

SEEING GREATER THINGS

Some of the Far Horizons of Faith

BY

NORTHCOTE DECK

M.B., Ch.M., F.R.G.S.

South Sea Evangelical Mission, British Solomon Islands
Author of "Credentials of the Cross," "Mounting
up with Wings"



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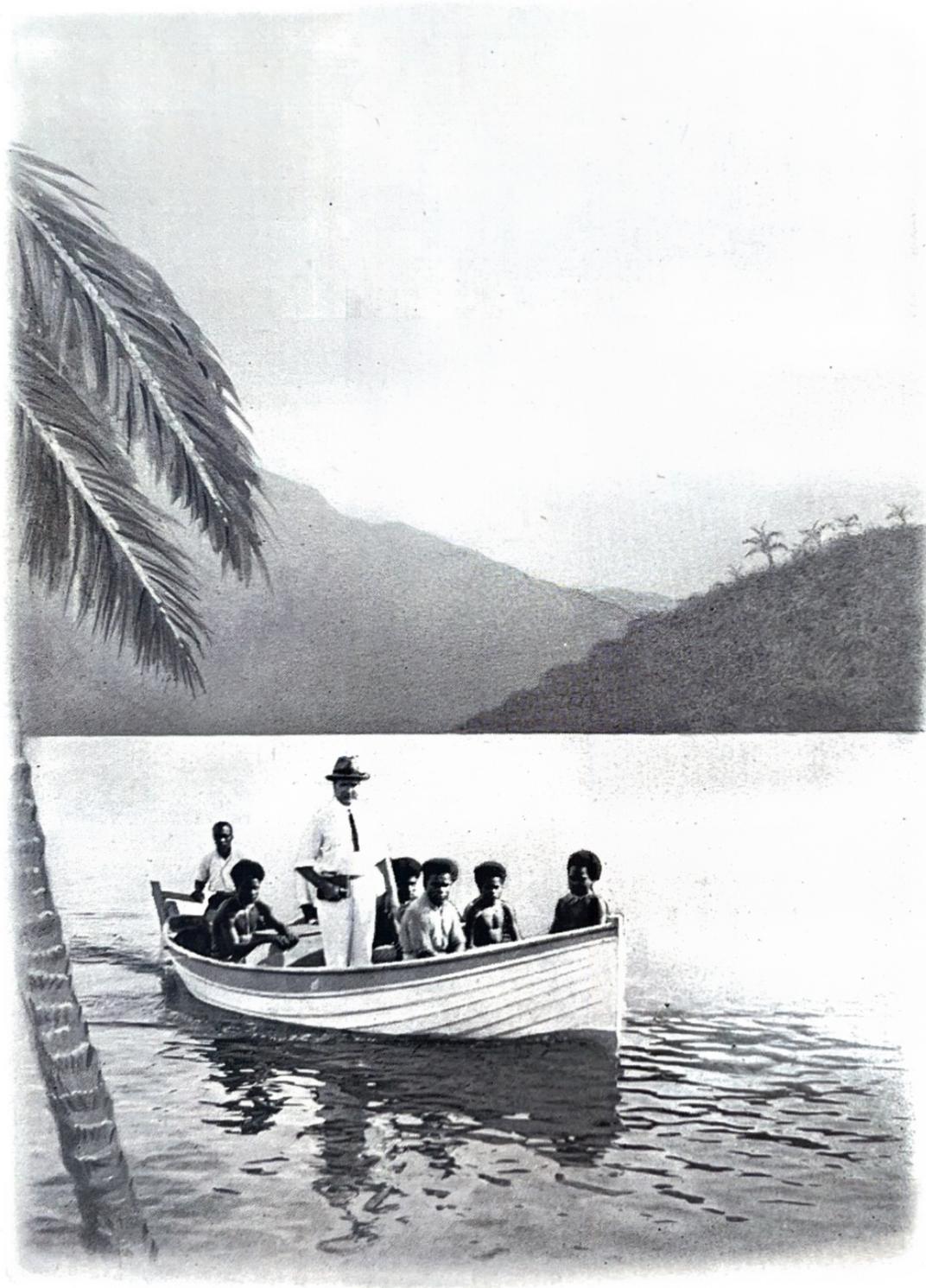
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THAT SEVEN OF HER CHILDREN
BECAME FOREIGN MISSIONARIES



DR. DECK VISITING IN THE "EVANGEL'S" LAUNCH.

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CHAPTER I
SEEING "GREATER THINGS"

SEEING "GREATER THINGS"

"Thou shalt see greater things than these" (John 1. 50).

IN these material days, one sphere after another yields in succession to the genius of the human race—the earth, the sea, the sky. And in a very special sense the ancient word of the preacher is being fulfilled: "They have sought out many inventions." But though telescopes have been constructed by which men may see small objects on the moon, they have never yet seen an angel. And though powerful X-rays will reveal the frame and body of man, they never catch a glimpse of his soul. For angels, and souls, and "spiritual things" are in a realm apart. Men may seek out "many inventions," yet only "God hath made man upright," and His fiat still holds, inexorably true and fundamental: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God," and all that pertains to it, of grace and of peace and of glory.

No, the natural man is born blind, "colour-blind," to the great spiritual world. For it is God's ordination that only through his "second birth" of the Spirit can a man get his "second sight," the supersight of faith, which will enable him to see, to know, the great spiritual world that surrounds him, and to know God.

So, blindly, pathetically men live their lives,
unseeing:

“They pass us by like shadows, crowds on crowds,
Dim ghosts of men that hover to and fro,
Hugging their bodies round them like their shrouds,
Wherein their souls have perished long ago.

Alas! poor souls, the anointed eye can trace
A dead soul's epitaph in every face!”

Yet having received the “second sight” of the child of God, through faith and the new birth, the great bulk of true believers are still in the pitiable condition of the man of Bethsaida (Mark 8. 24), who truthfully confessed: “I see men as trees walking.” For most do not realise that they are not yet made “perfectly whole,” or that better sight is possible. And so the Saviour's promise and desire for Nathanael, “Thou shalt see greater things than these,” needs to be made known to and worked out in the life of every child of God.

But, alas! most believers are only too content with the partial sight they have; and many do not realise that there is more to see. I knew a lad once, a keen naturalist, who spent his holidays collecting every species of birds' eggs. He could never make out why his younger brother could always find the nests so much more quickly than he, till after years of effort, one day his eyes were tested, and it was discovered that he was extremely short-sighted, and did literally and habitually “see men as trees walking.” When his sight was corrected, a new world of vision dawned on him: all things became new for him, and distant

things became clear. But what a loss! All those years, without knowing it, he had seen, as it were, "through a glass darkly." And that is just how most Christians spend their lives, continually hindered and handicapped, because they can't see, and therefore can't know God as He is, as He might be in their lives. The poet aspired to the gift "to see ourselves as others see us." But if we could see ourselves as God sees us, and then further, as He would like to see us, what a revelation it would be, how humbling, and yet how inspiring.

As God would see us! That is the greatest wonder of all, the tremendous ambitions and plans God has for each of our lives. Human parents naturally and rightly have great plans and dreams and ambitions, fond ambitions, for their children. But they mostly remain only dreams, for they have not the power to bring them to pass. But God! How different it is with God. His ambitions, His commands are His enablings. For what He graciously plans for each, He is willing and able to bring to pass. It only involves "letting go," and then "letting God." And what ambitions! For God is a Father who has far-reaching ambitions not only for His ten-talent children, but for you and for me, for each, for the half-talent child, for the one who seems to have no talents at all. All that is needed is that we will yield to Him, will prove Him, will on our side have "great expectations."

What is so wonderful, so unique in the Christian life is that in every believer there are such undreamed

of possibilities. On the human plane we are so hopeless and helpless. Our friends assess us at our true value. They know our weaknesses, our deficiencies, our limited capacity, how few are our talents, how puny our possibilities. They have us sized up so clearly, sometimes so cruelly. But when a child of God steps out in faith and on God, and discovers the secret of taking hold of God, of taking Him at His word by faith, then a new factor is introduced which confounds all calculations, and nullifies all estimates. For then begins, in an increasing measure, the wondrous fact and promise: "All things are possible to him that believeth."

Then, as we trust and obey, and begin to use what little talents we possess, God in His loving bounty begins to give more. For "to him that hath (and useth) shall be given," is His unvarying rule. So let none of us despair. One with God is a majority, and each of us can by faith be linked on to the power of God, that we may have "power" and a witness in some direction. For God soon begins to discover and develop talents quite undreamed of in our lives, which so far have been "laid up in a napkin." These He will unwrap, if we will let Him, if we will humbly prove Him, that He may make them to be for a praise and a glory to Himself. Let us get this fact fixed in our minds, that God always has further ambitions for us that so far we have not realised. These ambitions are not, of course, that we should be great. Thank God, no; but that we should become ever enlarging channels of blessing, and that more and more we should

be "well pleasing" unto Him. So, some of the most precious, most fragrant lives ever lived, have bloomed and died almost unknown to the world, but watched and tended and delighted in by God, some day to rank among His most precious jewels.

And now for Nathanael the time had come when he was to realise some of the ambitions the Saviour had for him. The Lord "saw" Nathanael under the fig tree when he was beyond human sight, because Philip had to "find" him, to bring him to Jesus. But the Lord "saw" more than the outward man. He "saw" into a heart, the heart of "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile." And this whole "seeing" by the Saviour was so evidently miraculous, that it drew from Nathanael the worshipping cry: "Thou art the Son of God!" So was born in him the second sight of faith. But at once the Saviour's love and desire for Nathanael far out-leapt the present, and He gave utterance to that everlasting promise to the believer "Thou shalt see greater things than these." It is all in keeping with His Regal magnificence; He desires a man not only to be "born again," but to be well born, not only to be "saved," but to be mightily saved, not only to have spiritual sight, but to "see greater things."

But His promise still further outleaps the present, for He goes on to add, with a wealth of feeling and love: "Hereafter thou shalt see Heaven open." And this is ever so. An opened heart, opened, abandoned to the Son of God, is to result in an open Heaven. There are various degrees to this promise,

the final fulfilment of which must still be future. Thus, there was a continuous opening of Heaven to men, as the Saviour "opened to them the Scriptures." It was opened wider for the three apostles at the Transfiguration. It was opened still wider for all believers on the day of Pentecost, when it became possible, and God's will for each, to enter in by faith, that He might make us habitually to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

It is very beautiful and fitting that this blessed promise and prospect of seeing greater things, of seeing Heaven opened, was recorded by the Spirit only through the Apostle John, the "seer of Patmos," the one who of old triumphantly testified: "We beheld His glory!" How much he had seen of the Holy One and the Just, in his long life! From the time he was "leaning on Jesus' bosom," till the day in the prison isle, when he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day," and saw the prophetic sweep of the ages, he was ever a "seer." Let us follow with bowed hearts the inspired record, as it comes word by word to the pen of the aged John from his "deep, clear memory." And then let us with holy boldness, afresh determine that, by the grace of God, each of us will "see greater things than these" of our past experience, each will be a better "seer" of the Saviour in the present, never to rest till we, too, by grace, and the Holy Spirit, are seated habitually in those "heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

For it is true of these material days as it was of the dark days of Israel, that the "Word of the Lord is

precious," and rare to-day, and there is "no open vision." But that makes it all the more urgent that we who have opened hearts and an open Bible, should use it to get an "open vision" of God, to see ever fresh beauties in the Saviour. So our glorious Lord, who by His death and passion has opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers, shall ever become more amazing, more wondrous, more worshipful to our adoring eyes.

But what "greater things" am I to covet, to make the goal of my life? What is this ambition that is so safe, so commended by God? For in another place I am warned: "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jer. 45. 5). And for my clear guidance, two men emerge from the host of witnesses in the Living Word. The first is a self-made man. He speaks with boldness and self-confidence. For he was a successful man in the world's eyes. In boastful accents he proclaims his ambition: "I will pull down my barns and build greater." And I have God's mind on the whole matter in the one short doomful sentence: "Thou fool!" And there is a further weighty and tender warning about such mere carnal prizes: "If riches increase, set not thy heart on them." God give us grace to take good heed, for these are not the "greater things" He covets for us. And then I see another, a man once accounted a king's son, of high earthly position and proud prospects. He is now a fugitive, and is accounted a "fool" by the world. So here are two "fools," the world's fool and God's fool. But the man the world counts "fool"

finds an honoured place in God's "Westminster Abbey" of the faithful. And there (Heb. 11. 26) I read his epitaph, written by the finger of God, and it is this: "By faith Moses forsook Egypt" and its earthly pomps and prizes, "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

I need first, then, the great sight for a far horizon, God's horizon, to see, to view, the delectable mountains of His purposes for me, that I may emulate the giants of old, who, with regard to the promises, "having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them." For "seers" must ever become "doers," possessors ("be ye doers of the Word and not hearers," seers, only). In Switzerland there are many who view the transcendent snowy mountain tops. But they only gaze upon them from afar through telescopes from hotel verandas far below. They get no farther, no higher. And too many children of God never do more than catch a glimpse of "the glory to be revealed." But it is to be our present daily possession and enjoyment. "He walks in glory on the hills, and longs for men to join him there." So the "greater sight" of faith should lead me to the "greater riches" of Christ's abiding presence. But there is a still greater inheritance. For these two inevitably lead me to a further obligation, the third of the great trilogy of greater things, the Lord's tremendous promise and ambition: "Greater works than these shall ye do." And only God knows the

limit of that promise, and the far-reaching scope of the "good works which God hath before ordained" for you, for me.

Guarding the gates of the Mediterranean, between Spain and Africa, stood "the Pillars of Hercules," the extreme westward limits of the then known world. It is recorded that on the Spanish coins of the day was a picture of the straits, with the proud words inscribed: "*Ne plus ultra*," nothing beyond. And then Columbus sailed away and discovered that there was a whole world beyond, and the proud motto had to be changed. So the "*ne*" was struck off, making it "*plus ultra*," ever more beyond. And that is the truest motto for the Spirit-filled Christian.

At first for most Christians the motto has become, "*Ne plus ultra*," no more beyond, nothing more possible, only a life of defeat and failure, only the cry: "O, wretched man that I am." But thank God for spiritual explorers, who have re-discovered the spiritual "land of promise," of Pentecost, and of the early Church. For us to-day the "*ne plus ultra*" of the seventh of Romans, "O wretched man that I am!" may be changed to the "*plus ultra*" of Romans eight: "Ever more beyond," for "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free...from sin." Truly indeed I may "thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." So that for the humble, surrendered, Spirit-filled child of God, there is ever more beyond, more worlds to con-

quer, more virtues to be possessed, more victories to be won.

“For to the contrite spirit yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.”

There is a wealth of Scripture to show that no less than this is God's ambition for you, for me. This is His appointment; “must we ever be His disappointment?” Is He ever to speak in vain? Are we indeed joined to our idols? Are we to be resigned to our failure? Must we ever miss the mark for the prize? “Who will bring me into the strong city? Wilt not Thou, O God?”

CHAPTER II

LIVING TO THE "OUTER MAN"

LIVING TO "THE OUTER MAN"

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4. 16).

WHEN God makes a dog, and it eats and grows and barks and dies, it has quite fulfilled its purpose in life. But when God makes a man, and he, in ignorance eats and sleeps and works and grows and dies, seeing only "the seen," and living only "to the flesh," he has altogether missed the one great reason and function for which he was made. For though to the human eye both dog and man have life and a soul, a soul which only differs in degree, yet in man, God's eye sees more. For in the man, expressly made "in God's image" (Gen. 1. 29), God's eye sees as well an immortal spirit. And that spirit is so precious, and is of such infinite everlasting value to God, that He actually went to the length of giving up His only Son as a Ransom to buy back that spirit to Himself. But this spirit, called by God the "inner man," even when it is redeemed, needs continual recognition and care and "renewal" day by day.

How best can we emphasise and really realise in our hearts and lives this vital, urgent duality in our beings, of spirit as well as soul, we who have so long lived with our eyes to the ground, with our ears deafened by the modern world's clamour? For our thousands of converts in the Solomons, men as animal

as any of the modern rationalists, one of the aptest illustrations of the matter has seemed in the homely banana.

THE BANANA SKIN. I have known our islanders eat many strange things, crabs and roots, mangrove seeds and butterflies. But though every native garden is dotted with great luscious bananas, yet when the fruit is brought home, I have never yet seen a banana skin eaten. Men do not grow bananas for the skin, but for the fruit. The banana ripe, the skin is merely peeled off and discarded, and later on picked up and buried. The native's objective is the fruit, and he keeps first things first.

And yet men, with all their wisdom, are mostly making the fundamental and extraordinary blunder of mistaking the skin for the fruit, of living "to the flesh," and not "to the spirit," and so, utterly missing the mark. For this body, this "outer man," which so many, even of God's people, spend their whole time and thought and lives in feeding and adorning and pampering. This proud body is but the banana skin of the man, the sheath of the immortal spirit. A few short years ("all flesh is as grass") and disease or age comes, and the man quietly discards his body and dies, and we find the poor cast-off sheath, and with reverent hands take it up and bury it. The poor, frail body was not the end of life; it was only a means to an end. It had a temporary purpose to serve for a few short years of housing the spirit. And now the immortal spirit has gone, gone out for weal or woe, to its reckoning with God its Maker. But the



ON THE LOOK-OUT !
Left to Right—Mr. BEE, Mate, Dr. DECK, and Mr. M'DONALD, Engineer, on the Evangel.

emphasis, the attention, the concern of the man has been upon the seen, not the unseen, upon the temporal, not the eternal, to the soul's everlasting loss.

And oh! the pathetic struggle to keep the body young, when it is the main objective of life! What cosmetics, what pains, what heart-burnings! How age is feared, dreaded, shunned! As children we had a French governess, a Protestant, yet unreconciled to God. She would never let us know or refer to her birthday. She strove to forget it, because it was a reminder that life was passing, and she was living at the present and for the present.

The world would give untold wealth and honours to the physician who could restore vanished youth. And long and urgent has been the search, which is continued to-day, for the elixir of life; now it is a monkey's gland, now it is a serum or a herb. But it is a hopeless quest, for God says man's "days are as grass," and no doctor can change this fiat. And back of the decay of the body is the fact that "by sin... death passed upon all men." Yet, blessed be God, death may be but the happy portal into a larger, fuller life, eternal in the heavens, which is found through Christ in God.

For just as the snake charmer has no fears of his snakes whose poison fangs have been extracted, even so, when sin, "the sting" or poison fang of death, has been extracted by the most precious Blood of Christ, for the child of God there need be no regrets for the swift passing of life, or fears of oncoming death. He may live as the triumphant apostle, and cry: Oh!

“Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!” Did that mighty servant of God regret the failing eyesight, the trembling hands, the weakening body? Ah, no! With his vivid sight of the world of spirits (“We look...at the unseen”), the transient frail “banana skin,” the perishing “outer man,” which had hampered him so long, which caused him to “groan, being burdened,” was valued only as the means to the further glad service of God, by his “inner man.”

For his living in “the body of this death” was only endurable that he might love and serve the more passionately, for he practised the supersight of faith, and lived ever with the clearest spiritual perspective. Would we then, in our turn, have life and youth over again? Would we call back the past packed years of service to be lived over again? Ah, no! Thank God they are safely stored in the counsels of the Most High. We would rather cry with the veteran, Charles Simeon: “How can I but run with all my might, when I am so close to the goal!”

Why then are we, true children of God, still cabined, limited, hampered by “this mortal” body? Because this is a period, not of probation, but of growth and ripening into God’s likeness. Very literally, “we are God’s husbandry.” Have you ever realised the tremendous import of that saying? What exactly does it imply? What is the humble function of the banana skin? What but to sheathe and protect the fruit while it is ripening. And God? God has the love, the adoration of angelic hosts. But, wonderful

fact, He has set His love upon me! And He is busy with His wonderful husbandry, patiently ripening the immortal spirit of His child, bringing about a growth and an enlarged capacity of the spirit for God, which can only take place while it is housed in the "outer man." And so, that frail, failing "outer man," which is the sole objective in life for so many, is but the temporary covering and protection during the growth of the spirit which is to shine as one of the bright jewels of His crown through endless ages.

And yet the activities of the body may be kept entirely to God's glory. God loves hard workers. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," and "If a man will not work neither let him eat," show sufficiently His mind about work. But we can learn the blessed art of sailing a ship, or running an engine, or keeping accounts with an eye ever upon God, and a heart continually conscious of His presence. He may still remain the one grand objective of the busiest life. But our work and our God must not be allowed to change places, or we may find that our work has become our god. In short, we must learn how "to use this world as not abusing it," or letting it abuse us.

And this frail body is not to be neglected or misused. "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." It is to be carefully tended and cared for. Health is a sacred trust, and a strong body the greatest blessing from God in His service, especially in the mission field, as one can thankfully testify. The banana skin has its humble temporary function, and

so has the body, "wondrously made." But I need continuous watchfulness to "keep under my body," lest it become a master and not a servant. I must ever beware lest it betray me, and I become "a cast-away" from God's blessed service.

RENEWAL DAY BY DAY. Much has been learned of the pathology of the body in recent years, but one disease, myxoedema, was long a mystery. The patient became monkey-like, with swollen face and scanty hair, scaly skin and dulled brain. Then it was noticed that a small gland in the neck, the thyroid, was atrophied. It had been thought unimportant, because it had no apparent function. But its vital business was to pour a secret solution into the blood, which was vital to health. When it failed to produce this "internal secretion," the patient sickened, became monkey-like, and died.

There is, too, a pathology of the soul, which needs knowing. And there is an exactly parallel "myxoedema" of the "inner man." For it, too, needs to be "renewed day by day" with a substance, which among the many foods on the modern market, is all too little esteemed. It is the "internal secretion" of the Word of God. Nothing can take the place of the thyroid gland in myxoedema, and nothing can take the place of the sincere milk of the Word of God to the inner man. For God has ordained it to be absolutely needful in the economy of the soul. Yet too often, in place of the life-giving Word, the daily paper, the sensuous novel, or the mad whirl of pleasure or of business is the mental diet, even of the child of God.

And the result must be eternal loss, the soul becoming more and more carnal and morbid, and less like God. And so I find "myself, the arch-enemy of my soul." Never doubt that we shall live more and more to the flesh, exalting the carnal outer man, unless we see to it that the soul is restored day by day with the only one "food convenient" and adequate—the life-giving Word of God.

And now, "what is your life?" Is the "outer man" practically in charge? Are you spending your strength "getting things?" For that is all the outer man can do. Yet the day is fast rushing upon us when the value of "getting things" will have passed. There comes the fateful day, soon, too soon, when the verb "to have" will have lost all meaning and value. And each will stand stripped and naked before God. Then it is that only the verb "to be" will have any value and meaning. What we are, and have become through grace, and how we have ripened into the image of God, will be all that matters, that retains any value. Then the short-lived "pride of life" and the puny pomp of man, that so fills the stage of life to-day, will have become the tragic memory of a pathetic blindness.

Oh, to realise the extraordinary value and significance of our present poor service for God. Each little act of devotion, often unconsidered, or too often misused, is fraught with eternal issues. Even so Mary anointed the Lord with spikenard for a moment. And the Lord has been anointing Mary with praise through the centuries, and her reward is not yet!

What a loss had the spikenard remained unbroken, unpoured out!

