

Reverence
and Other Addresses

by ALEX. ROSS



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Introduction

The substance of the first two of these articles appeared in the "Believer's Magazine" some time ago—applicable for the present day. The lack of reverence is the spirit of the age. Reverence befits the saints today. In the apostate days of Malachi there was a godly remnant who "feared the Lord" Malachi 3: 16. There are still those today who revere Him, and "tremble at His word" Is. 66: 2. It was sad days indeed when Malachi was raised up of the Lord to awaken the nation as to their true condition before Him and bring them back to Himself.

Divine principles are unalterable. "Holiness becometh Thine House O Lord **for ever**" Ps. 93: 5. "**For ever**, O Lord, Thy word is settled in Heaven" Ps. 119: 89.

Where is Mine honour?" is God's complaint to His people. "Ye offer the blind . . . ye offer the lame and sick." "Offer it now unto thy governor: will he be pleased with thee?" Mal. 1: 6-8. Hear the word of the wise man in Eccles. 5: 7. "Fear thou God." Of the ungodly it is written. "There is no fear of God before their eyes" Rom. 3: 18.

The article on "Aspects of Giving" is also relevant for the present day. Our Master said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20: 35. "Freely ye have received, freely give" Matt. 10: 8. Since He gave His all for us we owe our all to Him. This is the teaching of Rom. 12: 1. The Law demanded a life for a life: grace beseeches. Christ gave His life for us, we ought to give our whole life to Him. As to our wealth it rightly belongs to God. His will is to be sought as to its distribution. Giving is a grace and a joy, and will be rewarded in a Coming Day.

A christian lady called on J. G. Paton (Missionary to the New Hebrides) saying, "I gave you one little piece of paper (£100) at the beginning of your efforts. I have prayed every day for you since. God has prospered me, and this is one of the happiest moments of my life when I am able to give you another little bit of paper." So saying, she pushed into his hand £100. Protesting, Mr. Paton said, "Can you afford a second £100?" "Yes," she replied, "My Lord has been very good to me, in health and in my business, My wants are simple and in his hands. I wait not till death forces me, but I give back whatever I am able to give now, and hope to live to see much blessing thereby in the conversion of the heathen." This is the true and joyous aspect in giving. It is laying up "treasure in Heaven" Mark 10: 2. Far better than laying up "treasure in your sacks" Gen. 43: 23. Treasure in their sacks gave Joseph's brethren a lot of trouble. "Treasure in Heaven," gives cause for great joy, for we shall meet it again—not leave it behind, we know not what for.

Let us remember the Lord's word to us in Deut. 8: 18. "It is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." It is not our own, it rightfully belongs to God. We hold it in trust.

The other addresses are heart-warming for the child of God. We are in the last days and waiting with expectancy that glorious event—the Coming of the Lord for His own. The signs portend it; our hearts await it. It is sure, for Jesus said, "I will come again, and **receive you unto Myself**, that where I am, there ye may be also" John 14: 3. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" Rev. 22: 20.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "A. Ross". The signature is written in dark ink and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

To my brethren in Christ at Victoria Hall, Aberdeen, Scotland. I came as a stranger to the City in the year 1926 and found a true fellowship amongst the saints for sixteen happy years. It was there I was taught "the way of God more perfectly" Acts 18: 26.

Moving to another district in the City I became associated with believers in Holburn Gospel Hall. Still in happy fellowship after thirty-four years; completing "50 Years" in the City of Aberdeen. I trust by the Grace of God to continue till called up Higher to, "the City of the Living God . . . and Church of the Firstborn. which are written in Heaven . . . **and to Jesus** the Mediator of the New Covenant" Hebrews 12: 22-24.

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One

Reverence

“God is greatly to be feared in the Assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him.”

Psalm 89: 7.

Part One

Reverence for God and the things of God has almost ceased in the world today. Satanic influences make inroads into the welfare of nations and Governments: often passing laws which remove the fear of God. We are certainly in last day conditions (see 1st Tim. 4: 1). Christians today do well to take heed to words of wisdom written by Solomon. “Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long” Prov. 23: 17.

God says, “My Name shall be great among the Gentiles” Mal. 1: 11. His greatness is seen in Is. 43: 11. “I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour.” When Jacob saw the wondrous vision of the ladder and the Lord standing above it and speaking to him, awaking from his dream, he cried, “Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, “How dreadful (reverent) is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” Gen. 28: 16-17. Glad awakening, and blessed experience, to learn the Presence of the Living God and to revere Him. What are we? Poor creatures of the dust. We need to read often Is. 40 to humble us and keep us in our place before the Eternal God. Elijah learned well the Presence of Jehovah when he said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, **before Whom I stand**” 1 Kings

17: 1. "I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts, and My Name is dreadful (to be revered) among the heathen" Mal. 1: 14. The ills of the world will only be gone when God and His Word is revered and honoured. "The fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" Ps. 111: 10.

Moses saw God at the Burning Bush, and hastened to unloose his shoes for he stood on holy ground Ex. 3: 1-5. Isaiah saw Him and realising his own unworthiness cried, "Woe is me." The Seraphim touched him with the live coal saying, "Lo . . . thy sin is purged" Is. 6: 6-7. Paul saw the Lord on the Damascus way. With the Glory of His Presence he "fell to the earth" owning His Lordship Acts 9: 4-5. Stephen saw Jesus as the heavens were opened for Him. The reverence of the occasion was upon him for, in dying he called upon the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit and he "fell asleep" Acts 7: 60.

When John on the lonely Isle of Patmos, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, saw Him he, "fell at His feet as dead" Rev. 1: 17.

With awe and wonder in our souls we come to the transforming vision of Ezekiel. The heavens were opened to him to see the Glory of God. When he saw it, he said, "I fell upon my face" 1: 28. He saw "the four living creatures" (perhaps Cherubim). There was the great "Wheels," so high that they were dreadful (awe-inspiring). There was the terrible (dazzling) Crystal.

If these Living Creatures are indeed Cherubim they would be executives of God's Holiness and Righteousness; suggestive in their placing at the entrance to Eden's garden to bar the way to the Tree of Life. The Seraphims (another created intelligence) seem to be associated with the Throne of God: praising Him continually: waiting upon Him and serving Him (see Is. 6: 2-3).

From the very beginning of Creation, God is looking down from His High Place, exalted in the heavens. "The Lord reigneth" we are told again and again in the Psalms. He reigns over the earth inhabitants. The "Living Creatures," the dazzling "Crystal" and the ever-moving "Wheels" is a revelation to us of the Wisdom, Power,

and Knowledge of an All-seeing God. "The earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep" Gen. 1: 2. But God is working to a Divine plan. Nothing takes Him by surprise. He begins to re-create: "Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good." As for God:

"His way is perfect"—Ps. 18: 30.

"His work is perfect"—Deut. 32: 4.

"His word is perfect"—Ps. 19: 7.

"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth" 2 Chron. 16: 9. It was so from the beginning of Time and ever shall be. "The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee" Ps. 139: 12. The wicked, in their boasting say, "How doth God know? Can He judge through the dark cloud" Job 22: 13. **He can!** and does!

It grieved Him when looking down to see fallen conditions on the earth. His word was disobeyed when the forbidden fruit of the garden was partaken of. God saw it all and came down to judge, "Adam . . . where art thou?" In the dazzling Crystal He saw wicked Cain slay his brother Abel. He called to Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?"

So we trace throughout Scripture the All-seeing eye of God. In His wisdom He skilfully wove the pattern for the union of Boaz and Ruth for the Royal line of the Messiah, "and they called his name Obed! he is the father of Jesse, the father of David" Ruth 4: 17.

High heaven notes the scheming and wicked Jezebel kill Naboth and steal the inheritance of his father. God sends Elijah the prophet to Ahab, "Thus saith the Lord, hast thou killed, and also taken possession?" what a prophetic utterance follows, and tragic death of Jezebel. "God is not mocked."

Follow with me to the book of Esther. Craftily, Haman schemes for the destruction of the Jewish race, and raises the gallows high for Mordecai who sought, "the wealth of his people" 10: 3. Just retribution is

brought upon his own head, for the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai seals his own doom. The seed of Israel is preserved. While the Name of God is not mentioned in this book His supreme Presence is stamped on every page.

Saul, the usurper, sought to slay David, the youthful shepherd lad, ordained by God to rule His people.

The javelin sped, but missed its target. Thereafter, David was hunted on the mountains by Saul (1 Sam. 24: 11). God saw it all in the heavens. God seemed slow to act (see chap. 9: 17). David also was being prepared for kingship. Thus, God's purpose was being fulfilled. Finally, God stepped in and Saul's ending was very sad indeed (see 2 Sam. 1).

Nothing can escape the Divine "Wheels": nothing escape the dazzling "Crystal." Everything is known on High: everything judged. Look finally at the sad story and end of Ananias and Sapphira his wife in the days of the early church (Acts 5). They had all things common. They were of one heart and of one soul. No one lacked, "for as many as were possessors of land or houses sold them, and laid the money down at the Apostle's feet, and distribution was made to every man according to his need" 4: 32-37. Craftily, Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the sale, saying it was the whole. The Lord in heaven revealed it to Peter, who at once challenged Ananias saying, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" "Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost." Sapphira his wife and accomplice was challenged and in like manner died. "And great fear (deep reverence) came upon all the church and upon as many as heard these things" 5: 11.