So let us each face the facts, and examine our lives, our objectives. What really are we living, caring for? Is it unconsciously the outer man, the seen, the transient, the mere banana skin of life, worn out in a few short years and cast away? Or, are we definitely living for that precious inner man, which needs so much ripening to be ready and mellow for Heaven, that spirit which is to live and live and live while God lives, and to be for ever the richer, the fuller, the more triumphant, because our constant objective has been: "I delight to do Thy will, O my God!" "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice...unto God."

"Be thou God's 'corn of wheat';
The end thereof is sweet.
Deep joy is in it.
Welcome the barren ground!
Hereafter will be found
Fruit to abide, abound,
On! and thou shalt be crowned!
God's joy is in it."

CHAPTER III

“FATHER, MAKE ME!”

“FATHER, MAKE ME!”

“Father...make me as one of thy hired servants” (Luke 15. 18, 19).

“WE are here to glorify God every day and night, and anything which does not do that must go.” This sentence from a letter from my cousin, Constance Young, who in 1924 made her abundant entrance into glory from the Solomons, underlined in her own emphatic way, might stand as her habitual attitude through many years, towards every-day life and towards her Lord of Glory. *Anything* must go rather than He be grieved or His work be hindered. And that blessed art she practised, of putting first things first, and keeping them first, is one of the lessons this generation needs above all else to learn.

One feels all too unworthy and unable to write adequately of her and her unexpected and abundant entrance into glory, or of the shock, the pain, the blank of losing from our little company one who was always such a centre of blessing, and whose bright, happy spirit was so infectious to all around her.

How can I lay a wreath of loving tribute to her memory that only shall exalt her Saviour, that shall lead our hearts up to Him? For that is all she would have consented to.

Again I quote a sentence from another letter which may be taken as the tribute of all our hearts here.

“She was always so happy, so radiantly happy in her work, so enthusiastic in spite of the hardships of the Islands, that she will live in our memories, and be an inspiration. And yet it was God’s doing. He made her what she was, and I suppose He could make each of us beautiful for Him.” There are two adjectives which just seem to fit—beautiful and radiant. Beautiful, not only in outward looks, but beautiful, too, in character, beautiful in unselfishness and affection—and radiant; this expresses her best of all, because her very brightness came from the clear outshining of Christ.

She was dashed to the ground at times in the work, but then it was in sheer humility. But she was radiant almost always. There was something, too, of enterprise in her character which is unusual and most valuable in spiritual work. When last at Fo’odo, Mr. M’Bride led me to the end of the veranda facing the mountain side and the heathen. Here Constance often used to call them in the evening to come and sing:

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below.”

“Let’s sing it here in triumph, and as a challenge that all the *akalos* may hear and know that He must reign!” It was just a little token of her gallant, heroic heart. Yet beneath all her sweetness and romance and impulsiveness, there burned an indomitable spirit and a quiet, steady determination to do the will of God at all costs, that nothing could move.

A little before she was taken ill, one had come

across, in Luke 15, the two contrasted objectives in life, and they just seem to summarise her spiritual career.

(1) In verse 12 the cry, the desire of the heart is, “Father give me,” give me, give me. Here the prize of life, the objective of sonship, is merely “the portion of goods,” and the Father is regarded mainly as one from whom “to get things.” Many of our Island converts come to God with just that idea at first, that they will prosper better with God than with the *akalos*. It is only later that they learn to know the sinfulness of sin, and their need of a Saviour.

And the prayer life, the petitions of too many Christians at home, are taken up with asking merely for material things. That occupies most time and thought. But if money and “getting things” is allowed to become the prize of life, one thing is inevitable, it will lead the soul into “the far country.” For these things do not bulk largely with God; and it will mean parting company with Him if we will pursue them as the main prize of life. And in no time at all the soul begins to be in spiritual “want.”

But my cousin’s eyes from earliest days, were upon the mission field. And amidst all the picnics and innocent gaieties of a large and happy home circle, her greatest joy as a child was to go and sing with “the boys,” as the Kanakas on the plantation were called. From that it was a natural step to read with them, and tell them Bible stories. So she early learned the joy of service. And the great world, with its wealth and lures, never had her heart. How easily even earnest

Christians can be turned aside from God's best. How luxury creeps in, and many cares, till the simplicity of the Gospel, and a childlike walk and faith, is overlaid with other interests.

(2) Verse 19. "Father...make me." So from a child her cry, her desire from God, was not for material things, was not, "Father, give me the portion of goods." She saw clearer than that. Wealth held no charms for her. She sought and coveted the eternal, that which could be taken on to Heaven, that would abide the fire. And her continual cry, as I have heard many times in her prayers, was, "Father... 'make me'—make me like Thyself. Make me a channel of blessing. Make me a 'servant.'" And being a servant of God she early learned to see Him very vividly and continually.

"It were not hard, we think, to serve Him,
If we could only see;

.
It were not hard, He says, to see Him,
If we would only serve;

.
They who toil where His helpers be,
The glow of His smile shall often see."

So to her it was given in unusual measure "the glow of His smile to see," and it was reflected, radiated in her own.

"Father, make me a servant" (v. 19). But can we serve Him for naught? We might like to, might long to. But we can never do so. There are certain inevitable present rewards which are the heritage of

those who cry, not "Father, give me," but "Father, make me." Here are some of them:

(1) The "robe" (v. 22) of Christ's righteousness, a peerless fabric the world may never match.

(2) The "ring" by which we are wedded to His purpose of saving souls, the best union in all the world.

(3) The "shoes" of the feet, become "How beautiful upon the mountains" because of the precious message they bear.

(4) The "feast," the Divine joy, the making "merry" of heart. These all were Constance Young's in abounding measure, while she was exultingly "running the race."

And now? "There is no pocket in a shroud," and the "portion of goods" must be left behind. But a heart, a "heart" made "like Thine." Why, a heart like that can be taken up into Heaven! And so this eager warrior has cried and lived, "Father, make me" a blessing, a channel, a servant, and she has chosen that "good part which shall not be taken away."

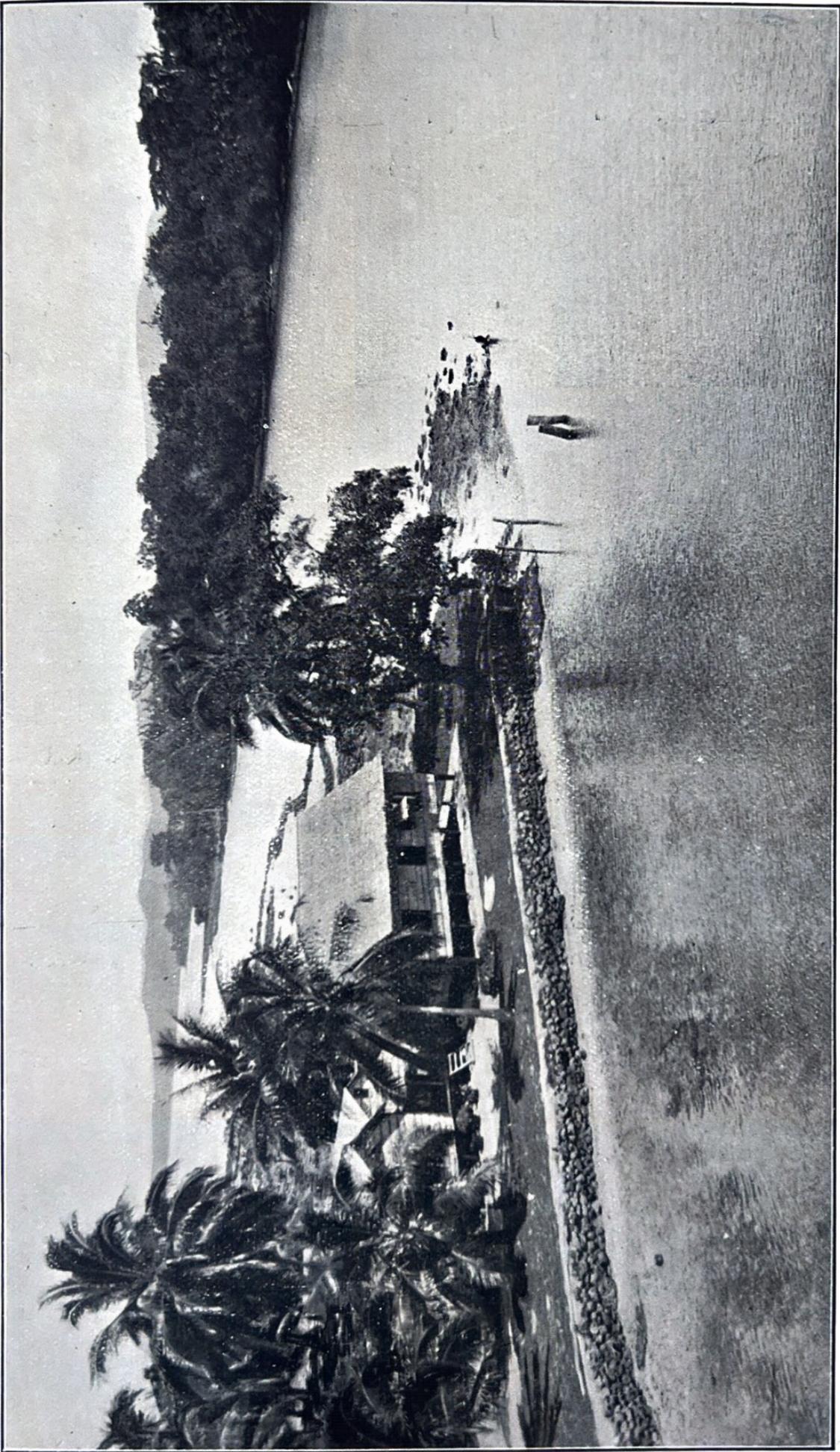
It cost much, the "making." Cost fever and weariness, stifling days and nights, pale cheeks and weary limbs; it cost disappointments and hardships. Pinned to her mirror, the last time I saw her, was a little slip of paper, with the words, "My brethren, count it all joy..." It was still there on her mirror after she had died. It was an eloquent witness to her "care of all the churches" of the five hundred Christians God had given her to love and teach. But that was just her way of meeting tribulations with a song on her lips

and joy in her life. The little message is left to us, but she is counting the joy now "with Christ." "So she has triumphed with a song. Triumphed and sung and passed along."

So she was borne on the shoulders of the elders who loved her, escorted by bands of weeping Christians who mourned her. "So they laid the sufferer down in her grave under the trees." And there she lies after a very gallant and glorious death, in a coral tomb, shaded by palms, and looking out to sea. How gladly she used to welcome the ship in days gone by. What wavings! What joy! What greetings! Now in the cliff overlooking the landing where the "Evangel" anchors, and the boat comes ashore, she sleeps, silently awaiting, not now our coming, but that glorious and fast approaching coming of our Lord of Glory.

"Who is to fill the gap?
Who follows in her train?"

CHAPTER IV
"GOD'S PLANTING"



ENTRANCE TO ONEPUSU HARBOUR, MALAITA, SHOWING MISS K. DECK'S HOUSE, WITH LEAF ROOF, AND FISH POND IN ENTRANCE.
THE MAIN ONEPUSU HOUSE AND BIBLE SCHOOL IS UP TO THE LEFT.

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“GOD’S PLANTING”

As “gardens...which the Lord hath planted” (Num. 24. 6).
“When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God”
(Rom. 1. 21).

It is deeply instructive to carefully trace the rise, the growth, and then the continual relapse and decay of the many “gardens...which the Lord hath planted” in human races in past various ages. For these successive plantings of God’s truth in different peoples and ages have often been so gracious, so unexpected, and so evidently fruitful, that their apparently inevitable decay and doom must seem most mysterious in the age-long conflict of good and evil, and they are surely recorded “for our admonition.”

In the forests of the Solomons there grows luxuriously the great and stately sago-palm, crowned here and there with a wealth of glistening ivory nuts. And a stranger, judging by its massive trunk, its tremendous fronds, and its net-work of roots, would suppose it more robust and longer lived than the slenderer coconut. But the sago palm has a most significant and unexpected life history. It grows steadily stronger and taller and more massive for fourteen years, and then, when apparently in the zenith of its life and strength, suddenly bears its first and only great crop of ivory nuts. This done, without apparent reason, in a month or so it dies and falls to the ground.

A number of these sago palms were planted in the early days at our mission station at Malu, and afforded us for years a good supply of leaf for thatch. About two years ago they bore their one crop of nuts. To-day the palms are all fallen and gone, and we have had to take the nuts they bore and replant them over the hillside, to start another growth of palms to supply leaf for the future.

And this process of dying out and having to replant again has furnished one with a very impressive and needed object lesson and text for our converts, as to the dangers which continually assail the plantings of God's truth in men's hearts, in the different ages, or "dispensations," of human history. For to converts it comes as a new idea, and seems unthinkable, that a people, once having been delivered from the delusions and darkness of heathendom, and having entered into the light and knowledge of the love of God, could ever again lose such light and revelation, to plunge again into darkness and idolatry.

So it comes as a surprise to them (and as a tremendous shock to the self-complacency of a few who are inclined to drift) to read of races lapsing again into heathenism, as set forth in Romans 1. 21. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened." Here, though often unrealised, we have that cycle of spiritual changes carefully detailed, by which peoples and nations have passed from a previous knowledge of God, back to idolatry and heathenism. So it is an

intense surprise to those Melanesians to find that we bring to the islands no white-man’s God, but that they themselves are a relapsed people, and that our Heavenly Father is the very God of their own far-back ancestors.

And seeing that these subtle tendencies and driftings are possible to every age and to every movement, however blessed of God, it is important for all to realise the continual danger of such departure from the faith in these last days. And we need as continually to use our great resources in Christ, given expressly for such “perilous times.”

(1) “When they knew God” (v. 21). This refers primarily, no doubt, to the human race after the Flood. There we find Noah and his posterity knowing God, with a new covenant (Gen. 9. 1), with a form of human government, and a special sign in the heavens (v. 13), sacrificing to God (chap. 8. 20).

But it became quickly evident that “the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” For no sooner did man begin to multiply and grow strong on the earth, with the domination over it expressly given them by God (Gen. 9. 2), than, still “knowing” God,

(2) “They glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.” He was no longer supreme in their hearts. “Other gods,” other goals, other desires, began to occupy their thoughts and take possession of their lives. And so, with their eyes averted from a God no longer supreme, the song died from their lips, and gratitude from their hearts. And they no longer

traced their daily blessings, "seedtime and harvest... day and night" (chap. 8. 22) back to His bountiful hand, but learned to live more and more "unto themselves." The process was a gradual one, it was more the departure of a race than of individuals, that backward drift which is absolutely inevitable, unless there is positive growth in grace and the knowledge of God, the very drift that is so apparent in the homeland to-day.

We have seen the beginning, alas, of just such a process of cooling off, in a tribe of converts, astray through native leadership, who have not been "glorifying God" with a single heart. Now, instead of God's work and interests being paramount in their lives, as in the past, they have turned to other and newer interests, which still are not satisfying them. Thank God, they are the exception, but they have made us realise afresh that this holy war must be a continual conflict, in which only the power of the Spirit can keep God's people steadfast in the Faith.

(3) They "Became vain in their imaginations" (v. 21) is the next stage. No longer awed by God's felt presence, man began to exalt himself—a pleasing occupation to the human heart. This literally and very exactly describes the recorded policy of the post-diluvians. For in Genesis 11. 4 their great objective and ambition was: "Let us make us a name!" How vain indeed, how blind. For how swiftly God intervened, first confounding their talk, and incidentally giving missionaries the burden of countless native

dialects. And then He scattered them all over the face of the earth.

Then, with this centrifugal force urging in their hearts, there began those restless migrations of the human race (so variously explained by anthropologists) which drove the Melanesian progenitors across the continents, over plains and mountains, rivers and seas, till they came drifting down the volcanic islands of the Solomons, the natural causeway leading into the far Pacific. They came, a naked race, for they had lost almost everything on the way, and brought little but their lives, in their frail canoes, as they crept on from island to island. For they brought with them neither pottery nor flint and steel. And all knowledge of metals, won so quickly for the race by Tubal Cain, was lost, as well as most of Tubal’s music (For they only blow bamboos.) And having forgotten the script of the ancient tablets now being discovered in Chaldea, all records of the past vanished, so that they have not even traditions of the Flood.

But more than all, they had lost all knowledge of God, and all idea of punishment for sin, for the next stage of verse 21 had soon supervened: “Their foolish heart was darkened.” For, God having largely faded from their hearts, Satan’s time had now come, and “the god of this world had blinded their minds.”

And as man was too lonely to live alone, and it is his nature to need and find some god, they cast about them for suitable objects of worship, and so reached the stage of verse 23, and “changed the glory of...God into an image made like...man and...birds and...

beasts and creeping things." And so idolatry began amongst Melanesians, though in place of carved idols in human form, they elected to worship the skulls and spirits of departed ancestors of renown. And, in addition, fourfooted beasts being absent in the islands, they chose as "totems," or patrons, of "birds" the hawk and frigate bird, and of "creeping things," the snake.

And God? Was God unconcerned? Ah, no. On the one hand there was the threefold abandonment of the apostate generations; that terrible reiteration of judgment in the first chapter of Romans. For in verse 24, "God gave them up to uncleanness;" in verse 25, "God gave them up unto vile affections;" and in verse 28, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Only too literally do our converts speak of being taken "out of the mud of sin." For though among these cannibals we are spared some of the refinements of the hideous sins of the East, still the people have become so degraded, so animal, that in a special sense, these men, made in God's likeness, have changed that likeness "into an image made like... beasts."

But having given up "unto uncleanness" and judgment the guilty apostate generations, "who did not like to retain God in their knowledge," God could not rest there. For He also gave up His only begotten Son, to be made man, and then to be made sin for man, that He might redeem us back to God. And so He has begun to bring back this wandering island people to Himself, replanting again in them His

Words of Life, as it is written: “They who sometime were far off are made nigh (again) by the Blood of Christ.”

Just as, then, at Malu, the sago palms, when they have died down, need to be continually replanted to produce a repeated harvest of leaf, so God has continually been replanting His Truth and a knowledge of Himself, in successive ages of men, producing successive harvests of souls for the “many mansions” of Heaven. Here are some of the plantings.

First, in spite of the godly line of Seth and the tremendous testimony of Enoch (the first premillennial preacher, Jude 14), and his exalted standard of life, described as “walking with God,” the tide of materialism of Lamech, the first polygamist, and his inventive sons, triumphed till “the wickedness of man was great in the earth.”

So the Flood came, and, as it were, the great and proud palm of humanity fell, and in the person of Noah, God had to replant a purified “garden of the Lord.” But again the tree of righteousness was short-lived, the fatal tendency towards evil again triumphed, and the tree fell at the dispersion. But again God, in grace, took of the fruit, and in the call and separation of Abraham we find again “God’s husbandry,” and the growth of “a peculiar people.”

But the godly seed became apostate again and again, till “in the fulness of time” was born the Saviour. Then, for the time being, the palm of the Jewish people passed away. And in the persons of the disciples and the early Church God again replanted His

Truth in the human race. But even this new garden had begun to wither in Paul's day, and fell in the dark ages. Unwearied, God gave up the apostate Roman Church "to a reprobate mind," and in Luther and Wycliffe the Truth sprouted once more. Yet the same fatal paralysis supervened, and there had to be Revival after Revival, each new outbursting of the Spirit being in turn poisoned by the enemy. And in the Modernist movement to-day, the palm of truth is tottering to its fall, and God is, in large measure turning to heathen lands for virgin soil for His new gardens where He may plant His Truth.

Yet why these continuous defeats of righteousness and faith? Is evil stronger than God? Must it always prevail? Must the tares always choke the good seed? To answer such questions we must realise God's revealed design has not been the "conversion" of the world. True, He wills it that all men should repent. But down the ages He has been occupied with His Own Divine programme and design, and that is, "to take out a people to His Name." And ever since He has been filling the halls of Heaven with those who have willed to become His own.

And in a day when the latest phase of idolatry is not the worship of idols of wood and stone, but rather of gold, and the deification of man is proclaimed in many pulpits reared in God's Name, it is a wonderful privilege to be employed of God in such a fertile "garden of the Lord" as the Solomons. But "we are not ignorant of Satan's devices," and we must needs despair of continued victory, did we not continually

draw upon the resources of our great “Captain.” The palm of Truth down here is vigorous indeed, growing and sprouting in all directions. But what of the future?

We have lately had some honoured visitors to the mission. And as we went round in the “Evangel,” taking stock of the harvest, thanking God, and taking courage at the continual signs of life and growth and spiritual power, remembering the state of things in the homeland, we could not help talking much about the future of the work. For its perils grow steadily as numbers continually increase, and “who is sufficient for these things?”

But, as has been recently well said: “We don’t know what is coming to this distracted world, but we do know Who is coming, and He will put all things right. And that expectation is peculiarly comforting to us down here, in that we believe this people need never lose their first love, but may be presently presented “as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

For so long as His birth at Bethlehem, His dying at Calvary, and His ascending at Olivet, draw the eyes and fill the hearts, and engage the holy ambitions of our people, the perils and ailments of spiritual life, and the senile decay of old age will be averted, and the native Church will go on “conquering and to conquer.”

And for us? What must be our confidence? “You have your Bible and you have your knees: use them!” cried the old saint to the young believer. And that has been, and still must be, our whole and sufficient

equipment. So that I cannot but close with the solemn appeal of the mighty Apostle to the Gentiles: "Finally, brethren, pray for us that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified...the Lord shall stablish you and keep you from evil." So may we all of God's planting ever contend earnestly for the Faith, and never lower our eyes and our objectives, but live and toil, and love and die, constantly "looking unto Jesus."

CHAPTER V

“INTO THE HOLIEST”

“INTO THE HOLIEST”

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest”
(Heb. 10. 19).

PROPHETICALLY, alas, the very first emotions of God's new creation, Man, which are recorded in the Bible (Gen. 3. 7-10) are shame and fear. They are both the instant fruit of sin. And sin and shame and fear have been the unchanging problem of the human race all down the ages. For to-day human sin and shame are still the most pressing problems of men, of nations, of rulers. We meet them in the paper's daily toll of crime; we meet them in the thronging mission-field; we meet them in our own hearts. And the Bible, too, is filled with the same inevitable problem, treated from the Godward aspect. Yet here, suddenly, towards the end of God's Book, in Hebrews, the tenth chapter, we come upon this tremendous invitation: “Brethren...enter into the Holiest,” an invitation to enter fearlessly into the very presence of God, there to abide, thence to go out no more. But long pages, and conflicts, and sins, and sufferings, and the Cross, have had to come before this culmination of man's re-approach to God.

Early in the pages of His record of the race there comes a doomful sentence (Gen. 3. 24): “So He drove out the man.” Yes, the God of Love, who had walked and sought in the garden for His creature's fellowship, drove out the man He had made. It was inevitable,

for He was "of purer eyes than to behold...iniquity." Yet no sooner had He driven out the man than His heart of love began to make a way to bring the man in again to Himself. And thenceforth the Bible is pre-occupied with a second subject, that of man's growing access to a Holy God. Such access began with the very simplest ritual and relationship through an animal sacrifice and substitute. Yet in Hebrews 11. 4 we have the clearest declaration that even at the beginning the one and only and unchanging basis of approach to God has always been "by faith." "By faith Abel offered unto God a...sacrifice." Yes, always and only "by faith," which implies a yielded will and a childlike trust.

Later came further revelations of God, which culminated in the elaborate worship of the Tabernacle, as outlined in Hebrews 9. There we read (v. 2) of an outer "sanctuary," and "after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all." "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle...But into the second went the high priest alone, once every year, not without blood...The Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made perfect." It is all a tremendous picture, deeply impressive, of the holiness of God. There was the still and darkened chamber; for in it were no windows, no external light; the Shekinah glory of God was its sufficient light. There was no sound, no voice heard, for over it from year to year brooded deep silence. Yet into that dread stillness, that holiness, once a

year, through the heavy veil which excluded the world of sin, there irrupted a man, a man of the fallen race.

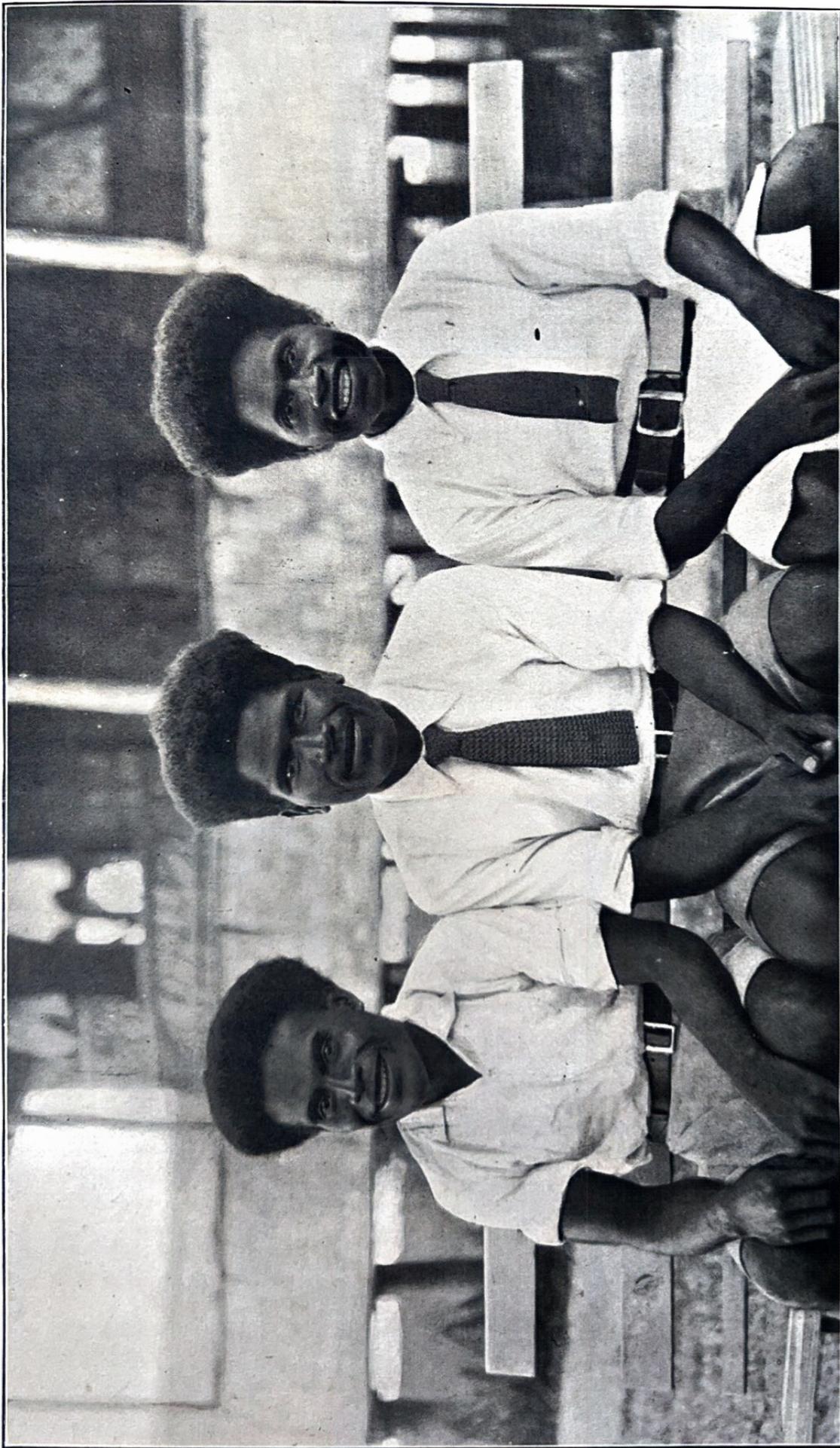
Yet he came, not in his own merits; he bore in his hands the blood of sacrifices, without which even his own life was forfeit. Silently that blood was sprinkled on and before the Mercy Seat, and the man again withdrew. And once more the room was still. And for another year that shed blood was a continual mute appeal to God for mercy on the race, a silent witness that His people had come in His own appointed way. So passed year after year, century upon century, the unending witness of the blood appealing to a Holy God. But there was no progress, no greater access, no increasing nearness. The high priest still came alone, and as quickly went, out from the presence, while for another year the jealous veil excluded from God’s face the world of fallen men.

But why? Why was God so exclusive? Men were coming in His own appointed way, fulfilling His own ordinances, offering His prescribed sacrifices, and yet He kept them all at arm’s length, excluded by the veil. Why could not the high priest stay in the Holiest; why only come once a year; why could not all men come? To these and all other bewildering questions there is an all-sufficient answer given in verse 4: “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.”

Then was there a mistake somewhere? Were all these elaborate sacrifices unavailing? Was God’s provision inadequate? What practical value had the “atonement” they were so often commanded to make?

A clear intimation of the purpose of God is given in the Passover. There in the twelfth chapter of Exodus they were told: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." This did not mean pass by you and not smite the firstborn, but pass over you to cover and protect you. This comes out more clearly in verse 23, the words "pass over" meaning hover over you, like a bird protecting its young. The same thought is clear in the word "atonement," which in the Old Testament does not mean at-one-ment, but again is merely *kaphar*, to cover. So we have continually the thought of sins not taken away, but merely covered. What then was the aim, the design of God in these covering sacrifices?

To make this clearer, we came across a simple illustration, which proved most helpful for our Solomon Island converts. It is one's duty on the "Evangel," our mission ship, to be continually bringing from out-stations to our head-quarters at Onepusu, suitable men to be trained in the Bible. Sometimes these men have frightful native ulcers, inches across, on their ankles. Devoid often of medicines and bandages, such sores become most horribly offensive, quite unapproachable in fact. So the first thing to be done, before the man can sleep on the ship, is to wash out the "putrifying sore" with antiseptic, and cover it with a thick bandage. This done, the man is more approachable. But though he can now come on board, you could not sleep next him. There are limits to his nearness, for the foul sore is not cured, not taken away; it is merely covered. It



THREE SENIOR TEACHERS : JOHN, CLEMENT, AND TIMOTHY, AT ONEPUSU BIBLE SCHOOL.

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must be still “thus far and no farther” in his approach. And it was just so with the worshippers in olden times. Their “putrifying sore” of sin being merely “covered” by the animal sacrifice, intimate and continual access through the veil, to a Holy God, was not tolerable. There must still be a limit to the nearness of their approach. They must still remain “without the veil.”

So we have the arresting fact, that the sins of all the Old Testament saints and worthies, such as Noah and Abraham, and Moses and David, and Isaiah, were merely covered, covered for the time being. And we realise that the alone value of all the animal sacrifices was to allow man’s faith in God to be exhibited, and to enable God to go on with a guilty people, in anticipation of some further more effectual sacrifice.

And then at last, in the triumphant language of Galatians 3: “When the fulness of time was come,” that time for which “the longsuffering of God” waited so long, “God sent forth His Son to redeem them that were under the law.” Here is now a new note, a “better” word, a new and adequate concept. It is not “cover” now, but “redeem,” take away “as far as the east is from the west.” And in the one perfect and sufficient sacrifice of Himself, the “Lamb of God,” slain, in the purpose of God, “from the foundation of the world,” all the sacrifices of all the centuries found their final and sufficient fulfilment.

And now, what of the veil—the excluding veil? In Matthew 27. 50, we read: “Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.” And then, without a pause, without another sentence

intervening, comes the triumphant statement; "and the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," evidently by the hand of God. Here, indeed, is the immediate and responsive "Amen" of the Father to the sacrifice of His only begotten Son. Gone at last was the final obstacle between man and God. For God's holiness was vindicated, His justice was satisfied, His race of fallen men was redeemed, and He could invite His own to enter into the Holiest by a new and living way, into a new and blessed state of communion and intimacy with Himself.

Gone, too, was Jewish exclusiveness, for the invitation now is to all; to all men of all peoples, all nations, of all ages. Picture then the face of Paul, once the "Pharisee of the Pharisees," called "the tiger of the Sanhedrin," as he bends over his Epistle to these same once haughty Hebrews, and now gladly throws open the portals of Jehovah to all believers. How he tastes the sweetness, the joy, of the invitation and exhortation he is authorised by God to utter. For him, indeed, the reflected glory of Judaism had for ever paled before the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. For him, indeed, the law had passed, the day had dawned, and the shadows were fled away. And out of a very full heart he urges his fellow-believers to enter fearlessly, and to dwell habitually, where once the high priest had only dared to tread. So indeed would be ministered unto them, here and now, truly and literally, "an abundant entrance into glory," into the Holiest of God.

And following the rent veil came the opened

Heaven. Before the ascension of Christ, it seems clear that though there was a great gulf fixed between the saved and the lost, yet they all, the wicked and the blessed dead alike, went to Hades or Sheol, and not to Heaven. This would be clearly in keeping with the fact that the sins of the saved were not yet taken away, but only covered; and so, though in Hades they were “in Paradise,” were conscious, and were “comforted” (Luke 16. 25), still Heaven could not be opened to them. But when the Sacrifice was complete on Calvary, not only was a way opened through the veil into the Holiest for the living, but a way was opened into Heaven for the dead. So Paul, when “he was caught up into Paradise,” was “caught up to the third Heaven.” So Paradise is now in the immediate presence of God. The change apparently is indicated in Ephesians 4. 8-10, when Christ, having “descended first into the lower parts of the earth,” “ascended on high,” and “led a multitude of captives,” including all believers from Adam to the dying thief, into the now opened Heaven. Everything dovetails in most perfectly, and is an added reassurance that the way of salvation is no makeshift, no afterthought, but “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2. 23), from “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” “to the last believer gathered home to complete the Body of Christ.”

Yet it is important to realise how much was hidden from the Jews. Looking back from to-day, it all seems so clear. Our youngest converts in the Solomons could tell you at once that Abel’s sacrifice was nothing

in itself, but the blood shed pointed forward to the precious Blood of the Lamb of God. But the Jews did not realise this. They did not understand that the blood of bulls could not take away sin. As a nation they have never seen the need for a suffering Messiah, dying to fulfil the sacrifices of the past. They see no need to-day. The Lord Himself could not persuade His own disciples that it was needful for Him to go to the Cross. "Be it far from Thee, Lord!" cried Peter. Some of the Old Testament seers and prophets must have seen something of what was coming. "Abraham rejoiced to see My day," and surely in the sacrifice of Isaac must have had a glimpse of the Son of God. David, too, who gave us the 22nd Psalm, and Isaiah, when he wrote his 53rd chapter, how much did they see? We are told many of the prophets "inquired and searched diligently...what... the Spirit of Christ did signify, when He testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ." But how much they realised we do not know. But the nation of the Jews never knew, never saw this great fact. As it is said: "Blindness in part is happened unto Israel." It has happened, too, unto large sections of the Church of God to-day.

And now for the practical response to God's gracious invitation. Positionally, as believers, we are all "made nigh." Yet experimentally, in daily living, we all need to "draw nigh." And in seeking to draw nigh to God, there are two main obstacles.

(1) There are man-made obstacles. Although God rent the veil, and thereby abolished the whole

system of animal sacrifices, which now became merely “the Jew’s religion” (Gal. 1. 13), yet we know that the rent veil was joined up again by the priests, and the Jewish sacrifices were persisted in for more than thirty years. Still from the altar, abandoned, and left “desolate” by Christ, the smoke from the sacrifices of the sin offering rose slowly and forlorn to Heaven. It rose in vain. And still the high priest entered the Holiest once each year and sprinkled the blood on the Mercy Seat. Yet that blood appealed to God in vain. For already “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” At last God, in righteous anger, blotted out the whole mocking system, at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, when the Temple was burned, and the Jewish sacrifices were for ever abandoned.

But the joining up of the veil by the Jewish priests, and the consequent excluding of men from God, is typical of what has been done since, so many times, in so many years. Almost every heresy, in its last analysis, does just this, it interposes a veil between needy man and a waiting God, which hinders or prevents communion. The historic Roman Church, with its mediatorship of Mary, erects exactly such a veil. And all the vestments and trappings of ceremonialism, all that panders to a sensual religion, these all are man-made obstacles which tend to distract the worshipper, and detract from the One worshipped, and so to hinder that free and spiritual communion of the humblest believer with God Himself, to which we are here invited by the Spirit. Ought we not “to obey God rather than man!”

And a professional, priestly class, apart from the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2. 9), always tends to interpose barriers between the soul and God. It so magnifies their function and office. We have the motive for such interference clearly stated in 2 Peter 2. 3, where we are told that "they with feigned words make merchandise of you." And in such a policy, even the simple sacraments ordained by God, as they become overlaid with man's tradition, are changed from helps into hindrances, and become veritable veils in the saddest sense. God clear away all such veils from our hearts, and give us boldness, disregarding man, to deal directly with Himself.

(2) But there is a still greater obstacle, not of ignorance, but of knowledge; there is the natural distaste of the human heart for intimate communion with God. In Exodus 20. 18, the people, beholding the signs of God's presence, "removed and stood afar off; and they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die." And that is typical with many believers. "They were afraid to ask Him," is still their attitude to the higher things of God. They come into the Holiest, even to the Lord's Supper, in God's House, on the Lord's Day, yet when they leave His table, His House, they leave, too, His presence, and have little real intercourse with Him in the week. Like the high priest, their visits are all too infrequent and all too brief. In, and out again, like him, a salve to the conscience, but showing little real love for God's

presence. They are but following their “treasure,” where their heart really is, in the world.

It is a solemn fact that the soul of every believer stands continually in “a place where two ways meet.” It stands between the spirit, the apparatus by which we touch God and heavenly things, and the body, the apparatus by which we touch the earth and the world rulers of darkness. And standing ever between these two contrasted realms of activity, the soul has all the choosing. It is the ego, the man, the active will, the self. The soul settles on which level we shall live, whether we shall live unto the body, the outer man, in the lower regions of life; or whether we shall live unto the spirit, mounting into the heavenlies, in conscious communion with God. And this choice has to be made deliberately and continually. It is terribly possible for true believers, attending God’s House, outwardly separate from “the world,” so as even to make “a fair show in the flesh,” to be really occupied with, and practically living for, the things of earth, which are passing and worthless and so unsatisfying. God give us the perspective of Heaven, and grant us grace to really live for “the things which are eternal.”

Then, too, we are only thus invited into the Holiest on the condition of a “sprinkled” heart, coming “in full assurance of faith.” How different this is to the self-assurance in which so many believers attempt to approach the Holiest. There are many hands stretched out to take the bread and the wine, which, because of some ancient feud, are not stretched out to clasp each

other. There are hearts opened to the Lord, but fast closed to each other by some old "root of bitterness," which to many seems more important than God's best. I do not think such hearts can ever really enter the Holiest. Such reservations are fatal with God, for "the Lord looketh upon the heart," and God is not mocked. We may settle to it that if we will not let Him put His hand into our hearts, to take out what He wants to, all that offends Himself or His own, then no more can He let us put our hands into His bounty, to take out what we want, in prayer, and still less to enter into His Holiest. God give us all grace, abandoning all else but Himself, to enter and abide in closest intimacy and union, and so to realise His most gracious plans for our lives!

CHAPTER VI

A GOD APPOINTED BRIDGE

A GOD APPOINTED BRIDGE

"I thank God...the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 7. 25; 8. 2).

HERE is language strangely attractive to every earnest believer. For nothing is so infectious as joy, so moving as the song of victory over sin and the flesh, for it is so seldom heard. Yet from Romans 7, verse 25 onwards, the apostle is able to indulge in a song of exultant praise and confidence, a strain that takes high place beside "the song of Moses," and tells of as great and as certain a victory.

Here is the language indeed of "a better country, that is a heavenly." For out of the wilderness of defeat and despair of the seventh chapter of Romans, the writer has come even "unto Mount Zion," in his spiritual experience, and he cannot but break forth into praises to God. For he has suddenly passed from the deeps of despair, into a spiritual experience which truly "answereth" to the "land flowing with milk and honey." He has come at last into the "promised land" of Acts 1. 8, where, experimentally, "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (power over sin and power for service), and "shall be witnesses unto Me...unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

And it is just that heavenly equipment which we need in the Solomons, our "uttermost part of the

earth," and which you, too, need in the homelands. Spiritually, that is where we all need to "abide" if the King's business is to be done. We need to be habitually dwelling "in heavenly places in Christ," never content with the wilderness experience, or resigned to defeat, or "coming short" of God's greatest promises. Yet how to-day are we to compass this great experience? How shall we cross our spiritual Jordans, and encircle our Jerichos, and possess our possessions in the land? Where shall we learn the secret?

Now it is noticeable that when on earth, Christ often spoke experimentally of what was to be possible in the spiritual life. His apostle later spoke doctrinally of how those possibilities were to be brought about in men's lives. The Master spoke longingly of the "rivers of living waters" which were to flow from each believer, yet He could not go into detail as to how. For the disciples were so dull of hearing, "fools and slow of heart to believe," that He went to His death on Calvary leaving these "yet many things" unsaid, for "ye cannot bear them now." But as He explained, "When He the Spirit of Truth is come... He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." And that showing was mainly through the great Apostle to the Gentiles, who in the Epistle to the Romans has given the most complete revelation of both justification and sanctification. So it is there we must seek in detail for this great spiritual secret.

Briefly the earlier sections of the epistle deals with (1) Humanity at the bar of God, when "all the world"

is found "guilty before God," in chapters one and two. (2) Then in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, we hear "good news" for dead men, men dead in sins, and of Christ's work on the sinner's behalf, justifying him from the penalty of sin. And many true believers are satisfied or resigned to stop there. But not God. He has far greater desires and ambitions for His own. So (3) in the sixth chapter we come to the great subject of Christ's work in the believer, and God's great method of freeing him from the present power of sin, by a double process of "reckoning."

And now having outlined this important spiritual process, which must ever form the real basis of all sanctification, and of our growing likeness to our Master, the apostle is led to illustrate and illuminate the doctrine, with what seems almost certainly a diary of his own spiritual conflicts, and final secret of victory. (And even if this is not Paul's own spiritual experience, it at least describes only too clearly and accurately the daily experience of the average Christian.) So in the seventh chapter, from the seventh verse onwards, Paul first leads us through the realm of the flesh. This is a very wilderness of defeat, and the constant conflict of the two natures. And he ends in despair on the edge of a spiritual precipice, at verse 24, crying out: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" a cry that I trust every one of us has sometime uttered.

Then suddenly at verse 25 the language of defeat changes to exultation as he cries: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" And now, at once

and at last the old "I" of the flesh is lost sight of, and Paul has passed right over into a new realm, the realm of the Spirit, where a new power is available for the conflict, and there is a new law of the land, "the law of the Spirit" (chap. 8. 2). And Paul is truly passed in experience from the winter of self-effort and defeat, into the summer of God's power and victory. He is indeed, now, at last, "filled with the Holy Ghost and with power," in the language of the Acts.

But between verse 24, "O wretched man that I am!" and verse 25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ," there is a great gulf fixed! And, alas, most believers seldom cross it, nor find a bridge to span this spiritual chasm! For I suppose most believers (from their own testimonies) and all carnal Christians habitually live and die on the wrong side of the gulf that comes at verse 24. They wander still in the wilderness of the flesh, the "I" country, with its continual conflict and defeat. For you can go to Heaven from verse 23, and probably most believers do, for, except on rare occasions, they get no farther. Hear their despairing voices: "What I hate, that I do" (chap. 7. 18), "For the good that I would (do) I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do" (v. 19), for "when I would do good, evil is present with me" v. 21), "bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (v. 23). Could you not have written just those words? Have you not often despaired like that? Many and many a time I did as a young medical student.

And to further guide us, and make clear where we

dwell, the spiritual landscape of the flesh is so painfully described in Galatians 5. 17. "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery,... uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry,...hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife,...envyings,...and such like." These must be our sordid, hateful surroundings, in large measure, unless we can find some way of deliverance and escape.

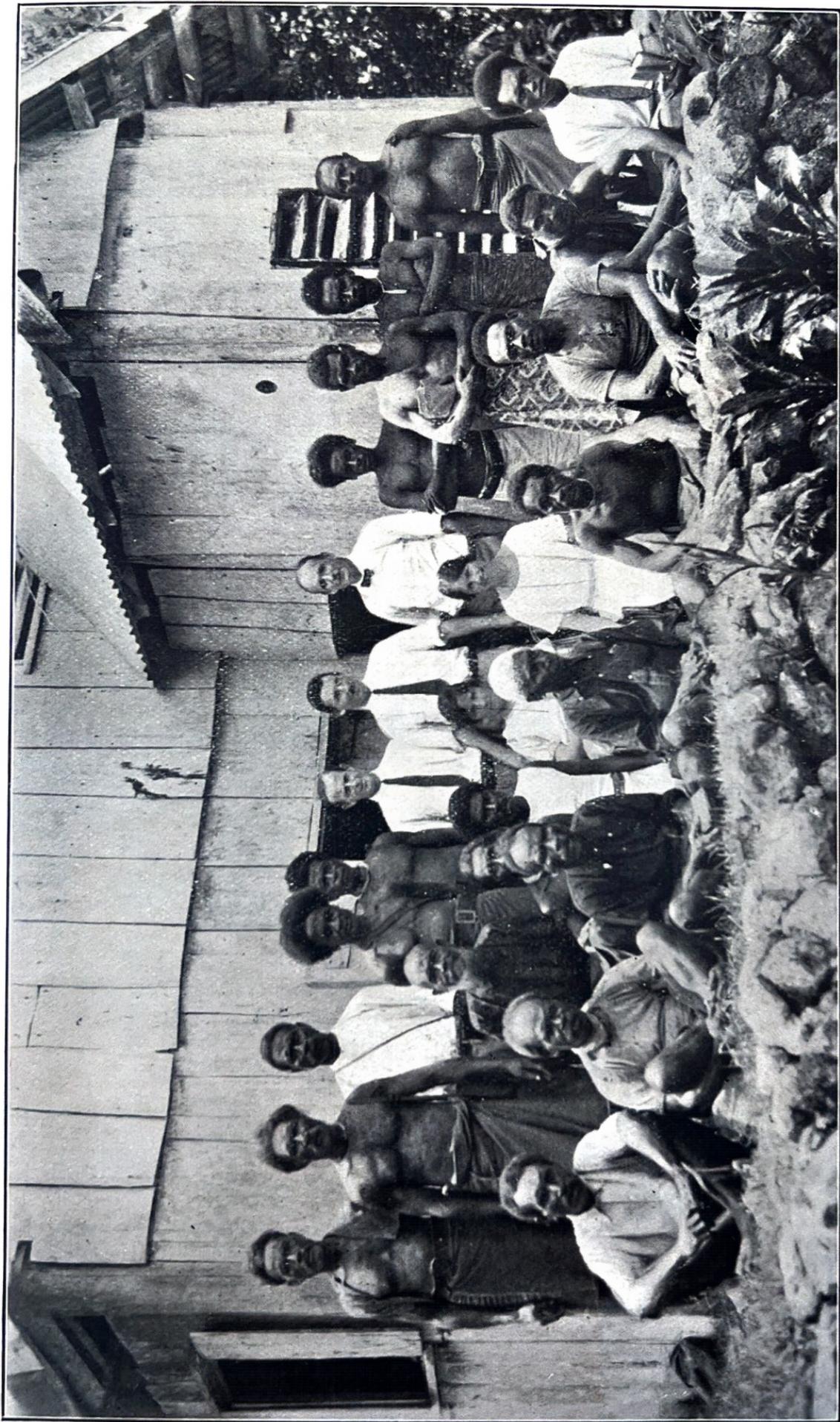
Yet across the gulf, the *pons asinorum* as it were of the spiritual life, there waits for every humblest believer this "better land" of God. It is indeed "a land of pure delight." In it there "blaze the unimaginable flowers" and fruit of the Spirit. "Heart's ease" grows well in that fair summer valley along with "joy and peace in believing." And among other best blossomings there is "a loyal will" and "passion for souls," and "prevailing prayer." "Love to all saints," too, you will find flourishing there, and "power for service" very abundantly. This is indeed "the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes." "Let us go up at once and possess it."