Not only individuals, God judges nations also. The Egyptians and Pharaoh afflicted the children of Israel. God saw it all and said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people . . . for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians" Ex. 3: 7-8. And He did! Before He did so great affliction was put upon Egypt. Many perished (Pharaoh too!) in the cold dark waters of the Red Sea.

If you will read through the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel you will find many woes and judgments God proclaims upon the erring and persecuting nations.

God still judges today.

Christ is Lord of the Churches, walking in the midst of the golden Lampstand, "His eyes were as a flame of fire" Rev. 1: 14. "I know," "**I know**," He said. He calls for repentance. Peter reminds us, judgment begins at the House of God. Paul reminds of behaviour in the House of God, "which is the church of **the Living God**" 1 Tim. 3: 15. It is both solemn and searching the mention of "the Living God." There was disorder at Corinth and the Lord judged. Paul wrote the meaning, "For this cause many are weak, and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" 1 Cor. 11: 30-31.

"Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen" 1 Tim. 1: 17.

Two

Reverence

Part Two

My God how wonderful Thou art,	How wonderful, how beautiful,
Thy Majesty how bright.	The sight of Thee must be,
How beautiful Thy Mercy-seat,	Thine endless wisdom, boundless
In depths of burning light.	And awful purity. [power.

It is most important for the spiritual life and tone of the believer that the reverence due to God and the things of God fill his soul. Divine instructions were given to a redeemed people long ago which, in the main, still apply to God's people today. Jehovah impressed upon Israel continually that they were a holy people and to walk in holiness. Reverence should characterise God's people today; certainly, irreverence characterises the world. Let us look now at some aspects of reverence as seen in Lev. 19.

ONE—REVERENCE FOR THE NAME

"Ye shall not profane the Name of thy God" v. 12. Jehovah's complaint in Malachi's day was, "O priests, that despise My Name" 1: 6. His voice in the same book declared, "I am a great King and My Name is dreadful among the heathen" 1: 14. Lev. 24 tells us of one who dared blaspheme the Name. He was put in ward till the mind of the Lord was made known. His doom was pronounced "he shall surely be put to death." "All the congregation of the Lord shall certainly stone him." Just punishment fitting the awful crime of blasphemy against that "holy and reverent Name." The reply of God to Moses for his authority to speak unto Pharaoh was, "I AM hath sent me unto you" Ex. 3: 14. "I AM the

ever present Self Existent One." The seventy in translating the Scriptures revered the Name so much that they took a new quill every time they wrote the name Jehovah. In Numbers 6 God's Name was put upon Israel for blessing, "The Lord bless thee . . . and I will put My Name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Who can curse when God has blessed? No one. Do we, today, as the elect of God, revere that holy and precious Name, the Name of Jesus? We have the Name for Salvation Acts 4: 12, for Baptism Matt. 28: 19; Acts 8: 16, for Gathering Matt. 18: 20, for Prayer John 14: 14, and for Discipline 1 Cor. 5: 4. Unworthy as we are He has put this treasure in earthen vessels. Let us be like those early disciples who "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name," or others who, "for His Name's sake went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles" 3 John 7.

TWO—REVERENCE FOR THE SANCTUARY

"Ye shall reverence My Sanctuary" (v. 30). When God brought Israel out of Egypt and unto Himself, He said, "Let them make Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them" Ex. 25: 8. That Sanctuary was holy Lev. 16: 33. Nadab and Abihu defiled it and died before the Lord. So solemn was the occasion that, "Aaron held his peace" Lev. 10: 3. Paul taught the saints at Corinth that they were the Sanctuary of God. He then follows this truth with these words, "If any man defile the temple (or sanctuary) of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" 3: 17. The solemn warning is carried out in chap. 11 for some were weak, some were sickly, and some were smitten by death. In Acts 5 Ananias and Sapphira brought a lie into God's House; they were both judged and "died before the Lord." "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of His saints and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him." Who can approach Him? for, "Our God is a consuming fire" (see Psalm 24: 3-4). Our attitude is to be one of self-judgment. "If we would judge ourselves." David sinned greatly but was freely forgiven. He judged

the issue, repented and confessed when God made known his sin through Nathan the prophet. "There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared" Ps. 130: 4. We too need to cry like David, "Search me, O God . . . see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" Ps. 139: 23-24. There is a very interesting verse in Psalm 96: "Strength and Beauty are in His sanctuary." I think we see this come out in the Assembly epistle 1 Cor. The strength of the sanctuary is undoubtedly the Cross, "Unto us which are saved it is the power of God" 1: 18. The Scriptures speak of the Cross prophetically, actually, historically and in Rev. 5 eternally.

In every assembly gathering we, with Paul, glory in the Cross. It is our strength, our foundation: we overcome by the blood of the Lamb. What of the beauty of the sanctuary? It is seen in Divine order. After Paul deals with the prevalent disorders at Corinth, in chap. 11 beauty is seen in the "sweet feast of love divine." "This do in remembrance of Me." "No gospel like this feast." He bids the saints examine themselves and "so eat." What beauty is expressed in the following chapters—12, 13 and 14, as the gifts are exercised and expressed. What beauty before God and to the saint in those eloquent pauses as we consider the Person, the Work, and the glories of Christ, when every heart is reverent, bowed, and worshipping. The sisters too add to the fragrance of the gathering in their sweet meditation of Him. Mary treasured up His words and "pondered them in her heart." Let each one of us see that we add to the beauty of God's Sanctuary as we with reverent tread and humble spirit "come together" and there is displayed in the sisters that "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price." Each child of God should reverence the sanctuary of God and devote life and substance thereto.

THREE—REVERENCE IN THE HOME

"Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father" v. 3. Paul confirms this injunction in Eph. 6. **Obedience** at the child stage v. 1, **honour** at all times v. 2. So

long as we are in the home God's beautiful order is to be maintained. The time comes when we may leave the home, maybe to set up one of our own, then obedience may cease, but the time never comes when we cease to honour our parents. The only perfect Boy sets the supreme example, "He was subject to His parents" Luke 2: 51. When He hung upon the Cross He honoured His mother in committing the sacred charge to John, "Son, behold thy mother" John 19. The characteristic of worldly youth is to overthrow the parental yoke; but for Christian youth it is to manifest the grace of God in submission. They may think differently from their parents, nevertheless, the Word is implicit, "fear (or reverence) every man his mother and his father." This is "good and acceptable in the sight of God."

FOUR—REVERENCE FOR THE WORD

"Ye shall keep My statutes" v. 19. The Word of God is no dead letter. It is living and powerful. It is God speaking to us. The public reading of the Scripture should have been a regular institution in Israel. They were to be taught to their children; to be written upon the door posts of their houses and upon their gates Deut. 11: 18-20. Alas, the Word was not so honoured. Blessing was therefore withheld; captivity and the curse took its place. Back to the Word of God has ever brought times of revival and blessing. See what happened in Jehoshaphat's day when he sent Levites to teach the law of the Lord in Judah 2 Chron. 17. Note also the glorious result in Ezra's time. When Ezra opened the Book "the people stood up"—here indeed was reverence. "They bowed the head"—there was humility, and "they worshipped." It was days of "great gladness." So it followed day after day. What a revival! Our early brethren from the rubble of Christendom brought forth precious truths such as—gathering unto Him; the priesthood of believers; the imminence of our Lord's return. Let us today seek to hold fast and hold dear those precious things. The early disciples in Acts 2 in their first love continued stedfastly, "in the apostles' doctrine"—**their love for the Word**; "and fellowship"—**their**

love for each other; "and in breaking of bread"—**their love for the Lord;** "and in prayers"—**their love for the souls of perishing** men and women. The true reverence for God and His truth was in their souls. Let us have the same reverence for the unalterable, unfailing Word both in assembly gatherings and private devotions. Let the Word have its true place in worship and ministry. Too often it is given second place; or pushed into a corner; even neglected. Read what the Word is in Ps. 119. Can we say with v. 72: "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver?"

FIVE—REVERENCE FOR THE BODY

"Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you. I am the Lord" v. 28. The heathen around them indulged in these vile practices which were an abomination to the Lord, hence they forfeited the land. Israel being holy unto the Lord were forbidden to copy these heathenish practices. Paul gives most solemn teaching on the believer's body. "The body is . . . for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." "Ye are not your own . . . glorify God in your body" 1 Cor. 6. After conversion we are responsible before God in the use of our body. Paul prays for the saints that their "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord" 1 Thess. 5: 23. We cannot do what we like with God's property. It is sacred, to be held in trust for Him who redeemed us. In the light of redemption let each of us hold sacred our bodies for Him.

What of our eating? Whilst there is no restriction such as was given to Israel, yet fleshly appetite has not to be indulged. "Whether ye eat or drink . . . do all to the glory of God." Rest, too, for the body is most important. Not only in consideration of our service for Him, but considering our appearing before Him in worship on the first day of the week. Peter (and James and John with him) undoubtedly missed much on the holy mount, for they were "heavy with sleep" Luke 9: 32. If the body does not receive its proper rest on the previous night the mind is not fully awake when, "Amidst us our Beloved

stands." We must be spiritually conscious of His sweet Presence as we come to the sacred trysting place. For our dress and deportment in relation to our body let each one of us search our heart in the presence of God.

SIX—REVERENCE FOR THE AGED

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man" v. 32. The passing years bring with them experience and wisdom. As we revere and converse with the aged ones we may learn from them. The advice from the old men given to King Rehoboam was a thousand times better than that given by the young men. What tragedy followed when he forsook the good counsel of the old men 1 Kings 12. How sobering the thought as we look upon those whose days are practically over and are ready to step into eternity. But again, how beautiful to see the Christian aged ones. "The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness" Prov. 16: 31. Think of aged Jacob dispensing blessing at the close of his life. His chequered career had taught him many bitter lessons, but it had also taught him to know his God. God had blessed him and now he is blessing others. In Gen. 47 he is blessing Pharaoh. In chap. 48 he blessed Joseph's two sons; and in chap. 49 with princely vision he peers into the future and blesses the twelve tribes. Now his life is closing and in dying he worships Heb. 11: 21. Paul pleads to Philemon as "Paul the aged." Philemon being a true Christian gentleman would honour the Word. Shall we too in these days of abounding lawlessness thus honour God's Word, "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father" 1 Tim. 5: 1. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder" 1 Peter 5: 5.

SEVEN—REVERENCE FOR THE SABBATH

"Keep my Sabbaths" v. 3.

God was very definite in the Sabbath being a day of rest. "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" Gen. 2: 3. This day was to be

observed in all Israel as commanded by the Law. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God" Ex. 20: 8-11. The sabbath-breaker paid the full penalty with his life—"whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death" Ex. 35: 2.

While the sabbath was the seventh day and ordained of God to be a day of rest, the present period is the Day of Grace. Since the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ the day has been changed to the First Day of the week. It is enlightening to note what the four Evangelists have to say:—

Matthew 28: 1—

"In the end of the sabbath as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week."

Mark 16: 1—

"When the sabbath was past."

Luke 24: 1—

"Now upon the first day of the week."

John 20: 1—

"The first day of the week."

From these Scriptures the mind of God is very evident regarding the Sabbath and the First Day of the week. Acts 18: 4 ends all mention of the Sabbath. Thereafter it is the First Day of the week, or, the Lord's Day for believers.

Compare these Scriptures:—

"Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre" Luke 24: 1.

"He is not here, but is risen" v. 6.

"The First Day of the week" —**Resurrection!**

"Upon the First Day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread" Acts 20: 7" —**Remembrance!**

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" Rev. 1: 10. —**Revelation!**

"Upon the First Day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him"

1 Cor. 16: 2 —**Responsibility!**

While the ungodly, blinded by Satan "the god of this world" 2 Cor. 4: 4 have no reverence at all for the Day, nor the Lord, both are precious indeed to every child of God. Given health, we ought to be gathered around the Table with our Lord, in fellowship with each other, simply and solely, to remember Him. As we wait in His sweet Presence the Holy Spirit captivates our hearts giving eloquent expression in silent meditation, or, spontaneous adoring worship as we thus, "Show forth the Lord's death"—**looking back** to Calvary's Cross: also, "till He come"—**looking forward** to His soon Return. What a precious and holy Feast indeed.

We look forward to the Lord's Day to give Him His heart's desire. What a beautiful sight for the Father to look down to see the saints gathered together to the precious Name of His beloved Son with the Table richly spread—far costlier and richer than Solomon's table. Surely, "this is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes" Ps. 118: 23. What a precious portion we have in Christ that the world knows nothing about. We pity them and pray for them. Hear our Lord in the Sanctuary praying for His own. "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" John 17: 14. The people of God are separated from a doomed world, even as the Israelites were separated from the Egyptians "I will put a division (Redemption) between My people and thy people" Ex. 8: 23. Our Redemption is costly, "with the precious blood of Christ" 1 Peter 1: 19.

Let us reverence "the First Day of the week." It is God's Day, and in honour of His Son.

Three

Some Aspects of Giving

More happiness when we believe,
More blest to give than to receive,
The joy of Giving, is true living,
When we give, 'tis then we live
The life of purest joy.

To give is to be like God and is an evidence of the new nature God has given to us at conversion. Our Master set the perfect example in giving when He said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to **give** His life a ransom for many" Mark 10: 45.

Christian giving is not only an act, it is the true Christian way of living—and a joyous life; to spend and be spent. It is giving our life to Him who gave His life for us. Romans 12-16 may be looked upon as a second division of that Epistle. In the first half we see Christ giving His life for us: for our Salvation, Justification and Sanctification. Now comes the challenge to the believers: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice" 12: 1. This indeed is giving to Him of His own 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20. The same truth is seen in Joseph and his brethren. "Behold, I have bought you . . . for Pharaoh, lo, here is seed, and ye shall sow the land" Genesis 47: 23-26.

As you read on from Romans 12: 1 to the end of the Epistle, you will find sowing and giving in the Christian life that is to bring forth fruit John 15. And giving is certainly a fruit of the Spirit Philippians 4: 16-18. We ought to count it a privilege and a joy to give and to give freely. "Freely ye have received, freely give" Matthew 10: 8.

Israel in their first love gave freely for the building of the Tabernacle, and Moses had to stay their hand for there was abundance Exodus 36: 3-7. How shall WE give? "Not grudgingly" 2 Corinthians 9: 7 but cheerfully, for the Lord loveth such.

Thou didst not spare Thine only Son,
But gav'st Him for a world undone,
And freely with that blessed One,
Thou givest all.

Redeemed Israel were instructed to give. Indeed, as being under law they were commanded to give.

Let us look at a four-fold aspect of giving as seen in the book of Deuteronomy which would be instructive and applicable for the people of God today:—

ONE—GIVING TO THE LORD

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God . . . they shall not appear before the Lord empty . . . every man shall give as he is able" Deut. 16: 16-17.

How do we appear before the Lord on the first day of the week? Barren or burdened? Empty, or, to be emptied? The wise man well said, "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth" Eccles. 11: 3. Presenting ourselves before the Lord full—of His goodness, grace and love—we shall indeed give expression. When due praise was being accorded to our Lord on His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the Pharisees objected, our Lord replied, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" Luke 19: 37-40. Some time ago I read of a beautiful garden, in the midst of which, there was a lovely fountain of waters sending a gentle spray around. There was quite a number of water-flowers, their stems standing erect out of the water. As the light spray filled their cups, gently they bent downwards releasing their water. So soon as they emptied themselves they sprang upward to be filled again, then bowed low. So the process went on—filling and emptying again. A true picture of worship—burdened with blessing; bowing

in worship. We glean and gather to store in our hearts precious thoughts concerning God's beloved Son as we read and meditate upon His word. We are told of Mary that she, "kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" Luke 2: 19. Her heart was indeed a veritable "alabaster box, very precious." Precious to God, and opened in the presence of her Lord.

If this is our sole occupation we shall indeed have something to give to Him when we appear in His Presence. We may give to Him in the silence and quietness of our own hearts as well as audible expression. At the Table of our Lord we function as holy priests. Grace—not gift—fits us for the Table. Even the youngest believer has liberty to take part. We are told, "Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child" 1st Samuel 2: 18.

TWO—GIVING TO THE LORD'S SERVANTS

"The priest's due from the people . . . they shall give unto the priest" Deut. 18: 3. The priest ministered to the Lord; the people ministered to the priest. God's principle has not altered today. The Lord's servants—saved, called, and sent forth by Him—ministering both to the Lord and His people, are sustained by Him through the exercised hearts of His people. It is our privilege to minister material things to those who minister spiritual things. And what a joy it is to give! The Master said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20: 35. Paul's message to the saints at Corinth is to give, "not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" 2 Cor. 9: 7. Indeed chaps. 8 and 9 of 2 Cor. ought to be read by every believer in Christ relative to the grace of giving. If we pride ourselves in our giving, then our giving in the sight of God means nothing. It is less than nothing in the light of Paul's statement, "Thanks be unto God for His Unspeakable Gift" 2 Cor. 9: 15.

Give, though thy gifts be small, still be a giver,
Out of the little fount proceeds the river:
Out of the river gulfs soon will be
Pouring their waters out, making a sea.

Out of the sea again, Heaven draws its showers
And to the ground imparts, all its new powers.
Thus in the circle born, gifts roll around;
And in the blessings given, blessing is found.

THREE—GIVING TO OTHER SAINTS

“If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren . . . thou shalt surely **give him** and thine heart shall not be grieved . . . thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother . . .” 15: 7-11. This was indeed seen in Spirit-filled believers at the birthday of the Church Acts 2 “All that believed were together, and had all things common” v. 44, also 4: 32. “Neither said any of them that ought of the things he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.” Also, the teaching of the inspired Apostle. “By an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality” 2 Corinthians 8: 14. Let us as true pilgrims not seek to amass for self but heed the words of the Master. “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” Luke 12: 15.

It is a Divine responsibility as well as a glorious privilege and joy to help our brethren and sisters in Christ in any difficulty. We, as believers have one Father who cares for us. We are all in the one Family—the Royal Family—destined for Eternal Glory. After all to whom and for what are we leaving our wealth and possessions that God has blessed us with and entrusted to us? We are stewards. “For it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth” Deut. 8: 18.