Yet first let us clearly realise that there are two great opposing spiritual powers, with two distinct codes of laws, on either side of the gulf. On this side, in the realm of the flesh, there is "the law of sin and death." Here, "the whole world lieth in the evil one," and Satan has power and great authority. But on the far side there is the realm of God, where only "the law of the Spirit" is in force. And can we but cross over and abide there, we are passed completely beyond the jurisdiction of the powers of darkness,

and so, automatically, are liberated from "sin's dominion."

To emphasise how far reaching and important is the difference of government and the altered legal status to the believer, in these two different realms, it is worth while instancing the slave-holding days in America. There, though for a time a slave might escape from his master in the United States, his liberty was short lived. The whole weight of the law of the land was against him. But let him once cross the border into Canada, and he was free, automatically free. For he had passed into a new realm where slavery was illegal. And now the whole weight of the law of the land was on his side, protecting him from his old masters. A yard across the border and he was a free man; free, not because he was stronger in himself, or more able to fight and defend himself, but because he had passed right beyond the reach of the old law and the old master, And more, so long as he stayed in Canada he could not be recaptured. For the law of Canada had set him free from the then-slave-holding laws of America.

Now at the new birth a definite change took place in my relationship to "the flesh," whose realm is "the law of sin." For I am specifically told (chap. 8. 5) that "if so be the Spirit of God dwell in me (as at conversion) now I am no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit." Yet the flesh is not eradicated. During my earthly life there remains enough of the flesh in me for me to go on deliberately living "after the flesh" (chap. 8. 12) as a carnal Christian. But as long as



MISSIONARIES AND ELDERS AT MALU, MALAITA.
Left to Right—Mr. WAITE, Mr. M'BRIDE, Dr. DECK.
Mrs. M'BRIDE, Mrs. DECK.

I am living on that level I am on the wrong side of the gulf, and am still in Satan's power and jurisdiction. And so sin will still have dominion over me, for with the flesh I am still serving the old "law of sin" (chap. 7. 25), and I must be defeated. But when in God's appointed way I cross the gulf between verses 24 and 25, and so begin to "walk in the Spirit," as I am urgently exhorted by God, I am entered on a new realm. And at once, automatically, "the law of the Spirit has set me free from the (old) law of sin and death" and Satan (chap. 8. 2). And now "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

How then am I to deal with "the flesh" which still remains in me? How am I to cross the gulf and to dwell in the realm of the Spirit? To discover that secret I must go back from what seems to be Paul's recital of his experience in chapter seven, to his revelation of the doctrine in the sixth chapter. I must go back seeking a bridge with which to span the great gulf. And I find just such a God appointed bridge in Romans 6. 11. Here it is: "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," but reckon ye yourselves to be "alive unto God through Jesus Christ." Here, then, is the double "reckoning" which is God's one appointed way for us to deal with the flesh. Here is His perfect and sufficient way of holiness and victory over sin. Let us interpret it in simpler language.

(1) There is first the negative, "reckon...your-selves dead." Now we know that at the grave, the flesh and its fatal proneness to sin is finally finished

with. For, "he that is dead is freed from sin." But God is not prepared for many of us to die like that just yet. We have not yet "finished our course." But as "the flesh cannot be improved, it must die somehow, if we are to be freed from sin. And so, while we are on earth still, the best thing God can do with the flesh is to count that it is dead, that it died when we died with Christ at conversion (chap. 6. 6, 8). That is our legal position or standing in God's eyes. And now He urgently exhorts us to make it true in experience, by "reckoning" the flesh dead, by treating it just as if I were a dead man, and so had nothing further to do with my own natural fleshly desires and ways. A simple literal example of such "reckoning dead" in practice was the case of two fashionable girls, recently converted to God. They are asked to a ball by a rich relation, and this is the answer they sent: "We are sorry to have to refuse your invitation. But the fact is it is not possible for us to be present with you, for we are dead! We died with Christ a week ago, so we cannot come!" That was a very simple and effectual putting in the place of death, the old natural self and its desires, of being "crucified with Christ."

But this "reckoning" ourselves literally to be "as dead," here commanded, is none other than the "absolute surrender" many of us have been practicing with thankful hearts for years, a thought which is also literally Scriptural. For in Romans 6. 13, 19, we are exhorted to "yield" or "surrender" ourselves, and our members, "servants" or "bondslaves" unto God, so

that we may be at God's absolute disposal. And thus we are in effect "as good as dead" to the flesh and our own lusts and desires so long as that "reckoning" is maintained.

But this "reckoning" ourselves as dead, or absolute surrender, is only half the secret. By itself it is not enough for deliverance. And I remember many, many times honestly and wholly surrendering, as a student, without finding deliverance. Climbing out, as it were, on this single half of the bridge, and vainly longing for the other side, for the land and fruit of the Spirit, where a number of my friends so evidently were already. But one only relapsed again back into the wilderness of despair. For one was only using half the bridge, and it was inadequate, and could not bear me over. And surely it is evident why. "Reckoning dead" is not life. It is not enough for the house to be "empty, swept and garnished." It must be occupied, and by Christ Himself. For holiness is not negative, not the mere absence of sin. Holiness is Christ Himself and His perfections appropriated.

So, first, I must make room for Him by this "reckoning dead," and emptying of self. The temple must be cleansed and prepared by the confession of all known sin, and the giving up of all doubtful practices. But I still need Him as my life, Him, ministered and imparted to me by the Holy Spirit, that I may overcome and "walk in the Spirit." Now it is true that in "The Acts" the miracle of Pentecost is described differently. There the wonderful change is described by God: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost

and with power." And to-day we likewise are commanded in our turn to "be filled with the Spirit." Whose, then, is the power through which we are to overcome? Some of us, using the language of the Acts, may have been in the habit of thinking it was the Holy Ghost's own power, that He did the work, and through Him we are to overcome. But it seems clear that, though He is the Executive of the Godhead and as such is to be recognised and honoured, and not ignored as a Person, still, the power He imparts, through which we are to overcome, is Christ Himself in His resurrection life.

So now we are ready for the second half of the bridge, for the positive "reckoning." Reckon yourselves "alive...through Jesus Christ," or "alive" with the life of Christ. And that just means my continually appropriating Christ Himself through the Holy Ghost, as my present and perfect sufficiency. And this appropriation has got to be done by what should be to me the usual, normal act of faith of the Christian. It will not be by my merely "knowing" the truth. I must do more than know it. I must act upon it. Let us be quite clear about this. "The just" is not only converted by the act of faith, to go on afterwards by works and self-effort. Four times over in the Scriptures we are exhorted: "The just shall live by faith," that is, by daily appropriating our needed "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1. 19), by a succession of definite daily acts of faith. So, as a believer, by this deliberate exercise of faith, I must continually claim and receive, and give thanks

for Christ, in all His fulness, imparted to me by the Holy Spirit.

And again let us reiterate, in this deliberate act of appropriation we are depending, not on our feelings of blessing, which change so quickly, but upon God's faithfulness and promises which never change. Having done our part in asking for, and accepting, and giving thanks, we are now depending on His having done His part, in filling and empowering, though we may feel no different. Personally, what seemed the turning point, the final key, which at the last opened the gates of glory, to one who had been a believer since childhood, though in constant defeat and despair, was the believing that God had answered my definite act of faith, and had filled with the Holy Ghost though one felt no different. The transaction had been completed on God's side and on mine, and one's feelings formed no part of the compact. And I remember that attitude of blind trust, of believing, in spite of feelings, that God had answered, and one was "filled" had to be maintained for four long desperate days. Then the Holy Spirit broke through and graciously manifested Himself in power and glory and burning joy, which could not be mistaken, and which completely transformed life, and service, and the whole world.

But that was only the beginning. This double "reckoning" of surrender and appropriation may bring a tremendous crisis into the believer who thus for the first time is "filled with the Holy Ghost." But, as has so often been said, this first crisis is but to lead to a continued process by which, again and

again I must appropriate Christ Jesus, through the Holy Ghost, for my daily needs. Having discovered the great secret, the bridge will need to be used again and again (even many times in the day), as the happy years of service and blessing go by. For in a moment we can relapse back into the realm of the flesh, and its sins and lusts and failures. But the gulf is no longer impassable! God's way of deliverance has been discovered. The bridge is available, and will always prove effectual.

It is significant that we are not told when the apostle passed through the spiritual experience of Romans seven, or what happened to him between verses 24 and 25. Surely, like the "thorn in the flesh" both are left undefined, that each of us may fill in our own varying spiritual experiences. But I believe that (though often unrealised), with every heart truly "filled with the Holy Ghost," when analysed, the experience will be found to have consisted in just these two complementary acts, emptying and filling, surrender and appropriation, dying and being made alive. And I think as the years go by, and we thankfully continue to practice this reaction of the soul, the two acts will become merged in one. And we shall become more practised and more habitual in maintaining the position, as it becomes more natural and instinctive to seek to maintain an ungrieved conscience before God. "Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

CHAPTER VII

THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF
THE INTERCESSORS

THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF THE INTERCESSORS

"The weapons of our warfare are . . . mighty . . . to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Cor. 10. 4).

IN the early days of the Great War in France, an impregnable position had to be captured. The enemy's lines were so defended by trenches, parapets, and barbed wire, that any assault, however determined, by whatever number of men, must have failed. However brave the attackers might have been, not a man would have reached the enemy's trenches alive. It was, in fact, quite impossible for the place to be taken by infantry assault, and some new plan of attack had to be devised. So the attacking general collected large numbers of the most powerful artillery, firing high explosive shells. With this excessive strength of massed artillery, a continuous bombardment was kept up for days on the one objective, till trenches were blown in, dugouts smothered, and wire entanglement blown to pieces. Then, when the artillery had done its work, the waiting troops were at last able to go up "every man straight before him," and with comparatively little loss, to capture the position. What had been absolutely impossible to them before, had been made possible by the sustained fire of the artillery.

I believe this is a most accurate and instructive picture of spiritual warfare. There are positions of the adversary that cannot be stormed or starved.

There are defences that are impregnable. There are obstructions which effectually bar the progress of the most devoted members of God's great missionary army. Before such can possibly succeed, there is necessary the sustained and continuous fire of the artillery of prayer. Nothing else can take its place. Nothing will avail till it has done its work.

Too often, in the absence of prevailing prayer, the assault has to be made without, and precious lives are sacrificed, time is lost, and all efforts are in vain; not because God is unfaithful, or the servant is not devoted but because the artillery of prayer has been lacking, and no breach has been made in the enemy's defences. Why do spiritual assaults so often fail? Why are precious souls passing, while the Bread of Life is at their gates? Why has God's Word apparently failed after long years of effort? There seems mainly one answer. These devoted soldiers of the Cross have been leading the assault without adequate support. Some of them have had to advance almost alone against the entrenchments of the enemy. They have not been sufficiently served by the artillery of prayer. The breach which should have been made with the dynamic power of intercession has not been made.

And until the breach has been effected, the Church must have recourse to prayer. That is the only weapon that may prevail. It seems to me that the failure of the attack is often more a reflection on the intercessors than on the attackers. The sooner we realise the all-important function of prayer, the sooner we shall learn to put first things first, and to be

resolved that, in our lives at least, nothing shall be allowed to usurp its place; and that we will not allow ourselves to be so cumbered with clamant duties, that prayer is crowded out.

In England there is a historic body of men known as "The Honourable the Artillery Company." Positions in this Brigade have for long been greatly coveted and hard to obtain. For their function is the all-important one of breaking down the enemy's defences. They have their counterpart in God's great army of occupation, which contains a body of saints who have an equally important and essential function to perform. These might well be called the Honourable Company of the Intercessors. Their numbers, alas, are far too small, their ranks too thin. This service, in spite of its honours, is little sought after. For the great bulk of God's children are so short-sighted, indeed, so blind to spiritual warfare, that they cannot follow the flight of the projectiles of prayer, nor realise the effect they produce.

Yet God will give the sight of the seer to those who desire it, that at last we may realise the function and the urgency of prevailing prayer. This work of breaking down the walls and effecting a breach has got to be done. It is going to be done. But is it going to be done by you? All cannot be great preachers or teachers. But I do not see anything in God's Word that would prevent the humblest saint from becoming a great intercessor. George Müller was raised up by God to be, not an exception, but an example. Praying may be hidden service, yet it is

none the less honourable. It is a service, too, with which many might be trusted, for it does not expose us to the deadly chill of popularity and applause. How often we ask for power from God that we might do greater things, when He would rather give us weakness, that we might do better things. Recruits for this service are needed, never so much as to-day!

Speaking as a learner to other learners, the best way to become a true intercessor, to learn to really pray, is to do it, to make a definite and sober beginning. We need not be so much concerned at first about knowing how to pray. We need to be intensely concerned about giving God the chance to teach us how to pray. Being then convinced that prayer is the greatest essential to holy living and effective ministry, it is wise to make a covenant with God, that by His grace we will make time in the day for prayer. As a writer has said: "God's acquaintance is not made by pop calls." Time is needed. Throughout the Word of God, the greatest emphasis is laid upon waiting. There is something peculiarly healthful to the soul, and effective with God, in waiting.

If we are too busy to pray, then we must at once abandon the most effective service of the soul for God. Such waiting is toilsome at first ; after a time it becomes a natural habit. In carrying out such a covenant of prayer with God, it is a great practical help, I think, to have a certain burden in prayer for a certain number of people or subjects, which has got to be discharged daily, and about which we have a bad conscience till it is discharged for the day. There is no need to get

into bondage, but if you are unhappy till you have encircled your definite Jericho, and cannot sleep till it is done for the day, it will tend to definiteness and regularity. And you will not need lists of names of those you pray for daily. You can carry hundreds in your heart quite easily, and this keeps prayer from becoming mechanical.

“And watching thereunto.” In inciting our converts round the islands to persistent prayer, one has often used the illustration of a yam garden. How does a native grow yams? Does he take a bagful and roam through the forest, pushing in one here and one there, in any nook he may find, never to know where they are planted, never to return, to tend them and watch their growth; never at the last to gather them, and feast his heart on them? Surely reaping no resulting fruit, he would soon tire of planting yams. Yet that is just how many children of God sow where they never reap, make a duty of what might be a joy, and soon tire of praying.

They stand up with petitions so vague and indefinite, that they could not recognise the answer were it given. We plant a prayer for some definite object, and straight way go away and forget all about it. So that like the yam planted and abandoned in the forest, it is never reaped by the sower, it never gladdens his heart, and impels him to further planting. No, I have never seen natives plant yams like that. They are too practical. Yet I have heard many pray like that.

A native grows yams to obtain the fruit. He chooses the place with care, clears it and plants his

yams with skill. He marks it off with fences, that he may know his own yams. Day by day he visits them and tends them. The first green sprouts of promise gladdens his heart, and incites him to further care and loving attention. He gathers his harvest and, encouraged by the fruit of his toil, never fails to go on planting and reaping. That, too, is the way of fruitful prayer, above all, to be definite. To choose the subjects of our prayer with care, waiting about God to guide our minds to ask for those very things He wishes to give, and then to record the prayers, that we may never forget. It was so that George Müller kept account with God. Seven subjects for prayer, thus carried through to fruition, are more incentive to go on praying, than seven hundred begun and abandoned. It is the derelict prayers of the saints that so discredit the power of intercession.

It is our privilege in the Islands to have many such men and schools in our prayer gardens, and like the attackers at Jericho, to encircle them daily before the Throne of Grace. It is the greatest possible incentive to prayer to visit such gardens of the Lord in person, to find tender green shoots out of a dry ground, some here, some there; to tend the growth and fruitage of the prayers God has compelled from us. "Watching thereunto," impels one with joy to go on, ever planting ever praying.

PESSIMISTS IN PRAYER. But many of God's people are pessimists in prayer. A pessimist is one who habitually looks on the dark side of things, who counts the discouragements, and discounts the deliverances.

Applied to human affairs, it is excused that, "If you expect little, you will not be disappointed." But such a state of mind, such an outlook and expectation, applied to earthly things, is apt to become habitual, and unconsciously becomes our attitude towards spiritual things as well. Thus there is adopted a God-dishonouring attitude that undermines the expectations of faith, and causes prayer with many of God's children to become a power unavailed of.

God has no use for pessimists in prayer. "Ye have not, because ye ask not," is the Spirit's explanation of the usual poverty of soul. "Expect great things from God, and you will get them," is the sober and triumphant verdict of George Müller, the latter-day apostle of prevailing prayer. Surely then, seeing we have the resources of the Saviour on which to draw, we may safely be the most habitual optimists in prayer. For, abiding in Him, being led out by Him in intercession, we shall not be confounded. To the ardent soul who would excel in prayer, pessimism is a state of mind that needs to be consciously and constantly guarded against, even as, constantly, we need to enlarge our expectations by recording and recalling God's deliverances in the past.

"With perseverance." Yet, on the other hand, some prayers, like some plants, mature slowly. At times the husbandman needs "long patience." The most precious fruits of intercession must often be attended "with perseverance."

In the Islands we have a class of native dogs that suffer from chronic starvation. As might be expected,

they have little spirit, so that when they take hold of anything, it does not need much to drive them off and to discourage them. They have often afforded an apt illustration for our converts of the way many men take hold in prayer. And I have told them how bulldogs, when they catch hold, will die, almost, before they let go. Many a time since then a native, ever quick at parable, has prayed: "Oh, Lord, make us bulldogs in prayer!" Such indeed are the intercessors that are needed in the Church to-day. Men who will cry, with the patriarch Job: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Men who will set their faces to pray on with unwavering faith for years, in quiet confidence that what God has laid upon their hearts to ask, that He is certain in the end to give, when patience has had her perfect work. Bull-dogs in prayer! How many of us could be described like that?

To you, therefore, who care to pray and believe may be the preciousness of this service, to you all who are His. May this ministry of intercession be for each of us as the Word of God was in Jeremiah's heart—as a burning fire, shut up in his bones, so that he was weary with forbearing, and so that he could not stay. Only so shall the ardent soul fulfil the highest destiny designed for each by the Crucified.



Top—Sinorango, where two Government officers and fifteen police were massacred in 1927.
Bottom—Converts and native teachers on cliff at Oliburi, on east coast of Malaita. Once a very wild place, it has now a flourishing school, with about 70 Converts. Teacher, Silas Matamauri (ex-witch doctor), and Milcah, his wife. *Evangel* in distance.

CHAPTER VIII
"A CHANGE OF RAIMENT"

“A CHANGE OF RAIMENT”

“Now Joshua was clothed in filthy garments” (Zech. 3. 3).

IN the third chapter of Zechariah we are given by God a strange and wonderful glimpse into the unseen, ceaseless conflict in the spiritual realm. A window is opened through which for a moment we are allowed to see Satan standing before God to “resist” the cleansing and re-equipment of His servant Joshua. Such a revelation is given by God, not only to the Jews, but to us, for to-day. It is given, not to satisfy idle curiosity, but that all may realise the awful and tremendous spiritual conflict which always enveloped God’s ancient people, and which still continually encircles each feeblest believer on earth.

Now in this striking scene there are three representative persons who are present in every such spiritual conflict. There is God, the Author of life and light. There is Satan, the “prince of this world” of darkness. And, lastly, there is Joshua the high priest, representing primarily restored Israel, and the renewal of the priesthood. But in this restoration and cleansing of the high priest of that day there are very striking and instructive lessons for us in the present day. For God has transferred the interest and importance of this scene, from Joshua’s life and day, to ours, by telling me that, as His child, I, too, am a priest. And I believe that just such a transformation

scene as this needs to take place many, many times in the life of every believer-priest. For this "change of raiment" granted to Joshua is part of the spiritual "wardrobe" needful to each believer, which is repeatedly commended and commanded in Scripture, and which needs continual appropriation.

For note that this great transformation scene takes place to a living man. The scene is set on earth, not in Heaven. It is true that Joshua is seen standing before "the angel of the Lord." But I, too, here and now, am to have similar but continued audience with God. Thank God the change over from the "filthy garments" of the flesh to this heavenly "change of raiment" does not need to be postponed till death. It takes place now, not in Heaven, both with the sinner being saved and justified, and with the believer being cleansed and sanctified.

Now from the records given of Joshua's life we may believe that he was certainly a child of God, and that he was also one of the most godly men among the Jews. Perhaps he is here selected and put forward by God, not only as His obedient high priest, but as the holiest man alive at the time! And in the dim light of earth, and the limited sight and judgment of man, no doubt he did seem holy and pure and blameless, in his long flowing high-priestly robes. But now "Joshua stood before the angel;" and now in the light of God's glory, judged by His standards, how great a change! At last his real condition becomes evident. He, the venerated high priest, is clad "in filthy garments." They were not merely soiled, or thread-

bare, or respectably stained, but filthy. That is the adjective God must use about them.

And to define these "filthy garments" Scripture is its own best interpreter. And Isaiah plainly tells us what they represent, and utters by the Spirit this tremendous indictment of man and the best that man can do: "We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64. 6). It is not that a moral man is not better than an immoral man, or that good is not relatively better than evil. It is that man's very best is not good enough for God, and that relatively all the righteousness we can accomplish is but as filthy rags in God's sight.

Of course this total depravity of the natural man is most bitterly resented and denied by the worldling, with his gospel of education, and the improvement of human nature. So it is important to realise what pains God has taken to prove that the natural man cannot be improved. That most tremendous demonstration lasted over a thousand years, and began at Sinai, when God took a separated chosen people, the Jews, and gave them a Divine code of laws and worship to discover if there was any good in man in the flesh, and to give him every assistance to improve and recover himself. And very significant was the rite and sacrament selected by God to illuminate and make plain what He was attempting to do under "the law." It was circumcision which was chosen. And it was chosen by God to typify and make clear that the process He was attempting was the improving of man in the flesh. For circumcision is graphically described

by Peter (chap. 3. 21) as "the putting away of the filth of the flesh," implying that the flesh could be cleansed if only its filth were put away. But we now know that the flesh proved wholly incurable, and the dispensation of law ended in apostasy and idolatry and disaster.