Let us remember the words of the little hymn:—

We lose what on ourselves we spend;
We have as treasure without end,
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend,
Who givest all.

FOUR—GIVING TO THE STRANGER

“Who is my neighbour?” Luke 10: 29. We need not ask ourselves this question. Our hearts give the answer. They are all around us. Harken to the command of Jehovah. “When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and has forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow” Deut. 24: 19. We as believers have a debt to pay. Let us seek to pay it in the manner the Apostle did and taught. “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you” Romans 1: 15. Our Master commanded us, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” Mark 16: 15. Are we doing this just where we are? The poor worldling is without Christ and perishing for the Bread of Life while we have “enough and to spare” Luke 15: 17. Let us drop, now and again, a rich sheaf (of first fruits—a living Saviour). It will be a blessing to the one who is a stranger to grace and to God. It was to Ruth when she gleaned in the field of Boaz. It also brought a blessing to Boaz, for, note the instruction, “that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands” v. 19.

A servant of the Lord told me on one occasion he met a poor tramp. As a true evangelist his heart went out in pity to him, and he longed to tell him of his wonderful Saviour. But before he could drop the rich golden sheaf he sought to gain the ear of this poor man by giving him something material. **“This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul”** 26: 16.

Four

The House of God

In the study of any subject in the word of God, it is important to observe the law of first mention. In the above subject we go to Gen. 28. Runaway Jacob is very weary. As the sun sets he lies down to sleep. He dreams: A ladder is set up from earth to heaven: the angels are ascending and descending upon it. Then, "behold, the Lord stood above it." He speaks to Jacob, saying, "Behold, I am with thee." Jacob, awakening from his sleep said, "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" v. 17. There was no building there, only the canopy of heaven, with the twinkling stars overhead and hard stones for his pillow. To Jacob, the "House of God" was:—

The Presence of God—"the Lord stood above it."

The Holiness of God—"a reverent place."

The Shekinah (Glory of God)—"the gate of heaven."

The first House to be built was the Tabernacle in the wilderness—built according to the Divine plan. God said to Moses in the great seven "I wills," "I will take you to me for a people" Ex. 6: 6-8. Later, God said, "let them make Me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" 25: 8. "And on the day that the Tabernacle was reared up the Cloud covered the Tabernacle . . . and at even there was upon the Tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire until the morning. So it was alway: the Cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night" Numb. 9: 15-16. With awesome wonder the Israelites must have gazed upon this great sight. A deep reverence for Jehovah and his Sanctuary must have filled their soul. The Shekinah, or, Glory of God, would be a most interesting and profitable study for my readers, beginning Gen. 3: 24 to Rev. 21: 23.

The second House of God to be built was Solomon's Temple. Israel, now in the Land of Promise, there was no need for the Tabernacle—a temporary structure. David, with deep thanksgivings in his heart desired to build a House for God. His exercise before the Lord was accepted, he prepared materials, and Solomon built, according to the wisdom given of God (see 1 Chron. 17: 1-4, 29: 2-3; 2 Chron. 2: 1-5). "In His Temple all of it tells of Glory" (translation) Ps. 29: 9. What a wonderful Edifice it was. We cannot speak of it now.

As we come to the New Testament we find the "House of God" is the Church of God 1 Tim. 3: 15. No building; composed of "living stones" 1 Peter 2: 5. The Lord in the midst! "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" Matt. 18: 20. The Church is a called out company (compare Acts 15: 14) —to witness, to worship, and "to wait for His Son from heaven" 1 Thess. 1: 10. Observe a thought on, "the House of God."

"Build the House" 2 Chron. 2: 4. **The work of the Evangelist.** Peter preached in the power of the Spirit of God when Pentecost was fully come. About 3,000 souls were saved, then baptized: soon they were gathered together in that precious Name—the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the first Assembly was formed by the Spirit of God at Jerusalem. Other Assemblies were soon formed owning the Lordship of Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The early disciples were called christians first at Antioch; being followers of Christ, or, Christ-like ones. Then as Paul and his companions set forth on missionary journeys to preach the word, souls were saved and other Assemblies, or churches, were formed, such as at Corinth, where Paul later wrote, "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's" 1st Cor. 1: 2.

"The Beauty of the House"—Ps. 27: 4. **The Ministry of the Teacher.** As in Tabernacle and Temple there were

rich unfoldings of the Person and Work of Christ in furniture and furnishings which all displayed the glories of Christ. So, the Spirit-taught teacher brings forth, "things new and old" Matt. 13: 52 to instruct the saints. Paul, after the founding of the Church of God at Corinth "continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them" Acts 18: 11. Those early disciples too, "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" Acts 2: 42. Here is the beauty of these gatherings, where the Lord is to the companies of believers, "a little Sanctuary": where His Presence is known: where the believers' hearts are uplifted and refreshed: and where the Lord is glorified. The world knows nothing of this. **It is there**, gathered solely to His sweet Name and glorious Person we see the Beauty of the House of God: not in furnishing or tapestry, but through His Word, or through His servants we behold the Beauty of His House.

"Behaviour in the House—1 Tim. 3: 15. **The Responsibility of the Elders.** God has placed godly elders in His House; for care; for correction, for discipline. In the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10) the innkeeper was given the charge of the wounded man and was told, "Take care of him . . . when I come again, I will repay thee."

This is God's mind for the Assembly. New born, spiritual babes are to be taken care of, 1 Peter 5: 1-4. Given first, the "sincere milk of the Word" that they may grow thereby" 2: 2.

There is a very important word in 1st Tim. 3: 15—"the church of the living God." This indeed is very solemn and searching. It is not "**my church,**" or, "**our church,**" but, "**the church of the Living God.**" The secret of Elijah's power lay in the words he spoke before King Ahab. "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before **Whom I stand**" 1st Kings 17: 1. Our Lord's true and rightful place is ever, "in the midst," as seen in Rev. 1: 13. Also, in chaps. 2 and 3. To each of these seven churches He says, "I know" "**I know.**" Nothing passes His holy All-seeing eye.

The elders being responsible to the Lord, as "they that must give account" Heb. 13: 17, members are told to submit. It therefore falls to the elder, having a godly care, to speak a timely word—of caution, or, rebuke to an erring one. Otherwise, it may lead to severe discipline in "putting away" from the church. See the solemn lesson in 1 Cor. 5. Also, swift judgment upon the sons of Elijah 1 Sam. 2: 12—17 and 4: 11. "Holiness becometh Thine House, O Lord, forever" Ps. 93: 5. If each one of us realized the sanctity of God's House, our behaviour would correspond thereto.

It is wonderful to note (a) the individual believer is a Temple (or Sanctuary) of God: "Know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit 1 Cor. 6: 19. (b) The local Assembly is the Temple (Sanctuary) of God "Know ye not that ye (the church) are the Temple (Sanctuary) of God" 1 Cor. 3: 16. (c) The aggregate of believers in a Coming Day will be the glorious Temple (Sanctuary) of God. "In whom (Jesus Christ) all the building fitly framed together **groweth unto an holy Temple** (Sanctuary) in the Lord" Eph. 2: 21-22. This is indeed a wonderful truth—with this thought in mind the Apostle impresses upon the mind of believers the sanctity of the House of God. But note the solemn warning in 1 Cor. 3 relative to the church. "If any man defile (or destroy) the Temple of God, him shall God destroy (or defile). How solemn, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" Gal. 6: 7. "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption" Gal. 6: 8. "Judgment must begin at the House of God" 1st Peter 4: 17. It was seen at Corinth: "For this cause many are weak, and sickly among you, and many sleep (death)" 1st Cor. 11: 30.

Five

Jotham's Parable . . .

—Judges chap. 9

Gideon, the sixth judge to deliver Israel, judged them forty years. The people in their gratitude pleads with him to be their king. Wisely, he refuses, saying, "The Lord shall rule over you" 8: 23. Scheming Abimelech in the pride of his wicked heart seeks by stealth to attain kingship, saying, "remember also that I am your bone and your flesh." Hiring wicked men like himself, he seeks to exterminate his brethren—three score and ten persons. Jotham, the youngest, escapes. From Mount Gerizim he calls to the men of Shechem putting forth his parable:

"The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon."

The Olive Tree—No! "Should I leave my fatness wherewith by me they honour God and man." The Olive Tree supplied the oil for the Sanctuary, "command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always" Ex. 27: 20. A very important and God-given task was

given to the Olive Tree to supply its richness for the Sanctuary lamp—and to burn alway. The offer to be king over the trees was very tempting indeed. The lesson for us today is obvious: every christian has a God-given task: to witness for our Lord and Master. When here on earth He was, “the faithful witness” Rev. 1: 5. “I am the Light of the World,” John 9: 5. Before He left this world He said to His own, “Ye are the light of the world” Matt. 5: 14. Paul takes up this word and exhorts the Philippian believers, “shine ye as lights in the world” 2: 15. Alas many of us put our lights “under a bushel (business?) or, under a bed” (laziness?) Mark 4: 21. Let us search our heart before the Lord to find our true condition. The world still calls to us and holds forth a glittering but transient crown. There is the danger in the captivating love of sport, music, entertainment, etc., as to our going in wholly for it and our witness for God blighted. Lot left his godly uncle Abraham for material benefit. When Sodom called he soon left the tent and altar to dwell there. The story ends sadly when Sodom was to be destroyed and Lot was saved, “yet so as by fire.” Demas too was overtaken by the world. Once profitable to Paul, sadly he had to write, “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” 2 Tim. 4: 10. Let us beware brethren, “let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” 1 Cor. 10: 12.

The Fig Tree—was now given the tempting offer to reign. NO! “Should I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go to be promoted over the trees?” Fruit bearing is essential to the christian. The first section of John 15 is our Lord’s message on fruit-bearing — “fruit” v. 2; “more fruit” v. 2; “much fruit” v. 5. Gal. 5 also gives valuable teaching on, “the fruit of the Spirit.” There is a 3 fold cluster here, which is most important to notice:

Love, Joy, Peace—**Godward.**

Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness—**Manward.**

Faith, Meekness, Temperance (self-control)—**Selfward.**

These fruits are produced only by the Holy Spirit Who indwells the believer. This is the true "sweetness" as seen in the fig tree. It is only thus we can minister to God and man. Look for a moment at Joseph, in Jacob's grand prophecy (Gen. 49), with princely vision (Israel, a prince with God) he prophecies:

Joseph is a fruitful bough—**A Divine Statement;**
even a fruitful bough by a well—**A Divine Secret;**
his branches run over the wall—**Divine Blessing.**

Joseph certainly bore fruit, both to God and man. With his branches running over the wall, all men were blessed indeed. He was called, "Zaphnath-paaneah," or, "Saviour of the world" (Newberry) Gen. 41: 45. When the famine was over all the earth, Joseph opened all the storehouses. "And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn."

As the christian is called to bear fruit here is the secret, "he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing" John 15: 5. How true! without the indwelling of our blessed Lord our life is fruitless. Ephraim proved it. Turning away from his idols God spoke these beautiful pardoning words, "I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely . . . I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon . . . From Me is thy fruit found" Hosea 14: 4-8. How can we—His professed followers—leave our "good fruit" to seek the plaudits of men. See how Paul shamed the Corinthian believers, telling them the time to reign was not yet: "I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you" 1 Cor. 4: 8.

Shame on us if we do. The Fig Tree refused. So may we. Then said the trees of the wood unto:

The Vine—"Come thou and reign over us." The Vine refused, saying, "Should I leave my wine which cheereth God and man." The Vine was doing a great work. It reminds one of our beloved Lord hanging on the Cross, when some derided Him saying, "Let Him

now come down from the Cross and we will believe Him'' Matt. 27: 42. Our Lord could have replied like the great-heart Nehemiah, when taunted by his enemies to come down from the building of the wall, he replied, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down" Neh. 6: 3. *Christians, in their daily living for God are doing a great work. Let us remember, all work for God is great. It is for Eternity!*

The lesson of cheerfulness from the Vine is very clear. The most cheerful person on earth—and radiating that cheerfulness to all—is the christian. Let me give you some verses:—

"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord" Deut. 33: 29.

"The God of Peace fill you with all joy and peace in believing" Rom. 15: 13.

Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" John 15: 11.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" Phil. 4: 4. Paul and Silas in prison at Philippi were so full of the joy of the Lord that they could sing unto the Lord. True cheerfulness, so pleasing to God, and true witness to men. Let me give some reasons why the christian is the happiest of men:—

- (a) **Salvation**—"I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His Name's sake" 1st John 2: 12. What a great blessing. "The gift of God is eternal life" Rom. 6: 23.
- (b) **The Word of God**—We have the Wonderful Word, abounding with precious promises and full of instruction. Precious Treasure.
- (c) **A True Fellowship** — "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" 1st John 1: 3. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common" Acts 2: 44.
- (d) **A certain Hope of our Lord's Soon Return** — Jesus said, "I will Come Again, and receive you unto Myself" John 14: 3. When this verse was read to a dear old blind sister, she kissed the verse saying, "Lord, I believe it." So do we. The last word from

our Lord concerning His Coming is found in the last chapter of the Bible Rev. 22—“Behold, I come quickly” “Surely, I come quickly.” May our hearts respond and say, “Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.”

- (e) **We have an Inheritance**—“incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you . . . 1st Peter 1: 4. How wonderful. And there is, “much more.” Our hearts cannot contain all the fulness, sweetness, and joy of the christian life.

“Lord unloose my stammering tongue;
Who should louder sing than I?”

We cannot, and will not leave all this to wear a worthless crown. Do not let Satan’s guile rob us of the “joy of the Lord.”

Then said all the trees unto the:

Bramble (or Thistle) — “Come thou and reign over us.” Eagerly the Bramble accepted. Nothing good could come for it, for the Bramble was useless, both to God and to man. It was the emblem of a cursed creation, “Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth” Gen. 3: 17-18. God’s prophecy is ever true, for so it came to pass. There was hatred and fightings concluding with a sad ending for Abimelech (see chap. 9: 52-54).

His counterpart is found in Diotrephus in 3rd John. Three things are said of him:—

(a) **he loveth to have the pre-eminence**” v. 9—This place rightly belongs to our Lord” in **all things** He might have the pre-eminence” Col. 1: 18. He is ever, “in the midst” :—

In Life—“They (his parents) found Him in the temple sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions” Luke 2: 46.

In Death—“Where they crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst” John 19: 18.

In Resurrection—“For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst” Matt. 18: 20.

In Eternal Glory—“And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb” Rev. 5: 6
Glorious is our Wonderful Saviour: Supreme in creation: better than angels, Greater than prophets: Upholder and Sustainer of “all things.” No one can compare with Him. He alone is worthy.

(b) **Prating . . . with malicious words**” v. 10. This is Satanic work. Satan is called, “the accuser of our brethren” Rev. 12: 10. He falsely accused Job, see chap. 1: 8-11. He is still active through wicked men. But, “fear not,” we have that final victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(c) **“casteth them out of the church”** (local) v. 10—Diotrephus could not cast out of the, “Church which is His Body.” This is precious and holy. “For we are members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones” Eph. 5: 30.

Let each one of us beware. It is sad when the Bramble reigns in the Assembly of God. It is then the saints suffer. The Assembly is God’s Heritage and God will not be mocked. Paul warned the Corinthian believers, “If any man defile (destroy) the Temple of God, him shall God destroy (defile); for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple (Sanctuary) ye are” 1st Cor. 3: 17.

Let each one of us keep to our God-appointed task:—

To Shine in our witness like the **Olive**

To Bring forth “good fruit” like the **Fig**

To Bless both God and man like the **Vine**.

“The Lord shall reign over you.” said Gideon. We gladly own the Lordship of Christ and seek to follow His perfect Example: “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” Mark 10: 45.

It is better to serve than to reign.

Six

The Second Coming

"I will come again"—John 14: 3.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"—1 Cor. 15: 52.

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout"—1 Thess. 4: 16.

"I am . . . the Bright and Morning Star"—Rev. 22: 16.

Dan Crawford, late of Central Africa, tells us that the natives on the march, in the early hours of the morning, when they see the Morning Star appearing, begin to chant, "Latunda, Latunda," meaning "the morning cometh." How it cheered their drooping spirits. For the child of God, "the morning cometh." What a beautiful picture we have in John 21. There was night and "nothing" v. 3. Soon, there was "the morning" and Jesus! v. 4. When He appeared Peter recognized his Lord. he excitedly cried, "It is the Lord!" We shall know Him beloved when He comes to claim His Bride whom He purchased by His precious blood at Calvary. What a Morning that will be. Never more to part from Him whom we love and adore. I often wonder what will be His first word to us. Will it be "Welcome Home?" Before He left this scene He said to His own, "I go to prepare a place for you, and . . . I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also" John 14: 2-3. It is recorded of J. M. Barrie's aged mother, and nearly blind, having someone read this word to her. She said, "Please put my finger on that verse." When it was done, she bent over and kissed it. "Lord," she said, "I believe it." So do we—and cherish it.

As we wait for Him, He too waits. "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long

patience for it" James 5: 7. May the Lord (the Spirit) direct our hearts . . . into the patient waiting for Christ" 2 Thess. 3: 5.

The two greatest events in the world's history are, the Cross and the Coming.

The Cross takes our sins away;

The Coming takes ourselves away.

His Coming is **Sure**—Jesus said, "I will come again" John 14: 3.

His Coming is **Sudden**—"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" 1 Cor. 15: 52.

His Coming is **Secret**—"The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive . . ." 1 Thess. 4: 16: 17.

His Coming is **Sanctifying**—"Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself" 1 John 3: 3.

His Coming is **Satisfying**—"I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness" Ps. 17: 15. Rev. 22: 4.

Like Him! O wondrous thought. Conformed to the Image of God's Beloved Son. Marvellous to know we shall have our own individuality, and yet be like Christ. Dr. Andrew Bonar sent Mr. Spurgeon a copy of his excellent commentary on Leviticus. When Spurgeon acknowledged the book he asked Bonar to send him his photograph that he might place it in the book to remind him of the author. Bonar complied with this remark, "Could you wait a little longer, you would have a much better copy"—Yes! Like Him.

The Old Testament declares He is Coming!

The Gospels tell us He has Come!

The Acts, Epistles, and Revelation reveal He is Coming Again!