Then came God's new way of dealing with mankind under grace, in which He no longer recognised the natural man at all (as being incurably sinful). For after the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, God's estimate of the flesh remained unchanged. For Paul's revelation and pronouncement is just as clear and conclusive as Isaiah's: "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7. 18). So now God would receive only those who through faith in Christ had been "born again" entirely "new creatures." And now what's the rite He commands to denote this most drastic and needful change? Baptism now becomes His sign and seal, of His covenant children. For there is absolutely no good in the "old man," so the "old man" must die. Nothing else would do. And baptism in its typical meaning certainly represents just that, the death and burial of the "old man," as being utterly corrupt and worthless. To all who bow to the Word of God, then, it is clear that the very best that an unbeliever can do in the way of moral improvement and righteousness is but as "filthy rags" in God's sight.

But, as believers, is it still possible for us to be clad in these filthy garments, seeing that at conversion "we have put off the old man?" (Col. 3. 9). In other

words, is it possible for us to go on producing the hated "works of the flesh?" Here are some of them: (Gal. 5. 19) "Adultery, ... uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, ... hatred, variance, emulations, heresies, envyings... and such like." Alas! experience tells us it is only too possible for us as children of God to wear such "garments," "spotted by the flesh," and to go on producing such "works." What then is my relation to the flesh since the new birth, and why are these things still possible to me? Here Scripture is very exact and definite. And a very clear and practical distinction is drawn, between my relation to that enemy the flesh, before and since conversion. In Romans 8. 9 we are explicitly told we no longer live "in the flesh but in the Spirit." But, alas, though as to position or status in Christ, we no longer live "in (the sphere of) the flesh," it is still only too possible for us to go on walking "after (the way of) the flesh" (Rom. 8. 12), and so wearing its garments and producing its works.

But it is hard to understand how, since I am no longer "in the flesh," the flesh can still be so in me that I am prone to walk "after (the way of) the flesh." The illustration of the ship's captain may help us here. A ship leaves London for Australia with a captain in command, who by his articles cannot be paid off anywhere but in London. But the captain proves a tyrant, and after a time is dismissed by cable, and superseded in command by a new captain. The old captain, however, is still on board, for he can only be paid off and finally discharged in London.

So he has still to be carried on the ship till the completion of the voyage. The old captain has now no legal right to any power or authority on board at all. But if he can tyrannise over and frighten any on board into obeying him he will do so, for that is his character. Yet all that the crew and passengers need to do to be free of him is to refuse to obey him, to be under his domination, and to appeal to the new captain, who will uphold and enforce their rights, and maintain their freedom. The old tyrant is a usurper; he is no longer captain. Yet he is still on board, and must continually be disregarded, and his control disowned. Just so at the new birth I passed out for ever from being "in the flesh." But the flesh is still in me, "on board," and can still tempt and tyrannise over me, and cause me to "walk after (the way of) the flesh." But I must continually disregard and disown it by appealing to my new Captain, Christ Jesus, in the person of the Holy Spirit, to whom alone I owe allegiance.

So it is still possible for me, like too many Christians, to spend most of my earthly life as a child of God, clad in the "filthy rags" of my own righteousness, a spectacle to men and to angels and to Satan. So in the secondary application of Zechariah's vision to ourselves as believer-priests what is its main message? What would God teach us by it? Surely the continual urgent need is that "the righteousness of God" which was "imputed" to me (or put to my account) at the new birth, should again and again be experimentally imparted to me in daily living, in place of my own

“righteousness” with which, even as a believer, I am only too often arrayed.

But what, practically, is the difference between Christ’s righteousness imputed and imparted? It is as though a Kingly Bridegroom, rich beyond compare, should espouse a penniless bride, so poor and so wretched that she is clad in rags. At the moment of marriage all the Bridegroom’s wealth and resources become the bride’s. And included in the dowry is a whole storehouse full of “fine linen, clean and white.” This at once is put at her disposal. She can buy that linen “without money and without price,” for potentially it is hers. She has only to ask for it to possess it. And for a time she is suitably arrayed in keeping with her now exalted position, in this “fine linen.” But after a while she becomes careless, and reverts to her old filthy rags, not of necessity, but from deliberate choice, and disgraces herself and shames her Bridegroom.

And the Bridegroom is Christ, and you and I are the wondrously privileged bride. The fine linen is Christ Himself, and His righteousness, and it is dispensed and ministered to us freely by the Holy Spirit. And that is just exactly the position of every child of God. At the new birth each humblest believer becomes an heir to all the virtues, the graces, the resources, and the righteousness of Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom. All this is at once put to his account, “imputed” to him for righteousness (Rom. 4. 22). It is indeed a wondrous inheritance for paupers, and we shall in any case enter into full possession of it in

Heaven. But we are exhorted by God not to wait for Heaven, but to possess it here and now.

And each time we do by a fresh act of faith, in some humble measure possess our possessions, and appropriate and array ourselves in this "fine linen...of the saints" (Rev. 18. 9) we do literally "put...on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13. 14). And again in our day and generation that scene from Zechariah 3 is enacted in our own lives, as God takes away the filthy garments of our own fleshly righteousness, and causes our iniquity to pass from us, and afresh clothes us with a "change of raiment" which is indeed Christ Himself.

What then is the practical gain to the believer who, "having no confidence in the flesh," and its works, does deliberately and continuously divest himself of his own "filthy rags?" What is the spiritual effect of thus consciously putting "on the Lord Jesus Christ," by an act of faith, and so, "walking in the Spirit?" One thing I believe is clear, he can still never develop a righteousness of His own, which will be able to abide the light and fire of God. He can never develop any merit of his own. That is to say, however long he may be clad in Christ's righteousness, it will never become his own character. It may and will develop Christian character, but anything of good in the believer, right to the end, will only be that which he is appropriating of Christ.

But the more habitually I "put on Christ," the more and more intolerant I shall become of the claims of the flesh, and the more disgusted with its rags.

And this bias against the flesh and its works will become stronger and stronger, while the instinct and desire to daily appropriate Christ for all daily needs will become more and more a fixed habit of life. And that is an enormous gain.

Then, too, every moment the believer is walking "in the Spirit," then, and then only, is he capable of producing "fruit of the Spirit." And this blessed "fruit" of love and joy and peace, and all the other clustered graces (and the service and power which inevitably results from them) is the only heavenly "gold of Ophir." This I am exhorted by God to "buy" now, for it is the only "gold" which shall be able to "abide the fire" and to remain our eternal treasure. So we simply cannot afford not to be "filled with the Spirit," for all time spent otherwise is but as "dross."

But surely the greatest incentive of all to wearing this heavenly "wardrobe" is that I am a King's son, and for His Name's sake I should be suitably dressed. And there is but one wedding "garment" which will both commend Him to the world and enable me to win that greatest prize, of being "well pleasing unto Him." For only as I habitually "put...on the Lord Jesus Christ," by faith, as my present dress, may the Father see Him in me, and so be "satisfied."

Now we may have known all these simple truths in theory, as so much "doctrine." But have we lived them out? We have all this in Christ, but have we got it experimentally in our own lives? For it is no use to hold it a doctrine. For doctrine is only a means

to an end, to a holy life. If it does not result in "life more abundantly" then it merely "killeth." For "heads" do not count much with God. "Hearts" full of love to Him count much more in Heaven than "heads" full of doctrine which is not brought to bear on the daily life. "To that man will I look," saith the Lord, not to the theologian or Bible student as such, but "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word." God keep us "poor" in spirit, each esteeming others better than himself! God keep us not only knowing, but trembling at His Word and will. For "to obey" is better indeed than sacrifice! Oh, may we not only hold the truth, but may the truth hold us and keep us in the sunshine and love of God!

CHAPTER IX

“NOT OFFENDED IN ME”

“NOT OFFENDED IN ME”

“What is your life?” (James 4. 14).

WHAT really is your chief objective in life?

(1) Are you mainly concerned for the mere body, to feed it, indulge it, care for it, and cling to it, till it is worn out, and must be left behind? And there is scant time to make provision for sin, and no time at all to lay up treasure for the future? For this lifelong concern for the mere body is the chief preoccupation of millions, to their everlasting loss.

(2) Or have you passed to the second stage, a godly concern for sins, never resting till they are safely under the Blood, and you are reborn a child of God.

(3) Then there is for you the third stage: the concern of sons to meet, to walk with, to love, and to really know the Father—the Father with whom countless aeons are to be spent. For this is the one grand, and worthy, and satisfying objective in life down here, “that I may know Him.”

And how much knowing He takes! That I may know Him! But how can I know Him? How can a child toddling at its father’s side read his thoughts, and understand his objectives, and discern his motives? It is quite impossible. And my Father is God!—the great God of Heaven! So I may settle to it that there must be many things He does for me, and to me, and with me, that I cannot at present understand, and

which it will be very hard for Him to teach me and explain. And if I am not to stumble, and blunder, and complain, I shall have to get to the heart of His "hard saying," "Blessed is He that is not offended in Me."

It is natural, of course, for the world, for Pharisees, for sinners to be offended in Him. But for me, His child, created, cleansed, redeemed, shall I, His child, be offended in Him, my Lord of Glory? Ah, yes, it is only too possible. And I shall have to take His tender warning to my heart. And if I would not stumble myself, and grieve my Lord, it will often be needful for me to deliberately "set my face" to trust Him in the dark, and so become one of those "blessed... that have not seen and yet have believed." For the proverb, "Seeing is believing," is a human saying. It is the philosophy of the natural heart. It must be largely unlearned by the child of God. For, in the realm of the Spirit, in the things of God, the saying must be exactly reversed if we are not to stumble and to doubt. For, with God, "believing is seeing." That is, in many cases it will be needful for me to believe first, to trust God in the dark, that a thing is true, is the best, in order that later by His grace He may let me see how good and acceptable and perfect is the will of God. Such lessons, continually learned in a "life of faith," teach me to really know God, and do literally work "for us an exceeding...weight of glory."

"Blessed is he that is not offended in Me." Remember, the setting of those unrealised words. John the



Top—AN OLD HEATHEN CHIEF, MALAITA.
Bottom—TWO SALT WATER BOYS, NONGASILA.

Baptist, great-hearted, zealous, wonderful John, was eating out his heart in prison, his mission interrupted, his witness silenced, his very life in jeopardy. And the One he had preached, announced, foretold, He who was predicted to “bind up the broken-hearted,” seemed to have never a thought for his breaking heart. He who was to “proclaim the opening of the prison to them that are bound,” never came near his prison, nor loosed the chains from off his feet. Could this be the One who was to fulfil all prophecy? And so John’s plaintive, pathetic message: “Art Thou He that should come?”

And the tender Shepherd, did He at once hasten to the relief of His own? Did he open “the iron gate?” Even if He would not liberate, did He not at least “appear” to John to comfort and explain, as in Acts 27. 23, He “stood by” His servant Paul? Ah, no. The test was far deeper, more searching, more precious than that.

Indeed, the more we ponder it, the stranger, the more unlike the Saviour, seems His treatment of John. As far as we know, He never went to comfort him in prison, or ever saw him again in the flesh. Stranger still, He did not even send an explanation of His apparent change of programme, that the Kingdom was postponed, and He, the King, was to be crucified. He merely gave John simple proofs of His Deity in the works He was doing, and then ended with this strange, difficult benediction: “Blessed is he that is not offended in Me!” and so left him to work out the problem in prison.

But that message has been a legacy, a tender warning, a peculiar benediction to the whole world of believers ever since. Many indeed in chains and in burnings, in perils of the heathen, in mockings and scourgings, in weariness and sickness, have had to face the same problem of a silent, unheeding Heaven, and have come forth "more than conquerors," by a triumphant faith, and have so entered in to the great inheritance of the "unoffended."

And we in our mission had been working at the same problem. Personally, one had been feeling the strain of the work, and of the crowded, incessant ship life, as never before. And one had come upon this arresting statement: "not offended in Me!" and had been seeking to teach its inner truth to our dear people in various schools, and had been seeking, too, to learn its deep lesson in a new and special sense in one's own heart and life. And as in God's school the teacher must ever himself be first the learner, God in His grace saw fit to add burden to burden, till the cup seemed overfull.

So, tired out, we reached our mission station of Wanoni Bay in Makira, in April 1924, with a big cargo and some cattle, and with a long line of needy schools to be visited. Miss Clarke, from England, was aboard too, specially appointed to help Mrs. M'Millan in the local teachers' school. The cattle had just been swum ashore, when Mr. M'Millan came on board looking very white, with the shocking, almost unbelievable news that his wife had died of blackwater fever only two weeks before!

At once one's thoughts flew back to the time, four months before, when we had had them both as our guests for three happy weeks on the "Evangel" on her last voyage round Makira, as we sailed from harbour to harbour, visiting village after village of Christians. It had been beautiful weather, and we had had the happiest Christian fellowship. And now she was gone! Gone before! And the very gladness of her Christian experience and testimony remained as the strongest impression.

And the apostle's loving assurance to his Corinthian converts: "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you," seems just the word to describe her life for God and the people as it was lived for ten years in Makira. Thank God, we can add another of the great apostle's assurances to the Church: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which...the Righteous Judge shall give me at that great day." There we can safely leave her, "with Christ," one more of "the saints who from their labours rest."

There are times when any words of comfort are pitifully inadequate, and the best relief of loving sympathy is in prayer. I shall never forget that hour in the little forecabin of the "Evangel," rolling at anchor in Wanoni Bay, while the bereaved husband told the details of the swift ebbing of life, and of the translation of the one who so brightly and so bravely held the fort, and poured out her life and strength for her people. For her, what could we do but rejoice, for she had gone so swiftly, and with such an abundant

entrance to the Lord, so long loved and served, and longed for. She had passed from all the toil and stress and conflict straight to peace and rest, and Christ!

“A singing land
Lies there above the clouds and the grey rain.
Sighing and tears have never found the way
That leads from earth to it, nor sin nor pain.”

Yes, for her, indeed, it is well.

And for the one left? The ship still rolled at anchor. The ladies in the after cabin were hushed and dazed. The crew sat around, silent and shocked. And the future and all its blankness had to be faced. Mr. M'Millan elected to remain at his post. But a second lady had to be got at once. So we sailed back 25 miles to Ugi that night, and so wearily back again the 100 miles to Onepusu next day for the only lady available there. And after one day to pack up again, set off with her for distant Malira.

Again reaching quiet Ugi for the night, the worker developed her first attack of malaria, after being 11 months in the islands.

It seemed most unfortunate, and we hurried on to Wanoni for better nursing conditions. Arriving at its dangerous unquiet anchorage, the fever was so severe that the patient could not be moved ashore, and had to be nursed on board for two days and nights in the little cramped cabin. At last this keen, bright, energetic missionary made entrance to her new sphere carried ashore on a stretcher! And for some days more had to be watched night and day. Still burdened with the recent shadow of death, as

trouble was added to trouble, we felt at our wits' end. Though the barometer was falling, the ship had to be left to take her chance, with the native crew, and we moved ashore to be near the patient.

So, camped on the veranda floor, while the symptoms seemed but getting worse, burdened in prayer, we learned something of the depths of being “not offended in Me.” For why should God have so troubled and pressed His children “out of measure, above strength,” when all the strength available was so urgently needed for pressing, waiting work. His work! Thank God, there was no thought of rebellion, or murmuring, but a continual cry rose in our hearts: “Why? Lord, why?” and “Lord, is it I?” “Lord, is it I?”

At length the clouds lifted, and we were able to continue the long packed voyage round Makira, calling back at Wanoni Bay three weeks later to make sure our friends were all right. But apart from the local tragic circumstances of the lesson we were set to learn, the principle of never being offended, or murmuring, or questioning God's will, God's acts, is supremely important. This is more than ever so in the mission field, with its many perils and uncertainties. Yet whose life at home is beyond the reach of God's arm?

And there are so many ways in which His acts may mystify us. We may be staggered by the loss of dear ones, of loved children. We may be perplexed that God does not do what we expect. (As with John the Baptist in regard to the Kingdom.) We may be troubled at the non-success of His Word and work

among the heathen, as in Moslem lands. Poverty may cut to the bone and embitter. Long lasting sickness and pain may tempt us to doubt His love and power. And remember He calls for far more than a mere resignation to His will. "Thou sweet beloved will of God!" has got to be the refrain of our hearts, and "Oh, how I love Thy law!"

Of course all this is quite impossible except to the clear, calm grasp of faith. True, at times, we shall have to cast ourselves in blind, believing trust upon His love, counting that, "He is faithful who hath promised," and knowing that ever "He abideth faithful."

It is God's surprising, wonderful way, that often, though the heart may burn within us, yet our eyes may be deliberately "holden" by the way. It is only that there may be the gladder, the richer, the more rapturous recognition of Him when His time has come. Always, He is there of course, yet suddenly the thrilling moment comes when:

"I hear His garments sweep, His seamless dress;
And close beside my work and weariness
Discern His gracious face."

CHAPTER X

“THE MARKS OF THE LORD JESUS”

“THE MARKS OF THE LORD JESUS”

“From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal. 6. 17).

IT has been said that when we reach Heaven God will look us over, not for medals or diplomas or for earthly distinctions, but for scars—scars of past conflict, waged for righteousness and for God. And the aged Paul, confronted with apostasy and disloyalty in the fickle Galatians, was inspired to refer them, not to the numberless churches begun, nor to the countless souls won during his strenuous missionary journeys. There was something far more convincing, far more unique in his apostleship. His greatest authentication to these erring converts was, not his labours as an apostle, but his wounds or “marks” as “a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” not his manifold and manifest “works,” but his literal likeness to his Master.

For as the Saviour went His shining way to Heaven and to the Father, He took with Him His new name of “Jesus,” which he had purchased with His Blood. And He took with Him, too, five “stigmata” or “marks,” the healed wounds of the nails and the spear, eternal evidence of the Passion and death he had passed through for mankind. And it was to these wounds of Christ that the apostle referred, as his mind went back to the stonings and the stripes which had so often punctuated his own service. And many wounds of the heart, subtle and still more poignant,

were in his mind, too, as he winced at the Galatians' fickle love, and thereby took his share in filling up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ."

And it is just such "marks," physical and spiritual, that the Master most longs should be reproduced one by one, in all His followers. They are to be, indeed, the hall marks by which His disciples are to be "most surely believed," and recognised, and known. And if any one thing is most needed in a missionary, for any service for God, it is just this literal likeness to the Saviour. "It is enough," and it is needful indeed, "for the disciple that he be as his Master." For always and everywhere, what we are means so much more than what we say; more to men, more to God. And if these "marks" of the Master be in us and abound they ensure that we "shall neither be barren nor unfruitful." Is, then, this insignia of Christ and of His Kingdom being woven into our lives, into our character? Could we say, would men say, that in increasing measure we bear in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus? Nothing is so wonderful, so convincing here; nothing will be so precious, so glorious there!

(1) The first, most essential "mark" we would examine is found in Galatians 8. 14, where the apostle breaks out into a pæan of exultation over what most of us very much fear—the Cross. We are willing enough to see Christ on the Cross for our sins, for our salvation. Are we further willing to see ourselves on the Cross ("I am crucified with Christ") for our present sanctification, that we may be changed here and now into His image? For the only way of getting

on to a higher level of life and joy and victory is by the “old man” dying, being crucified, and thus got out of the way. For because “in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing,” in some way it must be effected that “our old man is crucified with Him” (Rom. 6. 6). That is the position I must occupy in Christ, to perfectly please Him. And during this earthly life, this can only be brought about by a process of “reckoning” self dead (“likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin”), and then treating him as if he were dead. All this is none other than the “absolute surrender,” of yielding all our will to our Master, our Victor, till it is as if we had no will of our own, and the old man were actually dead. And as long as this position is maintained, and the will really yielded, Satan can get no advantage over us, for we are passed from the realm of the flesh in which he admittedly has power, over into the realm of the Spirit, where he has absolutely no power or jurisdiction.

But if “I am crucified with Christ,” this absolute surrender will have far-reaching implications. It will imply that the world and its goals and its gods must never again eclipse the Sun of Righteousness. They often do, even with Christian workers. We may find that we are really living for “our work,” for reputation, for place, for power, for man’s esteem, and that we have grown so big as to get in God’s way, until, for the highest service, we are “castaway.”

And then, even when first things are consciously kept first, the world will look for further credentials.

Thomas was their representative when he cried: "Except I shall see in His hands the prints of the nails...I will not believe." And he but voices modern unbelief. And unless the world sees in us, too, very definite evidences of the print of the nails, it, too, will not believe. For, "though I speak with the tongues of men and angels...it profiteth me nothing," if there are none of those marks of the Cross which were in Paul, and in Paul's crucified Redeemer. God grant us the insignia of the Cross, in our bodies, in our hearts, in our lives.

(2) Another characteristic "mark" is found in the 14th verse: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law (or way) of Christ." Here is a new focus of life. The natural man naturally is self-centred; he lives to get, to gain, for himself, for his own. But with the new birth there is imposed a new focus of life, and in place of being self-centred, the believer is called to be Christ-centred. And that involves being like Christ and living primarily for others. Of course this will make us "eccentric" to the world, "fools" to care, fools to love, fools to serve others; "fools" for Christ's sake in men's eyes, that we might be "wise" in the eyes of God.

For if anything is the supreme business of the missionary in preaching the Cross, it is just this burden-bearing. That largely sums up his service. Bearing the burden of the indifference of the heathen on the one hand, and the burden and "care" of many churches, and "many adversaries" on the other. Bearing the burdens of beloved fellow-missionaries in their

sorrows and their sicknesses; having a deep concern for the other members of the body of Christ, and for the spiritual children God has given us.

And that deep burden will beget in us another literal likeness to our Lord. It was over the lost sheep of the house of Israel, over Jerusalem, over Lazarus, that He wept and lamented, so deep was His concern for sin and its fruits. And in his turn, it was the wayward sheep that burdened the apostle's heart, as he warned "every one night and day with tears." And we missionaries must needs be in the succession, and in spite of all the joys of soul-winning, there will be many tears of the heart over carnal Christians, over seeming ingratitude, over backward, erring converts. It was the way the Master went, shall not the servant tread it still. But it all will develop a very precious likeness to Him.

And yet, in spite of all, a missionary, who is a "sent one," sent to be the servant of all, is engaged on a most blessed business. For supremely true it is that "he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Here is the secret of perennial springs of blessing in the soul. There is a precious saying of our Lord's, which might have been lost to the Church had it not been wrung out of the apostle's heart in the anguish of his last farewell to the Ephesians. He had heard it somewhere, and had proved it true, and by the Spirit he passed it on to us. "Remember," he said, "the words of the Lord Jesus...It is more blessed to give than to receive." This is but the complement of Christ's other law: "Give and it shall be given unto

you.” And after years of missionary service, seeking to freely give, to pour out life at Christ’s feet, and for His flock, we must still remain very literal debtors to all we have sought to serve, receiving a hundred-fold more from them and their Lord, than we have ever been able to give.

(3) Then there is another “mark” peculiar to the Master, and peculiar, too, in its blessed results to us, and which somehow is to be developed in the disciple. For “the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head.” Unique coronation! Yet how fitting! For it needed the Son of God to wear such a crown of thorns, because He, and He only, could transform thorns into a crown. And just that unique miracle is possible to, and is often expected by God, from the humblest believer in daily life. For this is, indeed, “the victory that overcometh the world,” the victory of the spirit over the flesh, of the unseen over the seen, of the radiant future over the painful present. The victory, that is, of “our faith,” as it draws upon the resources of God, and changes thorns into a crown, and finds in an intolerable trial, a chariot of fire.