It is told of a father who was going abroad on business leaving a young son. When told, his boy said, "Daddy, when will you be coming home again?" The father thought for a moment, then replied, "Listen, son, when you see the leaves on the trees turning brown, then falling off, then you will know Daddy will soon be home."

The days passed, then weeks, then weary months. The boy loved and longed for his Daddy's return. One night there was a great storm of wind. In the morning light

the leaves were strewn all over. Out with his nurse and kicking the fallen leaves, he suddenly remembered! With a whoop of joy he cried. "Hurrah! Hurrah! Daddy will soon be home."

The disciples asked the Lord saying, "Tell us, when shall . . . be the end of the world?" Matt. 24: 3. He goes on to tell them of future events. "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" v. 32.

CONSIDER SOME OF THE SIGNS

"Iniquity shall abound" Matt. 24: 12. How true today. In every country in the world, riots and violence fast spreading. Hi-jackers and revolutionaries multiplying. Prisons and detention centres full. No one can deny the fact that lawlessness and iniquity are on the increase.

"Lovers of pleasure" 2 Tim. 3: 4. As church attendances decrease annually, so-called pleasure-palaces continue to increase. Night clubs and gambling dens cater for lustful pleasure. How true the Scripture, "Lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God."

"Many shall run to and fro" Dan. 12: 4. Ever faster cars, trains, and airplanes glide us swiftly across Continents.

"Knowledge shall increase" Dan. 12: 4. Modern surgery in the new heart transplant and moon landings certainly amaze us. Solomon wrote long ago, "God made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions" Eccl. 7: 29. Alas, none of them has taken man nearer to God.

"Riches Heaped" Jas. 5: 1-3. Few indeed were the millionaires at the turn of the century. Today, there are countless thousands the world over. But money does not bring happiness, often the reverse, as many testify. Far, far better to have "treasure in heaven," abiding and eternal, than riches heaped for destruction.

"Scoffers" 2 Peter 3: 3-4. When a christian takes his stand for his Lord and Master, the scoffer begins to mock.

Faithful Noah warned the people of his day of the impending judgment in the flood. He was laughed to scorn. Was Noah right! He was, for he was, "warned of God" Heb. 11: 7.

"Upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity" Luke 21: 25. How true in the present day. Communism spreads its grasping tentacles over the whole earth with its anti-God doctrine bringing distress to the people and perplexity to Statesmen.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

This is plainly recorded for us in the Word of the Living God. "God cannot lie" Titus 1: 2. The very first great event to take place is the Lord descending from heaven to take His people Home to Glory from an evil and hostile world, 1 Thess. 4: 12-16. Till believers on the Lord Jesus Christ are called up to meet the Lord in the air the world will go on as before. Christians are called, "the salt of the earth" Matt. 5: 13. Salt among other things is a preservative from corruption. Christians arrest the corruptive influences in the world. They are also called, "the light of the world" v. 14. When light is removed then darkness sets in. Sodom was preserved till Lot was taken out, then the fire of God descended in judgment and completely destroyed that city and its inhabitants for their wickedness. When the Lord's people are called upward the way will then be open for the Man of Sin to be revealed. He will then deceive all peoples with diabolical cunning. "Here is wisdom" saith the Scripture, "it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six" **666** Rev. 13: 18. In the reading of the book of Revelation we note the number seven belongs to God. Seven therefore speaks of Divine perfection. Six, being one short of seven must be man's number—human imperfection. Follow through Scripture and see the first **6** in mighty Goliath of Gath 1 Sam. 17 who defied the armies of the Living God. The second six **66** is found in Daniel 3. It is the golden image set up by the heathen king Nebuchadnezzar. At the sound of

music **all** must bow to worship this golden image or be cast into a burning fiery furnace. Worship belongs to God alone, 1 Tim. 6: 15-16. The third six **666** is the culmination of all evil, the Man of Sin—Satan's masterpiece: "he causeth all . . . to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads . . ." Rev. 13: 16. Woe betide the earth dwellers in that day. **It is coming!** and coming **sooner than you think.** John Goodman, founder of W.A.C.Y. 2,000 aims to establish world-wide stability and prosperity by the year 2,000. Mayor Douglas, California, U.S.A., wrote, "By the year 2,000 we should have some semblance of the Garden of Eden in the world." Such folly is unthinkable. We cannot call tomorrow our own, James 4: 13-1. I doubt if we shall see the year 2,000. The signs indicate "the end is near, even at the doors" Matt. 24: 33.

While we cannot completely dovetail events, I think we can follow the Divine pattern, thus:

The present day is called "**The Day of Grace**" 2 Cor. 6: 2. The Gospel call goes forth to the whosoever" John 3: 16.

The next great event is called, "**The Day of Christ**" Phil. 1: 10. That is when the Lord comes, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump . . . and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" 1 Cor. 15: 52, when the saints have gone to meet their Lord in the air, then Judgments fall from heaven upon earth (see Revelation chaps. 4-18. This is called, "**The Day of the Lord**" 1 Thess. 5: 2 (and many other Scriptures). This Day merges into, "**The Day of God**" (or Eternity) 2 Peter 3: 12.

God will bring order out of disorder. He is working to a Divine plan and nothing can hinder. To the saints at Thessalonica Paul writes, "And to you who are troubled rest with us" 2 Thess. 1: 7. To the saints at Rome, "The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" Rom. 16: 20. There shall be no more sorrow, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" Rev. 21: 4.

An elderly christian lay dying. Her husband sat by her bedside holding her hand. Silently they remained this way for some time. Then a tear came into her eyes. The dear old brother when he saw this carefully took his handkerchief and tenderly wiped the tear away, saying, "Thank God, Mary, that will be the last tear." Alas, there is no future for the unsaved ones. Only the child of God has a hope beyond the tomb. Search out these Scriptures and find something for your soul:—

A Blessed Hope—Titus 2: 13.

A Purifying Hope—1 John 3: 3.

A Comforting Hope—1 Thess. 4: 16-18.

A Glorious Hope—Phil. 3: 20-21.

A Joyous Hope—1 Thess. 2: 19-20.

An Imminent Hope—Jas. 5: 8 and Rev. 22: 20.

There's a Man in yonder Glory,
I have loved for many years:
He has cleared my guilty conscience,
And has banished all my fears:
He is Coming in a moment,
In the twinkling of an eye;
And no time will be allotted,
Just to utter one goodbye.
Are you ready, christian, ready
For the Shout and Trump and Voice?
Will His Coming make you tremble,
Or cause you to rejoice?
Are you walking, talking with Him?
Daily making Him your care?
Do you live so close to Heaven,
That a breath would waft you There?

When our Lord comes to the air to call His waiting people Home, then the Judgment Seat of Christ will be set up in the air. "Behold, I come quickly; and **My reward is with Me** to give every man according as his work shall be" Rev. 22: 12. While there is reward, Paul makes it abundantly clear that some, "shall suffer loss" 1 Cor. 3: 15. There is the "wood, hay, and stubble," which shall be burned up — a wasted life; nothing for

eternity: "saved; yet so as by fire." We are seen here as builders. The Foundation is laid—Jesus Christ. He is the Rock—the Rock of Salvation! The Foundation of God stands sure. We are saved! Praise Him! That is secure. But what about our lives? Can we do what we like? **NO!** Christ is Lord. To His own disciples on one occasion He said, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say" Luke 6: 46. Let each one of us make the application, "Lord, is it I?"

You will know what is wood, hay, and stubble in your own life. For the gold, silver, and precious stones that we build, and are so precious to God, I would suggest:

Gold—The highest metal. The Deity of our beloved Lord and Master. Denied by many today. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in flesh" 1 Tim. 3: 16. Hold fast to the Deity of Christ—precious to God. Faithfulness will be rewarded.

Silver—Speaks of Redemption. Paul wrote: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" Gal. 6: 14. The Cross is everything to the sinner—and to God!

Precious Stones—The precious truths of the New Testament. The early disciples "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Paul charged young Timothy, "O Timothy keep that which is committed to thy trust" 1 Tim. 6: 20. The precious truths are "precious stones" in the sight of God.

There is a suggestive picture in Gen. 24. When Abraham's servant has found the bride for Isaac, he adorned her with jewels:—

Silver—Redemption!

Gold—Accepted "in Christ!"

Precious Things—Peter gives us some of these in his Epistles — "precious blood," "precious faith," "precious promises." "Elect Precious" (Christ).

Let us hold fast to these: Precious to God and precious to the saints.

The Judgment seat of Christ will be:—

Reviewing—"all appear" 2 Cor. 5: 10.

Revealing—"make manifest the counsels of the heart"
1 Cor. 4: 5.

Recompense or Reward—"receive a reward" 1 Cor. 3: 14.

Rebuke for some—"suffer loss" 1 Cor. 3: 15.

"ashamed before Him at His Coming" 1 John 2: 28.

I earnestly believe our Lord is Coming for His own very, very soon. The Bible foretells it: Angels announced it: Apostles taught it: Best of all Jesus said it, and I believe it. "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus." He still says to us today:—

"Occupy till I come"—**Work** Luke 19: 13.

"Hold fast till I come"—**Wait and Witness** Rev. 2: 25.

"Show the Lord's death till He come"—

Worship 1 Cor. 11: 26.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.—Jude v. 24-25.

Seven

* *Heaven*

Cities have always had an attraction for people of all lands. We thrill at the mention of such cities as London, New York, Paris, Rome, or any other great city. But I want you to think of the greatest City of all. It is called in the Bible the City of the Living God. It is described in the last 2 chapters of the Bible, Revelation chapters 21 and 22. God's Glorious City is of pure gold, built upon 12 foundations, each being a massive precious stone. The Walls are of Jasper, 216 feet high. There are 12 gates, all of pearl; at each gate an angel. Taking a look inside this wonderful City we see a beautiful street of purest gold. But as gold is not valued there, the thrill of it all is its beauty and purity. Before I invite you to this City, for invited you are, let me tell you something more of its wonders.

Its Dimensions. An angel measured the City with a golden reed. The City lies foursquare; the length, breadth, and height of it are equal, 12,000 furlongs or 1,500 miles. Its symmetry is perfect. But did you notice, not only the length and breadth are equal but the height also; 1,500 miles high! This wonderful City is much larger than the British Isles. Truly there is room for all who accept the gracious invitation.

Its Lighting cannot be equalled, "The Lamb is the light thereof." On earth we have daylight and artificial light. When God's daylight turns to darkness then man's ingenuity has devised artificial light in its various forms. But neither of these are required in the City of the Living God, for the Light there is the "Glory of God and the Lamb."

Its Health is perfect. There are no hospitals. Doctors and nurses are not required. There is no pain, nor disease, nor infirmity of any kind. There are no cemeteries for death is unknown. Eventide homes are not required for there are no elderly people. Its inhabitants enjoy perennial youth for they breathe the ethereal air of the new creation untainted by defilement of any kind. In the midst of the street of that City blooms the Tree of Life bearing 12 manner of fruits, yielding her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Is all this true? God has said it, and "God cannot lie."

Its Beauty is unexcelled. "There shall be no more curse." Picture to yourself the fairest, brightest day that ever dawned, so peaceful, so calm: no sorrows to mar; no fear to cloud; no frosts nor cold winds to blight; no darkness to descend. Perfect peace, perfect rest, perfect beauty. In 1 Peter 1, 4 we have a lovely picture of that City. "Incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away"

Incorruptible—as to its beauty.

Undefiled—as to its purity.

Fadeth not away—as to its durability.

We speak of the land of the blest, that country so bright
and so fair,

And oft are its glories confessed, but what must it be to
be there!

We speak of its peace and its love, the robes which the
glorified wear,

The songs of the blessed above, but what must it be to
be there!

Its Society is of the best. The redeemed of the Lord are there, cleansed by the precious shed blood of Jesus, now at Home with the Lord, and in their glorified bodies. No sorrow, no pain, no tears, for it is God Himself who shall "wipe away all tears from their eyes." There are 4 lovely pictures of them in the book of Revelation—seated, clothed, crowned and singing. All the lovely Old Testament saints will be there. Abraham, "looked for that City." David sang of it; Moses esteemed it; Job longed for it; Noah prepared for it These all died in faith, having

seen the promises afar off, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" Heb. 11, 13. Multitudes of bright angels grace that glorious City. They worship God, serve the Throne, and are ministering companions of the redeemed. What shall I say more of its choice society. The inspired writer in Hebrews 12, 22-23 sums up the eternal bliss with these words, "and to Jesus . . ." The golden street would be dull without him, the ransomed song empty and hollow. His own sweet Presence is the perfume of the City four-square. As the stars are to the heavens, or the sun is to this earth so is Jesus Christ, and much more, in that fair and golden City. One has aptly said:—

The Light of Heaven is the face of Jesus
The Joy of Heaven is the presence of Jesus
The Melody of Heaven is the name of Jesus
The Harmony of Heaven is the praise of Jesus
The Theme of Heaven is the work of Jesus
The Employment of Heaven is the service of Jesus
The Fullness of Heaven is Jesus Himself.

In closing, may I ask you in sincerity, are you going to that City, the City of the Living God? Queen Victoria, visiting some of her cottagers around Balmoral Castle was asked by one of them, "Is your Majesty going to Heaven?" The good Queen replied, "By the grace of God and the precious blood of Jesus, I am." Are you, dear reader?

When I enter that beautiful City,
And the saved all around me appear,
I hope that someone will tell me,
It was you who invited me here.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the City was pure gold, as it were transparent glass"—Rev. 21: 21.

"And the City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the Glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof"—Rev. 21: 23.

"The City of the Living God"—Hebrews 12: 22.

"In My Father's House are many mansions . . .
I go to prepare a place for you . . . I will come again,

and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also"—John 14: 1-3.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life”—Rev. 22: 1-2.

★The above address can be had in leaflet form from the Author.

Eight

Some Questions and Answers

One

Question—**Are our loved ones in Heaven after death?**

Answer—If saved by Grace they are Eph. 2: 8. The very moment they pass from this life, they are in the immediate Presence of their Lord. Consider the repentant and dying thief. Crucified beside the Lord, he said, "Lord remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The Saviour immediately replied, "**Today, shalt thou be with Me in Paradise**" Luke 23: 42-43. There was no good work the dying thief could do. Salvation is all of Grace. The Apostle Paul had the desire and assurance that, "to depart and to be with Christ: which is far better" Phil. 1: 23. Again, he writes with assurance. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord" 2 Cor. 5: 8. The whole tenor of Scripture makes it abundantly plain that the believer in Christ is safe and happy after death.

Two

Question—**What kind of body shall the redeemed have in Heaven?**

Answer—There will be a beautiful change: "fashioned like unto His glorious body" Phil. 3: 21. Consider our Lord's resurrection body as found in the Gospels. We shall not be spirits, but, we shall have a spiritual body.

Consider 1st Cor. 15. The believers at Corinth had written the Apostle as to the resurrection body v. 35. The Apostle's answer cannot be fully treated in so short a space here, but, note v. 42-44.

- (a) It is sown (at death) in corruption (see Lazarus John 11: 39): it is raised in incorruption.
- (b) It is sown in dishonour (in the soil). It is raised in glory—**Like Christ!**
- (c) It is sown in weakness (in dying). It is raised in power (see John 11: 43).
- (d) It is sown a natural body (earthly). It is raised a spiritual body (glorious and heavenly) v. 40.

Please notice two very important words in this chapter:—
First, "sown" (not buried). When we sow we expect a return. It will be so in the resurrection body of glory and beauty.

Second, "sleep." It is actual death meant here (see also Stephen Acts 7: 60). Since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, death is no more death to the christian, it is now, "sleep in (or through) Jesus" 1 Thess. 4: 14.

Two very comforting words for the child of God:—

- (a) "So shall **we ever be with the Lord**" 1 Thess. 4: 17.
- (b) "we should **live together with Him**" 1 Thess. 5: 10.

Three

Question—Shall we know one another in Heaven?

Answer—I have no doubt we shall. In 2 Sam. 12 we find that King David is concerned about his child. He fasted and prayed to the Lord. When tidings came that the child was dead, he exclaimed, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" v. 23. David fully believed in this God whom he learned to love and trust. Therefore, of a surety God would allow him to see his loved child again in Heaven.

Paul too, had the same faith and assurance concerning those he had led to Christ (see 1 Thess. 2: 19-20).

Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration Mark 9: 4 please note the words, "**there appeared,**" also, "**and they**

were talking with Jesus." There was full recognition with Moses and Elijah. There will be sweet conversations in Heaven, like Luke 24: 13-27. We shall have no recollections of sad events on earth. In the resurrection body there will be no remembrance of that which grieved us on earth. Of the pardoned sinner God says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and, **I will remember their sin no more**" Jer. 31: 34. What a gracious God we have.

He forgives and forgets our sins—Isaiah 43: 25.

He does not forget His saints—Isaiah 44: 21.

Four

Question—What about the children: Will they be in Heaven?

Answer—There is definitely an age of responsibility. We read about the child Moses: "When he was **come to years**, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter"—"choosing . . ." Heb. 11: 25. Note the word, "**choosing.**" Moses at maturity, knowing the full implication made his deliberate choice to side with God's people and trust God for the future pathway. We are told of little Samuel (later a prophet of the Lord) "Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child" 1 Sam. 2: 18. There comes a time to everyone when God calls to us and we have to make a choice; either to follow Jesus, or self and the world (see Mark 1: 17-20). The age of the child may vary. With Samuel he obeyed, when, in the still of the night he heard the Lord call, "Samuel, Samuel." Samuel answered, "Speak: for thy servant heareth" 1st Sam. 3: 10. Today, the Saviour still calls, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" Luke 18: 16. When the choice is made the children belong to Him. But, note again, should death occur before the age of responsibility is reached, the child is the Lord's! Full provision has been made in the Atonement. From birth to responsibility they are the Lord's by right of Redemption. The blood of Israel's lamb

sprinkled on the doorway protected the firstborn son (see Ex. 12). So, the blood of the Lamb of God shed on Calvary protects till responsibility or, maturity is reached (study Jonah 4: 11). There is also a lesson in Ex. 9: 32. "But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: **for they were not grown up.**"

What a God of love and mercy we have. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. 10: 25.

Let me emphasize, it is the duty of every parent to pray for, and instruct their children in God's way of Salvation, thus setting their feet on the royal road to Heaven.