And had Paul this “mark” also? Not indeed when he “kicked” against the pricks. For that is no way to transform thorns into a crown, though it is the way of many children of God, with trials and difficulties. But, a little later, very literally, very exactly, Paul developed this mark also of his Master. With him, indeed, it did not at first take the outward form of a crown. But there was given unto him “a thorn in the

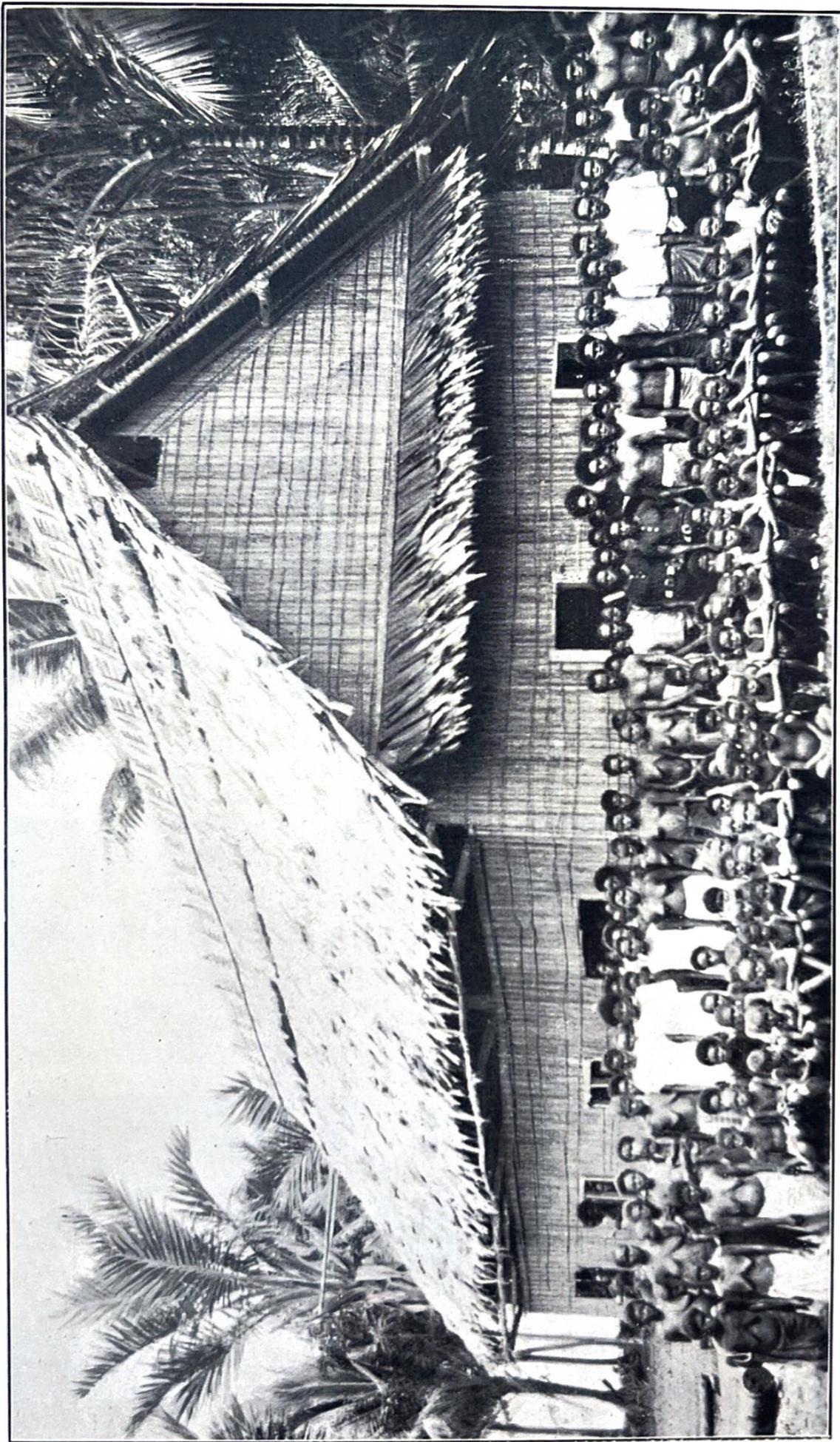
flesh," which was just as painful, just as inescapable, but which became just as wonderful, just as convincing, and about which he spoke with deep thankfulness. And that same blessed "mark" of the thorns is being reproduced, that same miracle is being repeated in many humble, yet greatly honoured members of the body of Christ to-day. Let us not try to take off the radiant crown of thorns, and of the Lord's appointment, if for a time we wear it. Indeed, it is working for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And there is nothing so convincing to the world, so glorifying to the Saviour, and so profitable to the saint, as when, by His grace the very thorns have evidently become "our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing."

But, how often we would choose or change our "thorn in the flesh." How it seems the very one kind least bearable. But it is not always those people with whom we have the greatest fellowship who give us the most help, or do us the most good. It may be those who are veritable thorns in the flesh, who are needed to cast us upon God for grace to live with them. Indeed, they may be the very, the only anvils on which our crowns must be hammered out. And when, the lesson learned, the thorn has been removed, the scar remains only a memory now, but a precious reminder of past victories won, and a sure promise of the Master's present approval and confidence, and of His future: "Well done...faithful servant."

(4) "I bear in my body the marks." And now, the long letter to the Galatian Church is almost ended.

And the aged, scarred warrior of the Cross bends lovingly over the rustling papyrus, writing "with how large a letter" his farewell to his still dear Galatians. And as he thinks and writes of the marks of his Lord, that Sacred Form rises before him as He had seemed to those others, too, who "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." And on Paul's worshipping mind there at once flashed one more mark of his Master, a mark so unusual in a conqueror, so unique, so compelling, and he wrote: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." Yes, it was just His grace, His loving-kindness suffusing them, they needed to supplement all other marks and virtues and graces. This they must have, if they were truly to be His living epistles.

It is fitting and prophetic that the Epistle begins so naturally, so lovingly, with just this same prayer. Paul has hardly taken up his pen in the Spirit before there wells up into his heart a loving benediction. His "heart's desire" at once is that the fragrance, the peace, the grace of his Master might develop and suffuse them. "Grace be to you and peace," he writes, "from God" (chap. 1. 3). Then, when the Epistle has run its course through the varying experiences, and dangers, and faults, and fruits of the Christian life, it closes at the last, so naturally, so truly again in peace (chap. 6. 6) and grace. And inside these two graces the whole Christian life is embraced and is to be lived. And though, for the happy warrior, there will be storms and battles, trials and temptations, yet the keynote of life will be found



New Church built by native converts at Abu, at North of the Langalanga Lagoon. There are 1200 very bright Christians in the Lagoon. Six inland villages come down to Abu for the baptisms and special meetings. Abu is next to Auki, The Government station. Teacher is Shadrach Marama. Four hundred converts centre round this village of Abu.

to be just this: "Grace and peace," "Peace and grace." And between the dark valleys there will be many "green pastures and still waters" the world has never found, and the "rod and staff" will comfort on the road, and "goodness and mercy" will envelop the "life...hid in Christ."

And at the end, what prize? No great earthly reward is promised, though often given. Take the Book of Acts of the Apostles. It begins with great expectations, with closed doors, but an open Heaven, and the mighty rushing wind and the power of Pentecost. Yes, all things in Heaven and on earth must have seemed possible to the early Church. Yet the Book ends, humanly speaking, in disappointment. No proud palace welcomed the apostles, no earthly kingdom became theirs. To Paul, the greatest amongst them, the closing chapters of the Book bring merely a "hired house," a limited liberty, an attendant soldier. His end was in seeming disaster, and a chained body. But in that body there was an unchained spirit, which found exultant outlet from time to time in the so-called "prison Epistles," which are really the liberty Epistles, that ring with the victor's shout. No, Paul was more than conqueror, and he only exchanged that prison for a very "abundant entrance into glory." I think of another happy warrior, Barnabas A'asu, of South Malaita, who died three years ago, after many long, faithful years in the firing line. He, too, died in a "hired" leaf hut you would not have deigned to sleep in. He left little behind, for his treasure was already in Heaven. There were a few worn-out loin

cloths, an empty box, his treasured Bible, and his poor old worn-out body, but worn-out for God! To-day he is with Christ and his many converts, and is to wear crowns with many jewels. Life? What is your life? You can pay too much for money, for lands, for position. They may cost too much. For too often "our possessions become our possessors." They do not belong to us; we really belong to them. Still, as of old, man by himself is priced. For thirty pieces Judas sold himself, not Christ. God give us possessions which can be taken up into Heaven, scars it may be, and souls, and spiritual investments, and, above all, a burning devotion to Himself!

CHAPTER XI
"GOD'S HUSBANDRY"

“GOD’S HUSBANDRY”

“Some..branches..broken off and thou...a wild olive tree.. grafted in” (Rom. 11. 17).

IN this single verse we have another of those striking panoramas of the travail of God, for mankind, down all the centuries. And here, under a fresh aspect, important laws and warnings are pronounced, to which we do well to take earnest heed.

In this striking spiritual “landscape” there are found:

(1) First, “Some...branches...broken off.” These branches (called in verse 21, “the natural branches”) plainly represent God’s “peculiar people,” the Jewish nation, which for centuries were the only branches of the tree, and who had now been cast off in a state of apostasy.

(2) And these once favoured branches are broken off from what in verse 24 is called the “good olive tree,” which plainly represents God Himself, as the Author of all life and blessing.

(3) Then there is introduced “a wild olive tree.” This certainly is not one of those “trees of righteousness...the planting of the Lord.” It stands clearly for man (here primarily Gentile man), unregenerate, unrighteous, “under sin.” For it has already been proved of “both Jew and Gentiles,” by the writer to the Romans, in the third chapter, that “there is none

righteous, no, not one," "all have sinned." And therefore the declared destiny and doom of all fruits off this "wild olive tree" is "the wicked shall be turned into Hell."

(4) Lastly, there is a spiritual process, here described as being "grafted in," by which it is possible for any branch of the wild olive tree to be joined to, and made one with, the good olive tree, and thereby "abiding" in the tree, to partake of its "root and fatness."

Combining these four factors, here, then, we have plainly set forth God's great process of "breaking off" the Jewish "natural branches" on account of their "unbelief," and the replacing of them by fresh "branches" of humanity, from the Gentile wild olive tree, by the Divine process of their being "grafted in."

A WARNING. But these verses are specially written to convey a Divine, terrible warning: "Be not high-minded, but fear (v. 20)." And if we only read this passage merely as a matter of doctrine (as is usually done) we shall entirely miss the practical lesson God is urgent to teach: "Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." And it is to this warning we would specially take heed in the mission field. But that we may gather the full importance and menace of this Divine warning, we need to take not only the dispensational, but the widest human aspect of this age-long process of breaking off and grafting in.

Now the underlying law of this great spiritual allegory is that branches of "the olive tree that is

wild by nature” can produce only one kind of fruit, “the soul that sinneth.” And growing on the wild olive tree, in a soil and world of sin, the world’s laws of gravity must still operate downward, “down unto destruction,” “into Hell.” On the other hand, as each individual branch, either of the Jewish “natural branches,” or “cut out of” the Gentile wild olive tree, was “grafted in” to the good olive tree of God, each branch (given saving faith) was able to bear as fruit, souls in which “the law of life...hath set me free from the law of sin and death.” And so the earthly laws of gravity were abolished and counteracted, and such souls winged their way upward to God.

But in reviewing this Divine process, what is so tremendously impressive and significant is not merely the epoch-making change over from Jew to Gentile, of God’s blessing and favour. It is rather that right down the ages God has never been, and never can be, satisfied with branches that are not bearing “much fruit.” When there was merely “fruit” on a branch, the Divine process has always been “He purgeth it” with chastening and warnings and messages, “rising early and sending” His prophets, that fruitfulness might be increased. And when this failed, and the branch became more and more diseased and decayed, and withered through unbelief, and so unable “to bear fruit upward,” the time at last came when “there was no remedy.” And then there was no alternative but that the nation or the generation concerned should be “broken off” from the good olive tree, and so “cast forth as a branch...and burned.”

And we must conceive that this process was in active operation right from Adam to Abraham, though God was then dealing with individuals. So the first branches of this tree bore their spiritual fruit in the souls of "the elders" who "obtained a good report," and were gathered home to God. Then, humanity having utterly failed under the test, God began anew, and grew what are termed the "natural branches" in Abraham and his posterity, the Jewish nation. And now to mankind the root and fatness of the tree of God was available only through the Jews.

So, through various experiences and centuries, the great Jewish national branches flourished and grew, and bore their fluctuating harvest of souls, abundant under Moses and Joshua and David, blighted and diminished in the times of the Judges and later kings. But the decay of the branches became ever greater, the fruits more scanty, as the apostasy deepened, and God's warnings intensified. At last, indeed, "there was no remedy" and the blow fell, and the breaking off began, first at the captivity of Israel, and later of Judah. In each case God had safely gathered home the individual fruits of the branches, "the souls of just men." And then the withered, apostate branch and generation was broken off. Always there was "a remnant," true spiritual fruit of the great tree, such as "these feeble Jews." Yet, when the Messiah appeared, how few were those who "waited for the consolation of Israel." Simeon and Elizabeth, Zacharias and Mary are a few of their now illustrious

names which are preserved for us. But the great trunk of the good olive tree was bare indeed of branches and fruit, and God could not be satisfied nor rest content.

So, when the Saviour had come and lived and died and gone again, swiftly a great process of grafting began, now of branches of the wild olive tree, the Gentile nations. How their names crowd the pages of the Acts and the Epistles, how great was their growth, how abundant was the fruit! And how permanent and assured secured their place in the tree of God. And the proud Jew was now displaced and set aside, the Jew who for centuries had looked down in scornful, spiritual aloofness on all other nations. Was it strange then, that these Romans and other Gentiles now promoted to God’s favour tended to “boast...against the branches” broken off? How quickly came God’s warning: “Take heed lest He also spare not thee!”

And now follows the spiritual record of the Church since those Apostolic days, which should be a continual warning in our day and generation. How quickly the proud Gentile branches decayed and withered, and were displaced and then replaced! Where are the once flourishing Churches of Paul’s missionary triumphs? Where are the seven Churches of John’s time, admonished in the Revelation? They have long since passed and gone. The grass grows and the sheep browse over the ruins of many of the Churches Paul founded. Or worse, the false worship of Islam, or Rome, has long supervened. But in each case the same cycle of events took place. First the grafting in of some new tribe or nation, the rapid spread of the Gospel,

and the abundant growth and fruitage of the branch. Then came lukewarmness and worldliness and a boasting spirit of self-sufficiency. And with them came the inevitable withering decay of faith and truth, to be followed by the final breaking off of that people by God. So it has ever been, and so it ever will be, if God's warnings go unheeded. And this breaking off, at least for the generation concerned, is irremediable. The one great exception is the Jewish nation, which (v. 24) is once again to take its chief place in the tree and purposes of God.

And now to come nearer home to our own times and dangers. To-day the withering branches of the homelands, with their diminishing fruit, must yield pride of place for fruitfulness to many newer branches grafted in by God from the heathen world of Africa and India and China. And God is still ever seeking fresh grafts for His tree from among the dark places of the earth. But home or foreign, no nation, no church, no revival, no movement of the Spirit of God is immune to the danger which has so constantly overwhelmed branch after branch of the Church of God, however fruitful they may once have been. And this boasting over other branches of the tree of God who have, perhaps, less light than we, this spiritual pride, is so easy, so natural to the human heart; it is so inexcusable in the eyes of God; it is so disastrous. Are we guilty of it? Can we afford it? Are we alone to be exempt from its dreadful consequences? Hear again God's clear answer, heed again His dread warning: "Be not highminded, but fear."

And then there are peculiar dangers in this grafting in and joining of a heathen people to the love of God, when they have been, till lately, ancestor and devil worshippers, as ours have been. They, like all other heathen, have been born and cradled in fear. The only powers they know are malignant. The island belief is that each man when he dies has two akalos, or spirits. One is benevolent and kind, and at once betakes himself to the outlying islands of Ainagwao or Malapa, where he stays and has no further dealings with his descendants. The other akalo is wholly malignant, and stays in the local district to inflict trouble and sickness on his descendants, and so must be continually appeased and propitiated with sacrifices. The very terrors of the dark and the unknown and the imagined make them the more fearful, and they live constantly in an atmosphere of dread. Then comes the day when the peace and joy and liberty of the Gospel bursts on a native’s darkened mind, and he learns to know a God of love, a Father who cares, and who forgives, and who is not always watching to strike him down with sickness or trouble, but who longs to bless and prosper him.

So, to a native, God seems the very antithesis of their old akalos. They hated them, God loves them. The akalos always hurt and troubled them, God helps and blesses them. And this tremendous contrast tends to mislead them. They get to think of a God only of love. They are, in fact, just like the modern world to-day, which wants a God of love, “too kind to punish.” And this all tends to make the native

Christian lax and careless of sin, when the first wonder of the change to God has passed. They think they can take liberties with God they would not have attempted with the akalos. We have had one or two backsliders, who glibly talk of coming back to God when they like, and not till then. "No matter we go on in sin. God, He kind along us; He love us and forgive us." And unless corrected by the Word of God, this may easily become the unspoken feeling in the hearts of many island Christians (and of many white Christians, too).

For akalos are one-sided, always malignant and hurtful. And many natives unconsciously develop in their minds a one-sided God, always loving and forgiving. But God has two sides, as we are emphatically reminded and exhorted in the 22nd verse: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God!" God could not be one-sided and ignore sin. He must love the sinner, for that is His nature, but just as inevitably He must hate the sin, and must deal with it. "Goodness and severity." Here we have God's two sides, the two contrasted attitudes He has to adopt towards every believer. If we are "willing and obedient," we need know nothing but the "goodness." Indeed, "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." But if we presume, and grow careless and heedless of sin and of God, we shall have to know the "severity of God." Thank God, the Word of God, constantly applied by the Spirit, brings the right balance of truth, and our people as a whole are being kept in the fear of God, as well as in the love of God.

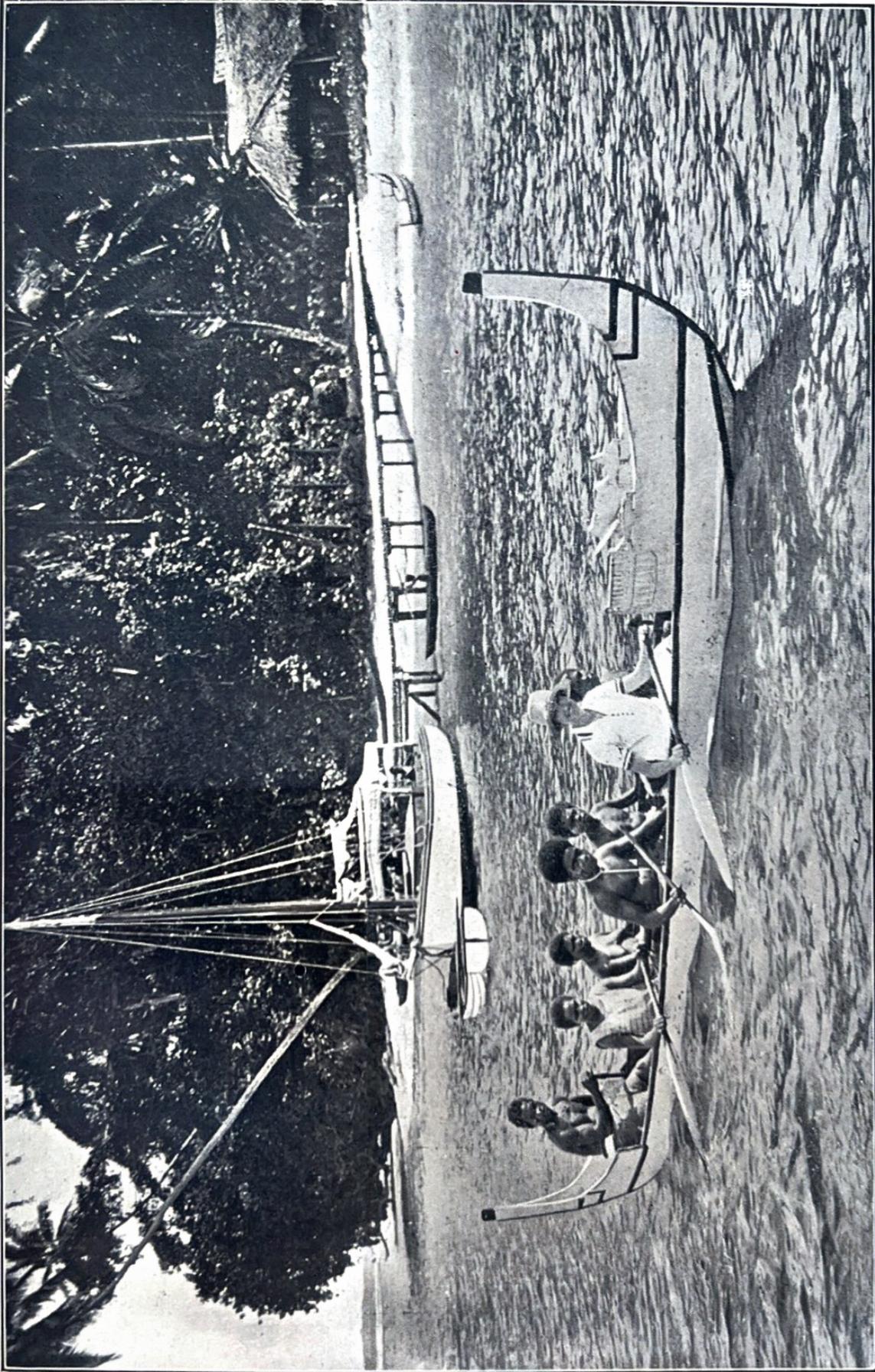
Yes, thank God, the branch of the Solomons so lately grafted in by God still grows and spreads and fructifies. And we are continually rejoicing in fresh buds on the branch, fresh little clusters of fruit in some new little clearing, in the forests, where some young Christian has been used of God to gather around him a little, growing band of once dark hearts to love and “to worship the Living and True God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven.” Yes, “much fruit” is still our grateful testimony to His grace. We want no new methods, no modern plan of campaign, only men better taught in the life-giving Word. It is a joy to watch how, as each Christian village is supplied with better instructed pastors from the Onepusu Training School, the tide of blessing rises, as they minister to their people. For it is the root and fatness of the trees that begins to rise and flow through the branch, bringing life and joy and love.

And we confidently trust that there need be no loss of the first love, no looking back, but that “through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,” this recent branch of God’s tree shall be kept green and vigorous, and ever more fruitful. That as the Saviour’s Coming draweth nigh, our people may never “know when drought cometh,” but may go on from grace to grace, and from strength to strength.

“O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

CHAPTER XII

“THE MEMORY...OF GREAT GOODNESS”



MISS JOAN DECK MISSION-VISITING FROM NONGASILU.

To face page 128.

“THE MEMORY...OF GREAT GOODNESS”

“They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness” (Psa. 145. 7).

As one seeks to testify to God’s goodness, one looks back over nineteen years packed full of blessed service for the Master in the Solomon Islands. They have been years often of real conflict, and some “hardness,” at times “pressed out of measure, above strength.” Yet the refrain that naturally and gladly rises to one’s mind is still: “They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness.”

For though every true missionary needs very literally to become “partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel,” yet our present and joyful “consolation also (so) aboundeth by Christ” that even now “an eternal weight of glory” far outbalances any soon forgotten “hardness.” And I think it is a spiritual law, that largely, the consolations will be proportionate and complementary to the afflictions, and that only, as some of the “afflictions of Christ” are really manifested and worked out in our lives, will the consolations in turn really abound in God’s most wonderful measure.

How many, many times in past years, attack and counter attack, and then the victory of God, have followed each other in succession, in these wild islands! And how, meanwhile, God has been patiently refining and purifying and developing the members of His body of missionaries and native teachers in the process. And He is still the same God of deliverances, still able and urgent to save and to keep, even in these days of increasing world apostasy!

But it is very difficult to give a fair estimate of the present state of the work in the Solomons, with its more than 200 entirely Christian villages, its hundreds of keen devoted unpaid native teachers, and its 7000 converts. It is hard to balance the profit and loss, the joys and the sorrows, the victories and defeats, and to tell equally of both, that we may encourage and call forth the prayer upon which so much of the success depends. Of one thing we may be sure, true spiritual work and progress are never going to become easy, though given simple spiritual methods of working, success is sure. The forces of darkness will never let up, and yet, always, "thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory."

For we may safely be habitual optimists where God is concerned, and any other attitude is dishonouring to Him. For, depending on Him, being led forth by Him, we shall not be confounded. And continually remembering and counting our many blessings, is certainly a most practical and helpful process.

We are still being granted by God a most gracious spiritual harvest. Last year (1926) 345 well tested converts were immersed, and hundreds of fresh converts are still being given us every year; and these are coming down in the happiest, most natural way, drifting down in twos and threes to the many villages. This is so much safer than a mass movement. And it is a wonderfully infectious and blessed business helping such inquirers into the life and light of God. It always seems to bring a fresh pulse of blessing to the little community that is doing so. And we largely

depend on this to keep the villages keen and bright spiritually. Do you often have such a stimulus and privilege in your life and service?

The years of intense labour at the Onepusu Bible School are now bearing abundant fruit, and in most of the established villages there are reasonably good teachers, able and keen to give spiritual teaching up to a growing standard. And the result seems always to be an increasing appetite for the things of God. "Letting the Bible loose" has the happiest results.

Thank God, there is little doubt that the great majority of the people living in most of the Christian villages are truly converted to God. But a missionary soon finds that the miracle of the new birth is not the only problem. There follows the necessity of sustaining and feeding and nourishing the new life with spiritual food. For, alas! it is true that in any large body of believers, from one cause or another, and mostly from want of spiritual nourishment, "many are weak and sickly...and not a few sleep." And this becomes a steadily growing problem in a mission field after the pioneer years, as the work grows older and the converts multiply. And it can only (yet thank God, it can) be solved by quiet persistent prayer, and a more adequate ministry of the Word of God.

Our hearts are being continually gladdened in hearing of the keener men going off on definite preaching tours among the bush heathen, and of fresh little Christian villages begun as the result of such preaching (in addition to the steady growth of the existing villages). But the Christians must still be the chief

care of many of the missionaries. And much of their energies and prayers and anxieties are of necessity expended on those already children of God, in order that they may evangelise their own people. For, of course, did we fail in the pastoral care of those already Christians (as alas, we often do) the flow of converts soon dries up. For the heathen are mainly attracted and convinced by the well-being and happiness of the Christians. In effect, they, like Thomas, cry (and rightly so): "Except we see the print of the nails, 'the marks' of the Master, we cannot believe."

And I think there is no doubt the spiritual difficulties greatly increase as a mission grows; and while the newer schools on the growing edge are usually keen and zealous, it is more difficult to maintain the same keenness in the older schools. And it must be remembered that the native teachers have continually many difficulties and problems.

For instance, there is a large section in any Christian village of old men and women who cannot learn to read much. They can and do learn to know God in varying degrees. But after a few years struggling with the first few pages of the Scripture text book, many gradually abandon the effort of learning to read, or of attending the reading classes, which call for a very great deal of patience on the part of the teachers, with pupils of all ages at all stages.

Then there is the problem of the mothers with small (and big) babies, who find it very hard to remain in a meeting when they do come. Few of them learn to discipline their children, who become veritable

tyrants, and refuse to be quiet after the first hymn! Often and often in a meeting I have wondered which is the best plan, whether to herd in all the mothers with babies, and so have a meeting so disturbed that it is almost impossible to get the people's attention, or to send out the disturbers, and so shut out the mothers, too. No island woman being able to look after more than one child at a time, it is impossible to set one or two to mind the whole brood of babies! And there are plenty of babies in most villages.

Yet, thank God, on the other hand there is a growing section of the younger men and boys keen and bright and earnest who have learned of God, and are keen to learn more of Him, and to go further intellectually in the Bible. They are wanting and needing “strong meat,” and they have a right to these deeper things of God, and must be given their chance or they will lose interest. It is really wonderful how much they do learn of the things of God, and of His Word, with their present limited knowledge and vocabulary. And this deeper teaching can best be given at the Onepusu Bible School, where we have come to the stage where advanced Bible lessons must continually be prepared and given to these seniors.

In reviewing the large and growing work in the Islands, there are many, many blessings, great blessings, yet to balance them there are always greater needs. The two will always go together. And we are doing our best to increase the needs and anxieties, just in so far as God is giving us more converts to care for and feed.

But what of the future, as numbers continue to multiply, and the difficulties therefore to increase? Thank God we have His sure Word of promise, "Our God is able to deliver,...and He will deliver us." But it will only be at a price, a price we shall have to pay as a mission. Adequate provision has been made by an Almighty Saviour, speaking through "a more sure word of prophecy," ministered by the Holy Spirit. But God has ordained that there is to be a further factor needful in His work, a human factor. "For it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching" (by men) "to save them that believe." Indeed, "how shall they hear without a preacher?" So we have our part to do, and it can only be done at much cost to the flesh.

There is a verse which has been much on my mind in days of physical weakness: "Bread corn is bruised" (Isa. 28. 28). That verse gives part of the solution of the feeding of the body of Christ in these islands. It composes part of the price of deliverance, the price to God, the price to us. For bread can only be made by corn being bruised or crushed; there is no other way. And it is spiritual bread our people need, and must have, if they are to "prosper and be in health."

Now among His many descriptive titles our Lord gladly proclaimed Himself as "the Bread of Life." It is the complement of His Name of Jesus, by which He saves His people from their sins. For now as the Bread of Life He would feed and sustain those He has already made alive from the dead. But to become food, as we are told, "bread corn is bruised." So if

He is to be the Bread of Life from Heaven, for men, He, too, must be bruised. So it is fitting and prophetic that in the dawn of the race just such a bruising is foretold for Him (Gen. 3. 15). It was indeed a double bruising which must take place in the great age long spiritual conflict, the bruising or crushing of Satan by the Saviour, and the bruising of the Saviour by the Cross.

And as His people must be identified with Him in His death, all down the centuries this double process has continued. Satan has again and again been "bruised under (their) feet" (Rom. 16. 20) by the faith of God's believing children. Yet how often those same children have in turn been "bruised" in the very process of triumph. How often even "they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword," "not accepting deliverance" that God's people might be delivered and fed.

And to-day it is no different. The disciple still must needs be as his Lord. He was literally "bruised for our iniquities." And in a very true and real and precious sense we, too, shall have to be bruised by our people's iniquities, and in order that we may fitly minister to them. Such was Ignatius' thought when he cried ardently: "I am God's corn, and I am willing to be ground that there may be bread enough for God's people." So, although Christ Himself is the only Bread of Life, which is ministered by the Holy Ghost, we are yet called continually in our turn to be bread corn, "bruised" for the many spiritual children God has given us. Yes, we out here in the

mission field, and you, too, dear partners in the homelands, if we would be invested with the highest honours, would taste His supremest service, we will have to take our share in this strange, wonderful process.

For if we are not willing, in our blindness, thus to present our bodies "a living sacrifice," we may pray for ever for the fire of God, the outpouring of His Spirit, to descend upon us. But no fire will fall, for if it did fall there would be no burnt offering for it to consume. The price of service, the price of power, the price of triumph, is a yielded "contrite heart." With such, and only with such, God can work His wonders, and feed His people, and magnify His Name. "The Master is come, and calleth for thee!"

And how many, many forms this sacrificial "bruising" may take! Yet how each varied experience is ordained, and scrutinised, and valued by the Master. It may be that in the loneliness of some distant mission station, far away from loved ones, the Lord of Love watches over the bruising of His child. And He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He watches anxiously the burning fevers, and the wan cheeks, the worn out bodies, even the sudden home call to glory of our loved ones. He feels with us the ingratitude of carnal Christians. He sorrows with us over loved children falling into sin or the wiles of the Devil. He knows the heart-break of disappointed hopes and scanty harvests, and measures the long years of burden-bearing. Yet just as much He rejoices with joy unspeakable the many, many trophies of

grace, and over the many children who "continue" through equally long years to "walk in the truth."

And how graciously He shares in the sufferings of His servants. Remember how He started from His seat in Heaven ("I see Jesus standing," Acts 7. 56) at the cry of His injured servant Stephen being "bruised" for His sake; how He felt the persecutions of His infant Church by Saul of Tarsus, as if again His own body were being buffeted (Acts 9. 4). Remember, too, how He walked with His own in the furnace, when "the form of the fourth (was) like the Son of God" (Dan. 3. 17). Yes, indeed, "He knows, He loves, He cares, nothing this truth can dim." Yet He does ask still that we be "bread corn" willing to be "bruised" that He may feed His people through us, for that is His appointed way, at home and abroad. Yet through it all how tender He is. "No Hallelujah shout He bends to hear from a torn heart; just, 'though He slay me' I will wholly trust, and not in part."

And praise God, through it all, too, God's promises may be like stars in Heaven, shining brightest in a dark sky. Through it all, as from Paul's prison, He is able to give "songs in the night" (Job 31. 10) and the victory of faith that overcometh the world. And "nevertheless afterwards," sure as Jehovah's throne, there shall come, even now, the peaceable fruit of righteousness, and looking back on the years of conflict and service and victory, there will yet be "the memory of (very) great goodness."

CHAPTER XIII

“STIR INTO FLAME”

“STIR INTO FLAME”

“Stir up the gift of God which is in thee” (2 Tim. 1. 6).

“STIR up the gift of God which is in thee.” Here the translators have missed the real meaning of the word “stir up.” The Greek word (which is used here only in the New Testament) means to rekindle, to stir into flame.

What, then, does the anxious apostle mean when in this, his second letter, he writes again to Timothy, his “dearly beloved son,” to “stir into flame the gift of God which is in thee?”

“The gift of God?” How many precious gifts come from His hand of love! How He “daily loadeth us with benefits,” life and health, food and clothes, a clean heart, a pardoned past, an assured future. These all come from Him. But “stir into flame” takes one back in thought to the upper room, the waiting, trembling disciples, the shut doors, the opened Heavens, and the “mighty rushing wind.” Then as a wondrous climax, “there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” So the “unspeakable gift” of the Holy Ghost is clearly the gift here referred to, which young Timothy is to “stir into flame.”

But having been endued with the Holy Ghost, is that not enough? Is He not enough for all the future? Is continued blessing and fruitfulness not thereby

assured? Why should stirring into flame be necessary? Ah! that is the secret of the human heart.

In the Solomons we have what we call the "island blanket." Often one has been glad of it at night. You will find it by every bedside, in every house. On the ground at each sleeper's side are four small logs, their ends together like an X, smouldering as a slow fire at the centre of the X, just hot enough to keep the sleeper warm, yet set to burn for a good long time. Almost devoid of clothes as they are in the islands, every sleeper has his "blanket" burning quietly at his side. After a time he wakes in the dark, cold and shivering, and instinctively sits up, pushes the burnt ends together, and blows the dying embers into a blaze. Then, warmed and content, he lies down for another sleep. On the mountains he may have to "stir into flame" his primitive island blanket half a dozen times before daylight comes.

But why? Why does he continually trouble to wake and stir the fire by his side? Because he has learned the law of the body. Every old bushman has learned it! And the law of the body is that of itself, the body tends to become cold. No sickness is needed; the cooling off is automatic and inevitable at night. And does the native become resigned to this law. Is he content to lie and shiver the long night through? Of course not! Without a second thought he makes it his business to "stir up" the embers into flame that he become warm again.

And the soul? Does it, too, tend to become chilled and cold? Ah, yes! And even more quickly, more

surely than the body. The cooling off of the soul is automatic and quite inevitable, unless it is continually counteracted.

Now there are two laws of the soul which every saint should know and realise:

(1) Unlike the “island blanket” of smouldering sticks, the spiritual fire can never entirely die out. There is a prophetic ordinance in Leviticus 6. 13: “The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar. It shall never go out.” Having its primary application to the Saviour, this is yet a picture, a prophecy, a promise to every true believer. For, thank God, once the Spirit has entered in “to abide with you for ever,” He never leaves, never abandons a soul. But, alas! the fire of the Holy Ghost may become so feeble, so diminished in the heart, that it is not seen or felt by the world around, and is little felt even by the believer himself. Still, thank God, “the fire . . . shall never go out!”

(2) But this, too, is only too true: Every heart, ever and always tends to become cold of itself. Even without known sin, this cooling off is automatic. This fatal tendency cannot be eradicated. It will, it must, persist to our dying day. However honoured, and sanctified, and hoar-headed the saint may become, the cooling tendency is always there. It may be counteracted for long periods, but it never disappears. There must be continuous, conscious seeking after God, or there is occurring unconscious inevitable drifting from God.

And it was because the aged Paul knew the acute-

ness of this danger that he again, the second time, "put in remembrance" the younger Timothy to ever guard against coldness by ever stirring up the precious gift.

How, then, am I to stir into flame this "gift?" How am I to continue "filled with the Holy Ghost?" There need be no mystery about it. There are certain simple conditions which must be fulfilled, and then a burning heart, an abundant life, and a flaming testimony are inevitable. Any old bushman could tell us the laws of fire for the body, and they are the same for the soul.

(1) If in the night a great stone rolled into the middle of the four burnt sticks, it would be useless to spend time trying to make a fire round the stone. The ends of the sticks might burn feebly, but there could be no united blaze. And such a stone is sin, sin known but unconfessed; sin tolerated in the heart. And stones in the fire and sins in the heart are both incompatible with a fire. So if, in the early morning, I want to rekindle my heart into a blaze, all these stones of stumbling and sins on the conscience must be confessed and removed. A "clean heart" is the first essential to the fire of the Holy Ghost. Be very sure of that, dear friends.

(2) Then there must be fuel for the fire. The stones removed, the sticks must be brought together to make fuel for the flame. And the fresh fuel of the Holy Ghost is the quickening, life-giving Word of God. It is what the Spirit feeds upon. And business and novels and newspapers make poor fuel for the

heart; they make only ashes of vanity. They are all that too many believers are feeding into their souls. They will never “rekindle the gift” of God thereby. Thank God, the only Book circulated in the islands is the Word of God, and all the efforts of the whole mission are directed to providing the teachers and the converts with a good and continuous supply of this “fuel of the Holy Ghost.”

(3) But when a bushman builds his sticks together, he does more. He fans the embers into a blaze by blowing on them. How often I have seen it done in the night, lying on the floor of some native house! The low, dark hut, the sleeping men around, the curling smoke, the flickers of flame lighting up the face of the fire-maker, as he bends over and blows the embers into a blaze! How illuminating! How true to life, to spiritual life! For as we bend over the precious Word of God, and fan it with simple believing prayer, how quickly fresh beauties and truths and messages leap to life on its sacred pages, warming the heart and enlightening the eyes!

But it is important to realise that the flame will burn low of itself, merely because the fuel is consumed. How often one has found this after a month’s hard visiting on the “Evangel.” For, being captain of a 75 feet vessel, cooped up with about 30 natives, as day after day is crowded out with pressing duties, interviewing teachers, dispensing medicines, writing letters, and having at least three devotional meetings a day, as well as travelling daily from port to port, by night and by day, the spiritual drain is very great. And one gets back

to Onepusu quite tired out, "burnt out" physically and spiritually. And there is only one thing to do, and it is the happiest doing, to "come apart awhile," and to take a few days in quiet reading and praying over the Word, before the next trip. Thank God, He "has not given us the spirit of fear" (v. 7) as to where the blessing for long lines of waiting schools is to come from in the future. For there is an inexhaustible supply of the fuel of the Holy Ghost at our disposal in the Word of God, to kindle all hearts and lives.

But it takes time and patience to coax a fire into flame; a few desultory puffs will not do it. And equally it takes time to be holy. It takes quiet "praying with...perseverance" to again "build up yourselves on your most holy faith." And if in the rush of modern life we will not make time to be alone with God, to set on fire His Word with prayer, the soul will not be "restored," the fire will not blaze, and we cannot continue to be "filled with the Holy Ghost."

And as the movement begun in late years at Onepusu, of each teacher taking a definite "quiet time" to be alone with God and His Word, has begun to spread to the district schools, most blessed have been the results. And I am very sure that the promise, "Them that honour Me I will honour," was never truer, never more gladly fulfilled by God, than to the man who will not let the vampire of modern life rob him of his sacred time over the Word of God.

And this fire of the Holy Ghost, how we need it!

(1) It is part of our glorious inheritance in Christ.

The world, with all its wealth and wisdom, has never yet devised a way to buy or to kindle a “burning heart.” That is the monopoly of the Spirit-filled Christian. “Did not our hearts burn within us,” may still be our habitual experience. No words can describe the richness of such “burning.” It must be felt to be understood. Every human experience pales beside it. Do you often enjoy a “burning heart?” Are you enjoying it now? It is for you. For still, to-day, “Joy and the Holy Ghost” may be your daily portion through believing faith.

(2) It is the surest, clearest testimony of the Saviour’s presence, the best sermon we shall ever preach. Any man that is really a “burning bush” is still a “great sight,” even to the world. Only, if you are on fire for God, see to it that you keep on burning, week in, week out. That is the most convincing modern miracle, a man burning out for God, yet not consumed. And the heathen, how soon they sense the difference between the ordinary Christian and the man on fire for God! “Heart burning!” How much more convincing it is than “mouth-preaching!” God make us each “a burning and a shining light!”

(3) The fire of the Holy Ghost is needed in each heart to burn out the dross. Can jealousy and malice and sin “dwell with the devouring fire?” (Isa. 33. 14). And that quiet consuming of all that is unworthy in us, is that not the greatest, the most wonderful present reward to those of us in God’s service, whose business it is to continue “filled with the Spirit?” For it is here and now that the dross of hearts must be burned.

And if we are not willing for that, if God's fire is not burning out the dross in us here and now, then that same fire is sure to burn up much of our "works," at the Judgment Seat of Christ, to our eternal loss.

(4) And just as the fire in the kiln burns in the pattern, and makes it permanent and indelible, so the gifts, the graces, the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, must become part of our character by this continual stirring into flame of the gift of the Spirit.

We are engaged down here in a task which is humanly impossible, the task of feeding and sustaining and setting on fire the spiritual life of thousands of converts. Thank God we are not being side-tracked by mere education. But God has shown us that the one true and needed knowledge for ourselves, for our people, is, "That I might know Him." But He has graciously ordained that very often such knowledge must first be passed through the soul, often the suffering soul, of the teacher, before it is available to the people. It is in our hearts that the miracle of kindling must first take place. May your prayers so fan the flame of love in each of us (who are still so "slow of heart to believe") that first, we ourselves shall be afresh stirred into flame, and that then, through the Word ministered, the fire may break out in many hearts, and God's ancient promise may again and again be fulfilled in our people: "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

CHAPTER XIV

“BY FAITH... HE ENDURED”

“BY FAITH...HE ENDURED”

“By faith...he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible”
(Heb. 11. 27).

THERE is a fundamental difference between national heroes and heroes of the Bible. With national heroes, all that appeals to the imagination is held up for admiration and imitation, while a veil, often a very thick veil, must be drawn over much of their past life. In the Bible it is just the opposite. For in it God delights to take a man and, admitting all his waywardness and sins, to trace his subsequent steady growth in grace, that the very victory of God's power may become more and more manifest for the encouragement of all His failing saints. And this contrast is simply because with man imitation is all that is possible, and so the sins of the hero must be ignored; while with God the process is regeneration, and so with God “all things,” all graces, all victories over sin “are possible.”

And this is specially true in the story of Moses. We think of him as the man of unwavering purpose, of great boldness. And so my craven heart would cry out that no lessons from such a life can help me, can apply to me, because I am so different. For that is just where I fail; I am so changeful, so timid, so inconstant. Yet Moses' growth and development in grace and strength were recorded just for such as

me, to encourage the faint-hearted, to lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees.

For Moses was by nature inconstant. Having visions of service for God, of being his people's deliverer, he made one misguided effort in the flesh and "slew the Egyptian," and later fled. But he did more than flee. He also abandoned all his dreams of service of being a deliverer. For we read in Exodus 2. 22: "Moses was content to dwell with the man" in the desert as a mere herdsman, and so married and "settled down." Then began his second period of training. In the first forty years of his life he had been learning to be "somebody." This second forty years in the desert he was to learn to be "nobody," that in the third forty years he might prove what God could do with a "nobody." God make us all quick learners of that lesson!

And now Moses must be aroused, but not by the direct voice of God, but by a thorn bush burning in the desert (Exod. 3. 3). Moses had once had a heart on fire for God, but he had failed to go on burning, and there was little flame of holy zeal, of expectation from God left in his heart. And what arrested him was not that the bush burned, that was a common enough sight in the scorching desert, but that the bush went on burning. And the fact that it was a common, worthless thorn bush which blazed so brightly, was all the more reproach to Moses, the King's son, with all his talents, his learning. So he rightly, naturally turned aside.

And I suppose that will ever be our supremest testimony in this changeful world, to burn and go on

burning. For the virtue of spiritual constancy is one of the rarest things in the world, the most arresting. How many once earnest souls drop out of the race, till they only have a name to live, yet are dead spiritually. So it will ever be the most arresting sermon we shall ever preach, to go on year after year, a steady flame for God, when the foundations of things seem to be moving, though God remains unmoved. It is blessedly possible for each one who is content to be "stayed upon Jehovah," and not on the changeful theories of man.

So Moses was arrested, and convicted, and ignited again, and sent out into God's glad service, to become himself, above all, a bush that burned, yet was not consumed. And in God's record in Hebrews 11. 27, of this mighty servant of His, of the four most notable victories singled out to be recorded, perhaps the very greatest, the most important, is that, by faith he endured. And that one virtue gave permanent value to all his other activities, and without it all else would have been of little avail. This enduring, then, is the happy sequel to the dismal failure of the fleshly activities of earlier life.

What did he endure? The king's wrath: that was hard. The hatred, the ridicule of the Egyptians, of the world: that was harder. But the hardest of all was to endure the murmuring, the jealousies, the accusations of God's own people. It will ever be so. Many of God's leaders are called to just that, and it costs them dear. And that word "endure" seems to sum up so much missionary work, if it is the quality

so continually needed. "Reuben, unstable as water," might not "prevail." But the missionary, the native teacher who would finish his course with joy, will have to learn how to endure. And Paul's catalogue of the afflictions of the Gospel in 2 Corinthians 11, will in some small humble measure have to be repeated and fulfilled in his own life.

And "How long, O Lord, how long?" will be the cry often rising from the heart, as the months go by, and the years lengthen out, and still He does not come. For, as the harvest in the Solomons becomes ever more abundant, and "the whole family of God" in the Islands steadily increases, so the burdens and cares and responsibilities must ever increase; and there are so few to share them in the mission field. And messengers from Satan there are in plenty to buffet us, as his strongholds are successively attacked.

Thus, sowing must often be "in tears" of the heart, which are much the most poignant, so that often, unbidden, the words arise: "How long, O Lord, how long?" before that great and glorious day when the course shall be finished, the fight shall be over, and the race safely run.

Pray much, then, for the "Evangel," and for those in charge of the vessel and the visiting. Only those who have lived on board can realise the incessant physical strain of keeping the ship continually in commission, going hard. What with bad weather, and the continual need of repairs to ship and engine on the one hand, and the long lines of mission stations waiting to be visited, the lonely missionaries anxiously

looking for the ship for mails and stores, voyages to the steamer for mails or cargo, and rush trips in case of sickness or grave troubles on the other hand, the physical strain of running the ship is tremendous.

And then endurance is one of the qualities most needed at the Onepusu Bible Training School. For there, too, the strain is very great and continuous. For, with over 150 pupils who must be fed and clothed, and cared for, and often nursed through pneumonia or dysentery, in addition to the numberless classes, and the constant need and demand for individual attention and spiritual help on the part of so many, there is little respite, and no time to be ill.

And then there are the more lonely missionaries, who need continual bearing up in prayer. For in a climate like the Solomons, with the temperature and humidity of a Turkish bath, in addition to fairly frequent malaria, which in itself is peculiarly depressing, where communication is so infrequent and life so uncertain, a good deal may happen in a short time, and a good prayer insurance is a mighty comfort and safeguard. So for these dear friends living their lives amid peculiar difficulties, even if amidst special privileges, endurance is signally needed. And it is most encouraging, on further examining the life and character of Moses, to find that he, too, was a "man of like passions" as we are. For really Moses seemed by nature and temperament the least fitted for the task of leadership of God's people, a nation notoriously "perverse and stiff-necked." And as if to reassure our fainting hearts, we are specially told by

God: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all...men." This was the man selected by God to stand up for Him against Pharaoh and against the continual murmuring of the children of Israel. And so his whole leadership was a miracle, and just such a miracle as might be enacted by the grace of God through the years of service of our own puny lives. And the secrets of Moses' success are quite simple; they are carefully recorded; they are within the grasp of each and all His own.

(1) It was "by faith." That must ever be the touchstone of success in spiritual things. Through all God's dealings with men there is one unwavering law: "by faith," "by faith," "by faith." "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see," is the Saviour's gentle reproach to those who would work and walk by sight. And God's order and ordination in this life of faith must ever be, "believe that you may see; believe that you may have." "Let us kneel our way through life," said the old saint, "for our knees are heaven's knockers," is but another way of putting the same fact that "asking" of God is so much more potent than "doing" by man, because it results in "doing" by God.

(2) Then there is the other great reassuring, steady-ing factor in Moses' life: "By faith...he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Blessed paradox! Invisible, yet seen! And how? "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face," is God's order and design. Sincere service "in the Spirit" will inevitably lead to a clearer and clearer sight of

Him. And how that robs life of its terrors and alarms. For now, though we may not see "the yet curtained future," we can see Him who does, and He is Keeper and Lord, and so all is well.

(b) And Daniel continued till the first year of Cyrus (Dan. 1. 21). As is so often the case with this book from God, there is an unrealised mine of truth hidden in that simple sentence. It forms one of the most triumphant testimonies in the Bible to God's safeguarding care, and a man's faithfulness. In those days of bloodshed and tyranny, it was the usual custom for despotic monarchs to make a clean sweep, often by execution, of all the favourites and ministers of the previous king, especially if another dynasty supervened. So Daniel, risen by God's grace, to perilous eminence under Nebuchadnezzar, would be in a position of very great danger, the God he served not being the god of the land. Yet through each change under four separate monarchs, and two dynasties, Daniel not only kept his life, but kept his high office, and, more than all, "kept the faith."

In short, he "continued" for over seventy years, in spite of all enemies and dangers, "to live a life of singular piety and usefulness amidst the corruption of an Oriental court." Moses "endured" in spite of himself; Daniel "continued" in spite of his surroundings. His life was sacrosanct, because round about him were "the everlasting arms," and, living to please God rather than man, he emerges unscathed from all risks and plots and perils. An illuminating verse in the first chapter gives the key to the secret

of his life: Having "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself," God brought him into favour...with the prince of the eunuchs." For it is true, "when a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even His enemies to be at peace with him." It is significant that God does not promise to make such enemies into friends, because there can be no real friendship between a child of God and his celestial outlook and desires, and a man of the world with his earthly goals and gods. The most that is possible between those so spiritually incompatible is to make our enemies "to be at peace" with us. We have found this very true in the Islands, where there must be a real reproach of the Gospel. God has signally of late years made many to be at peace with us who once were strongly antagonistic. Here is deep comfort for those whose future and employment seems to be at the mercy of those who know not God. We are not in man's hands, but in God's hands. And if the "purposing" is faithfully done in our own hearts, we, too, shall "continue," in spite of the whole world, and "no good thing" shall be withheld. "And Daniel continued."

(c) And then we pass to another, the Holy One and the Just, the Illuminator of His own Word. And of Him we read a deeply moving sentence, which bears out the same principle of the need of "enduring." As He went on His shining way, often tired in limb, untired in patience and love, the time came when the Cross, and the becoming sin for man, seemed ever more dreadful. How dreadful, how terrible, to His purity,

we have a faint revealing in Luke 9. 51, where we read :
 “When the time was come...He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,” to Calvary. So, as the Man of Sorrows passed on His mysterious way, spiritually alone, to the great Sacrifice, we must realise that, though He was very God, He was yet so perfect man as to be “tempted on all points like as we are.” And the Cross cost so much, the cup of His Father was so bitter that to describe the effort it was to Him, we are carefully told, “He stedfastly set His face,” not once, but often, “stedfastly.”

I remember once in Malaita running into harbour in the “Evangel” before a tremendous storm, and as we rounded into the wind, to pass between the reefs, the blinding rain squalls so smote the native steersman in the face, that after a moment he turned and ran, leaving the ship with no one at the helm, at a moment of great peril. And one had to jump to the wheel, and set one’s face and one’s teeth to look out somehow against the smiting tropical rain, to watch the reefs we had to pass between, till we were safe behind. And I believe that there must come in all our lives, times of crisis, when tremendous spiritual issues are at stake, and when there will have to be on our part a deliberate setting of the face by faith, to go through with God. Such crises may not come very often in life, but when they do come they may be of most critical importance to our lives and future service, as still further we are tested, that we may be still further trusted.

And the prize, the incentive for such service? Well,

with Him, our Master, it was: "Who for the prize set before Him endured the Cross!" And His prize, His very greatest prize, was, I am sure: "I do always those things that please Him." I remember a prize of boyhood's days, and bringing it home, and how very much more precious than the gilt-embossed book was my dear father's pride and pleasure in his not very studious son. The book I never read. I still remember that look of love on my father's face.

And that will ever be the purest ambition, the most splendid reward, far exceeding any crowns of glory or other rewards God may see fit to bestow: "That I may know Him," and please Him, and love Him with all my heart, in all my days. God keep such a goal ever before our eyes, and grant us each "an abundant entrance into glory!"

CHAPTER XV

“GIVE US PRAYER !”

“GIVE US PRAYER !”

“Praying always with all supplication in the Spirit” (Eph. 3. 18).

Now, how can I make vivid to you, the privileges and the perils, the trophies and the tremendous spiritual needs of the Eastern Solomons? In that cluster of three great islands, Malaita, Makira, and Gaudalcanal, each nearly a hundred miles long, covered with dense forest right to the far off mountain tops, and swarming with thousands of heathen, one has witnessed God's gracious working these many years. But we long for still further shareholders in prayer. How can I help you to see the islands, and to love the people?

Far the best way would be to take you for a voyage in the “Evangel” round the islands themselves, as we have done with a number of interested visitors. From her heaving deck you would watch mountains and reefs and islands slipping by. You would surge past many a threatening headland, with the white surf spouting up the rocks below, while the little ship rolled and plunged, and everything moveable on board slid and fell in all directions. Sometimes, thankfully, you would enter and thread down long glassy lagoons, past brown nestling villages, with rows of canoes and clustered native children. At other times after hours of groping in a black night, the engine quietly pulsing down below, the ship would slowly feel her way, guided from the masthead, through the darkness and

the reefs, into some hidden harbour. Then the big anchor would splash down into the calm waters of the quiet bay, one would climb down from the masthead, and the ship would settle down to rest.

But many a time you would have to roll day and night, with us, in an open anchorage, as, watching the skies continually for storms, we pursued the blessed business of ministering to the Great Shepherd's scattered flock in their more than two hundred Christian villages. You would lose your heart, I am sure, the first half hour! For these friendly, loveable people with their warm hearts and their broken English, hasten to adopt any Christian visitor into the island "family of faith" and love, in a way that is quite irresistible.

Come with us to-day, then, as we visit some inland Christian village! Crossing the shallow bar of the river in the ship's tiny launch, we go panting up a resounding river with high banks of ferns, the engine working bravely and sending the crowded boat along with a big wash. Passing through the usual zone of mangroves, the banks are soon crowded with great forest trees, which sweep far out over the water, and with tall palms that wave against the sky. Finally we run ashore on a grassy bank round the canoe house of the hidden village, to shake hands with a cluster of expectant natives. Then we all fall into line, to climb almost on hands and knees up the steep slippery track to the village perched a hundred feet up, on some inland spur. Perhaps a tropical storm drenches us to the steaming skin, as we pant and struggle up the

hill in this damp hot-house of a climate. It takes some time to cool off on reaching the village, then comes a change of clothes, and an urgent demand for a fan, a very large fan! After entering all the houses in turn, and shaking hands all round, at last the bell is rung for the service. How closely they pack the little Church, and how their faces beam!

Yet it is a great problem in this short precious visit to know how best to help the people. The audience is so varied that one has repeatedly to cry to God for understanding how to minister His Word. Often the lesson cannot be chosen till one is in the service, and has had time to realise the atmosphere and the local needs. And the singing is prolonged, as one searches in mind for a “smooth stone from the brook” that seems to be God’s message for the heart and the day. Most of the men understand the lesson when given in English, for with nine different languages one cannot know the local dialect. But for the sake of the women and others who do not know English, an interpreter is always used, an “interrupter,” as he is often called. So the Bible lesson proceeds. And how the Word of God does its work, searching the life and feeding the heart!

And now the service is over, and the leading Christians linger in the leaf church with their latest difficulties, and one and another is summoned from the village, and prayer is made about the difficulty with the Christians concerned. Then perhaps, tired out, as the day draws to its sudden close, and one turns to go, they bring the news that a number of people want

to "sign along Jesus," or "trust." They have turned to God from idols long before, and have all begun, as their way is, to pray to God as soon as they came to "school." But they want to have a more definite transaction, if possible with the missionary, to make sure that they are safely under the Blood.

They are each carefully questioned in turn as to their knowledge of sin and "the way" and the Saviour's work. It is wonderful how few mistakes they make. The older men have probably been murderers, and most have gone far in sin. Yet experience has shown how deep and real is the change through the Spirit, at conversion; and they often become most zealous in God's service. There may be a tottering old man or woman, for whom life has passed in the nightmare of devil worship, but who now with beaming, serious face and trembling lips, gives his heart and what remains of his life, into God's safe keeping. So they cry "in the night," in turn, to the One who ever hears the cry of faith, and gives life from above. So we set off at long last, down the slippery track to the waiting boat, and so off down the silent reaches of the river, and at last come with a blessed weariness to the anchored ship, her lights now gleaming cheerily over the water.

And, with variations, this is going on in station after station, as God turns to the waiting heathen, and gathers out these "other sheep," in preparation for His near return. Scores of these island voyages in the "Evangel," lasting weeks at a time, with every day packed full of blessed service, have been con-

tinually in progress these twenty years. It is a visitation that is never ended, for "the King's business" is never done. Many indeed of the trips are crowded with unexpected happenings, and accidents and storms, and merciful deliverances. And these all prove the continual uncertainty of what one day will bring forth, in an island mission and in such a climate. But they prove just as emphatically the restful certainty that through all the difficulties His power and "compassions fail not."

Yet all the time we are faced with the impossible. For human energy and untiring effort and love are not enough to change the sinful heart. Education is worthless till there has been regeneration. For all true mission work must be supernatural from above. There are indeed plenty of people who can do what is humanly possible. You can hire them for a few pounds a week, and they can do such work well. But God's prizes are for those (often weak and despised by the world) who can accomplish the impossible, by continual simple acts of faith, and "strong crying and tears." And as one thinks of the tremendous dead weight of darkness in the human heart, and the heathen world, both black and white, it does seem impossible that our spiritual equipment, and reliance on the Word of God should accomplish so great a change in so many lives. Yet overriding all these mountains of difficulties comes the calm, clear reassurance: "All things are possible to him that believeth."

And the only true plan of campaign is so blessedly simple. It has been said that "men are looking for

better methods; God is looking for better men!" And that seems so clearly true. Thank God we have not got to be always casting about for some new method to try and pierce the defences of darkness. But we *do* find the one prerequisite is better men; men better equipped with the Spirit and the Word of God. We need to pray continually to God that He may quickly give us many more "able ministers" of the New Testament. In years past the only teachers we could provide for waiting villages were often far too limited in knowledge and experience. And their limitations were inevitably reflected in the spiritual life and progress of the converts.

But now that the standard of knowledge and spirituality is so much higher in the training school at Onepusu, the influence of these dear teachers as they have returned to their home villages to take up pastoral work can be most clearly traced. It is a continual reassurance and testimony to the value of spiritual methods to watch how the inevitable result of men better equipped with the inerrant Word, is, better appetite and brighter, keener Christians, and in such villages there is little danger from the epidemics of spiritual childhood.

We have, then, three main concerns in the future of the mission. (1) The praying out and selection of Spirit-filled missionaries, and especially men, from the homelands to replace those who drop out through sickness and other causes. (2) The selection and training of suitable native recruits for the Onepusu Bible School, that the present high standard of har-

mony and spirituality may be maintained in the school. (3) The upholding of the lonely district missionaries and native teachers as they face all the problems of village life.

And to make vivid to you the essential function and need of prayer I would remind you of an old mission story of the Queensland days. It is years ago now. In those days thousands of merry-hearted South Sea Islanders dotted the coastal districts of Queensland. Long before they had left their tropical island homes, outposts of empire stretching across the blue Pacific. They had crowded across the sea in schooners, from the Solomons and New Hebrides, to work the sugar cane of Queensland in Australia. Many fled across the sea escaping from fierce island vendettas. And many came to see the world. They found as well its Saviour. They became seekers, and then finders. As unlearned and ignorant men, they entered the local "school" and found it a school of prayer.

And many there were who after patient months and years of learning, emerged, to press forward as soul-winners and teachers of their heathen friends who daily worked by their side in the cane break. Many a dusty mile they walked after the day's work was done, to some distant plantation or school, where they might teach or be taught the truths that now meant so much to them. So numbers of them grew old in the faith, and in the work of helping the missionaries with the thousands of converts. Such was the work of the Queensland Kanaka Mission.

And now by law these Christian natives were being

deported *en masse* to their island homes, being cast out by the Commonwealth. Hundreds had already sailed from other ports, and numbers more had gathered in Brisbane ready to sail. Many hearts quailed as they thought of the change to come. Many of them would stand alone for God among their people. Many would plunge alone into the cesspool of wickedness where evil held sway. They had no illusions. They knew what heathendom meant, how dark and degraded, how strong and seductive. They were leaving a Christian land, and their Christian friends and teachers to whom for years they had learned to look for guidance and help. They were leaving them for what? For isolation and distresses and fierce temptations.

To-morrow they were to sail. To-night was a farewell meeting, amid bright lights and singing and Christian cheer. There would be none where most of them were going. A man stood up, grey-headed and grown old in God's service. He stood up to speak and to say farewell. He told how that day he had wandered about the town till he reached the river. There he had seen a man in the dress and helmet of a diver, go down out of sight under the dark waters. He had seen the air pumped steadily down; and had watched the movements of the life line, the only evidence of the man below. He saw the evident concern of the men on the surface for their comrade in his danger and need. Well versed in parable, the speaker had caught the deeper meaning of the incident. He told the story of the man's preparation for peril, and how only the

“wind” pumped down had saved him. With deep emotion he pleaded with the audience in words like these:

“Brothers, we come from our islands of darkness to your land of light. Then we hear of One who died for us long, long ago. We never hear of Him before. But we find this news is good for our hearts. So we come to learn about Him, and we learn to pray to Him. At first we only come to ‘school,’ but soon we come to Jesus. And He who died for us so long ago, He came into our hearts. Now we belong to Him, and our hearts are not dark any more, but full of light, and we are praising God. But now your country is casting us out, and we must go back into the darkness of our islands. We are like that diver who went down into the deep waters. This man is safe only because they give him wind. They pump it down to him, and watch for him all the time. We, too, are going down far away into darkness. It is too strong for us. We are not very strong. Oh, brothers, you hold the line for us! You watch for us. You not forget us when we are far away. You not see us with your eyes any more, only with the eye of faith. But, oh, brothers, when we go down into deep waters, you not forget to give us wind. Give us wind or we die! Give us prayer!”

That, I think, is one of the most graphic and convincing illustrations of the essential need of prayer, in all work for God, that I know. And in answer to the need that cry made articulate, God induced the hearts of the hearers, not only to give them prayer, but later on to give them men and women who should

follow them across the sea and minister to their souls and bodies. So, 23 years ago, in 1904, the mission was re-formed in the Islands; Miss Young and a pioneer band of workers going down with a twelve ton ketch, the "Daphne," in which to do the visiting. The little band grew, and the line of Christian villages steadily extended, so in 1906 the first "Evangel," a much larger ketch of about 30 tons burden, with an oil engine, was built and sailed down to the islands, which enabled the visiting to be much more regular and systematic. As the work went on expanding, and the stations multiplied, in 1915 a still larger vessel, the present "Evangel," was built, with three deck cabins, and a powerful crude oil engine, which enables very much more work to be done.

And now, after about 23 years, the three islands are ringed round with churches in about 220 entirely Christian villages, populated by about 7000 people. But often the refrain of our hearts, through the trials and perplexities which always accompany successful spiritual work, with its conflicts and victories, the refrain of our hearts, is the cry of that simple Christian. For we only echo the call that rises from many minds when we cry: "Oh, brothers, give us wind! Give us PRAYER!"

For we long that more adequate provision may be made for the spiritual care of these multiplying converts. For we dread having in the Solomons "delicate members of the Body whose Head was once crowned with thorns." Christ wants His children to be "perfect," full grown, always abounding in grace and

truth and health. Our blessed Master calls the halt, the maimed, and the blind to Himself, that He may make the lame to take the prey, the blind to see Heaven opened, and the maimed to go on their way, “walking and leaping and praising God.” But that He may do these marvels, He expects His sheep to be tended and fed. Being so helpless, knowing so little, He expects them to be built up in our most holy faith, that they may be kept in the love of God. And this ministry of privilege He has committed not unto angels, but to the saints.

But “men are slow and late,” and the lambs grow up half starved, and the sheep are neglected, because so many of His own, who have the knowledge and health and talents for this service, fail to realise the urgency, the intense privilege, the rich return for thus ministering to these infant churches. Such do not seem to realise that marching orders were given to be obeyed, and go on waiting indefinitely for some special kind of call, before they can believe that God really and urgently needs them to minister to the numbers who are believing, or who are waiting to believe.

Men rightly deplore much coldness and deadness in the home lands, and many sit with helpless, folded hands. Yet when they hear of fields afar, or harvests rich, of men in darkness waiting for the light, what is their response? Truly it seems too like the Gadarenes: “His soul? What care we for his soul? What care of ours, that Christ can make men whole?” And many godly men at home bear faithful witness to the truth, but speak largely to deafened ears, to seared

hearts, to multitudes departed from the faith. But in the mission field often what a contrast! Why,

“Here is the place where He has touched the eyes
Of blinded men to instant perfect sight.
Here is the place where He has said ‘Arise,’
To dying captives bound in chains of night!”

“AND THEY BECKONED UNTO THEIR PARTNERS THAT
THEY SHOULD COME AND HELP THEM.”

SOUTH SEA EVANGELICAL MISSION.

WORKING in the Solomon Islands, Pacific Ocean. (1200 miles north east of Brisbane, Australia, and east of New Guinea.)

Origin. The South Sea Evangelical Mission grew out of a work begun in Queensland, Australia, in 1882, by Miss Florence Young. At that time there were about 10,000 South Sea Islanders from the New Hebrides and Solomon Islands working on the Queensland sugar plantations.

It was then a wonderful opportunity for the Gospel to be made known to these people, but few attempts had been made to teach them. One of the many difficulties was the babel of tongues, the only common language being a smattering of pidgin-English. But it was soon abundantly proved that "all things are possible with God."

In 1886 the Queensland Kanaka Mission was formed, being directed from the beginning by Miss Young, and a missionary was appointed to work the Bundaberg district. From one centre to another the mission was extended, until all the eleven sugar districts in Queensland were being reached by a staff of 19 European missionaries, assisted by 100 (unpaid) native teachers. 2484 men and women were converted and baptised before 1906, when the Queensland Government deported all these people back to their Island homes.

Mission Founded in the Solomon Islands. Two years before this deportation, a branch of the work was opened in the Solomon Islands, in 1904, in order to shepherd the large number of converts gained in Queensland, and to carry the Gospel to those who were still in gross heathen darkness.

Sphere. The Island of MALAITA, where the bulk of the work centres, has a reputed population of some 60,000. Cannibalism was widely practiced till recently, and large numbers of the people lived in constant fear of killing. The island lies within 10 degrees of the equator, the climate is hot and unhealthy, and malaria is universal. It is about 100 miles long, with mountains up to 5000 feet, and covered with dense forest, and no roads. Our field also includes the islands of Guadalcanal (called Solomon by the natives), with about 30,000 people; and Makira, with about 9000.

Results. The S.S.E. Mission has, since 1904, established nine European mission stations on the three islands, including a Bible Training School at Onepusu, with some 130 scholars. Dr. Northcote Deck, on the "Evangel" Mission Ship, has visited and ministered to the little companies of Christians for 19 years, and his place has now been taken by Mr. Robert M'Bride. There are at present (1928) a staff of 25 missionaries, and about 200 native out-stations in charge of unpaid native teachers.

Direction. The work has been under the direction of Miss Florence Young, assisted by advisory councils, and she has now appointed Mr. William Mallis, late of India, to succeed her. There is also an island council, consisting of Miss Deck, Mr. M'Bride, Miss Sullivan, and Mr. Waite.

Baptisms. In 1926, 345 converts were baptised for the year, making a total of 4383 converts baptised in the Islands, in addition to the 2484 baptisms in Queensland, making altogether up till February 25th, 1927, a total of 6867 converts baptised since the commencement of the work.

"It is God that worketh." It was He who taught us, when we began the work, to put first things first, salvation before civilisation or education. He taught us to use the Word of God. He taught us to lift up Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, a risen, living Saviour, exalted and "able to save unto the uttermost." And then "God gave the increase."

Support. The Mission is unsectarian and evangelical in character, and is supported by the free will offerings of the Lord's people. The printed and illustrated quarterly mission paper will be sent for a year to any address upon the receipt of 1/6 or 50 cents.

Donations and subscriptions to the "Quarterly Letter" may be sent to any of the following:

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Mr. LAWRENCE COOK, 20 Sheen Street, Dunedin, N.Z.

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