Epitaph on a tombstone over four children in St. Andrews Churchyard, Scotland:—

Bold infidelity, turn pale and die;

Beneath this stone four sleeping infants lie;

Say, are they lost or saved?

If death's by sin they sinned for they are here.

If Heaven's by works in Heaven they can't appear.

Reason, ah, how depraved!

Turn to the Bible's sacred page, the knot's untied.

They died, for Adam sinned,

They live, for Jesus died.

Five

Question—Will the Church pass through the "great tribulation"?

Answer—Definitely NO!

Scripture is against it: Reason is against it. You will note the two words, "**tribulation**" 1st Thess. 3: 4, and "**great tribulation**" Matt. 24: 21. For the believer in Christ the present day is tribulation as we witness for our Lord. To His own disciples He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" John 16: 33. The "**great tribulation**" will come upon all the world Rev. 3: 10. It will be a period of unparalleled suffering, both for the Jews (called the elect Matt. 24: 22) for their rejection of their Messiah John 19: 15); and upon the whole world for their rejection of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Before the "great tribulation" commences, "the blessed Hope"—our Lord's Second Coming—will take place. Our Lord promised John 14: 3 "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." This is an any-moment event. The dead will be raised with their spiritual bodies, the living saints changed, and together! "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" 1st Thess. 4: 17. Away from all coming disaster, suffering, and judgment. Christians are called, "the salt of the earth" Matt. 5: 13. Salt among other things is a preservative from corruption. Christians arrest the corrupt influences in the world. They are also called, "the light of the world" v. 14. When light is removed then darkness sets in. Sodom was preserved till Lot was taken out, then the fire of God descended in judgment and completely destroyed that city and its inhabitants for their wickedness. When the Lord's people are called Upward, the way will then be open for the Man of Sin to be revealed, deceiving all peoples with diabolical cunning. But the Church will be in Glory with her Lord. The Church is the Bride of Christ Rev. 21: 9 also v. 2. Christ is the Bridegroom John 3: 29. Rev. 19: 7-9, is "the marriage supper." The Church has nothing to do with earth. She is heavenly in Calling, Character, and Destiny. Our Lord calls it, "His own" John 13: 1 "My Church" Matt. 16: 18.

Some may say, "but the Church must pass through the 'great tribulation' to be purified." Nonsense; the Church is being purified now—on earth. The Church, redeemed by Christ is precious to Him. He gave Himself for it, **that He might sanctify and cleanse it . . . (now!)** and present it to Himself, a glorious Church . . . Eph. 5: 26-27. Moreover, we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones v. 30 "great mystery." It is not possible that His Church will pass through the great tribulation.

The church, as the Bride of Christ, is not only nourished and cherished by Christ, the Bridegroom, but is also protected by Him. So, Christ will keep His own.

Would a husband let his wife endure a period of trial and suffering? Definitely NO! True love cares and protects. To the church at Philadelphia our Lord says, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" Rev. 3:10.

We must separate Israel (her promise and hope Acts 26: 6-7) and the Church (her Hope and Destiny 1 Thess. 2: 19, Titus 2: 13). The Church is heavenly—Israel, earthly. We must distinguish, otherwise there will be confusion.

Nine

My Testimony—*as seen from Acts 27 in Paul's journey to Rome*

"The south wind blew softly" v. 13—All was fair when Paul's company set out on their journey to Rome. When, but a lad of seventeen years the world gave promise of good things: pleasure, and freedom from parental restraint and discipline. I was making money in the coal pits and meant to spend it for self. My sky seemed blue and would remain so for many years. Thus I gave myself to what I thought was enjoyment—but how false I proved it to be.

"But not long after there arose . . . a tempestuous wind" v. 14—The Spirit of God graciously began to work in my soul, I was a sinner "I remembered God, and was troubled" Ps. 77: 3. I still recall the workings of God to bring me to Himself. Sitting on the front "hutch" of a load of coals when driving my pony to the "pit bottom," it seemed a "Voice" from heaven spoke to me saying, "What about your sins?" I was startled and dismayed. I had never thought about my sins. So it came to pass I was: **"exceedingly tossed with a tempest"** v. 18—No rest could I find. "My sin," cried David in the Penitential 51st Psalm **"My sin is ever before me."** O dear unsaved one, it is a terrible experience when God deals with you. In olden times God dealt in mercy with men to bring them to Himself, and save from a terrible fate:

"For God speaketh once. yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men,

and sealeth their instruction. That he may withdraw man from his purpose and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers." Job 33: 14-22.

"Neither sun nor stars in many days appeared" v. 20—God's sword of stern judgment seemed to hang over my head. His wrath was heavy upon me. I saw myself now a vile, guilty, and hell-deserving sinner. No light. All was dark and hopeless. I was the accursed of God. I tried reformation. Being ignorant of God's Word I resolved to begin a new life. Soon I realized it was hopeless. I had no power to help myself. Then, it seemed:

"All hope that I should be saved was then taken away" v. 20—My experience was like Jonah in his deep dire distress:

"And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord and he heard me; out of the belly of hell, cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head, I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. Jonah 2: 2-7.

There seemed no hope for me: deep darkness and dire misery filled my soul—I was lost! **lost!! LOST!!!** Then like David in his extremity.

"This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" Ps. 34: 6. How I bless God, and shall through all eternity.

"Be of good cheer: I believe God" v. 25—So said Paul in the darkest hour. And so I too found in my deep need. There was a glimmer of light and hope now. I believed God that I was a sinner:

"For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God." Rom. 3: 23.

I believed God as to the Way of Salvation:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast." Eph. 2: 8-9.

Then that precious verse was brought before me from a servant of God:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life." John 3: 16.

That little word, "whosoever" meant me—and you too! dear soul. Take the word out and put your own name in its place—Believe it! and you will have peace and joy NOW! and through all Eternity. How wonderful. "Be of good cheer" believe God.

"We sounded and found it twenty fathoms" v. 28. We are drawing near to Eternity's shore. Our days are becoming shorter. Isaac cried, "I know not the day of my death" Gen. 27: 2. Neither do we: but, thank God we can prepare for it. While we can die in a brief moment, we can also be saved in that same moment. Here is the word of Paul and Silas, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" Acts 16: 31. **Believe!**

Nothing either great or small, nothing sinner no, Jesus paid it, paid it all, long, long ago.

"And when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms" v. 28. How wise they were to keep sounding. We cannot take chances. Ever so many self-righteous persons say to me when I speak to them of eternal things, "O, I'll take my chance." It will not do. We simply cannot afford to take chances where Eternity is concerned. The matter of your soul's salvation is imperative. Time is too short to neglect it: Eternity too long to regret it. See the wisdom in what the shipmen did:

"Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern" v. 29—one anchor will do! I proved it to be sufficient, so have multitudes more. It is **the anchor of FAITH**. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That will hold you. It **cannot** break. It

cannot fail. For, "He is the **Rock**" Deut. 32: 4 and 1st Cor. 10: 4. O what a Saviour is Jesus. Stedfast, unfailling, loving and kind. He says, "I am the good shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" John 10: 11. Commit yourself to the love and care of this good Shepherd, then read about Him.

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours saying unto them. Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." Luke 15: 4-7.

So the story ends happily: they, "**wished for the day**" v. 29—And it came! Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is waiting and looking for that Great Day when Jesus according to His own true promise, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" John 14: 3.

If you are saved, "**Praise the Lord**"
If not, **Trust Him now.**

"Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust"
Ps. 40: 4. Just say to Him. "Behold, God is **my Salvation**: I will trust, and not be afraid" Isaiah 12: 2.

Ten

The Way of * Salvation



It is told of Julius Caesar, that, in the midst of revelry an urgent message was handed to him. He threw it aside scoffingly and cried, "Pleasure tonight, business tomorrow." Alas, when morning light dawned Julius Caesar lay dead. The important message the previous evening had warned him that his life was in danger. **The warning message lay unopened.**

Over the central doorway of Milan Cathedral, Italy, is a sentence which reads: "Nothing is important save that which is eternal."

We have no time to sport away the hours;
All must be earnest in a world like ours.

Dear reader, should death terminate this life would it find you prepared? Prepared to meet God? Prepared for eternity? Remember the future is determined by choice—not chance. In self and in sin man is unfit for the presence of God. The prophet Isaiah cried to a people of old, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you" Isaiah 59: 2.

Before you can be saved you must realise that you are lost. Then you will find:

There's a way back to God, from the dark paths
of sin;

There's a Door that is open that all may go in.

At Calvary's Cross is where you begin:
When you come as a sinner to Jesus.

I once heard of a little boy who lived in the City of Glasgow. He was lost. In his helplessness he began to cry. A friendly policeman approached and asked him why he was crying. "Please sir, I'm lost: take me to the Cross and I'll find my way home." Of course, the lad meant Glasgow Cross which is a famous landmark.

The Christian's second birth begins at the Cross—the Cross of Calvary. There, Jesus "suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" 1 Peter 3, 18.

Come with me first to Gethsemane's garden, where the Man of Sorrows is bowed in prayer and anguish. "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me" Matt. 26: 39. See Him brought to Pilate's judgment hall, the Creator of the Universe, to be tried by the creature of His hand. After the mock trial and the cruel scourging. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" Isaiah 53: 7. Passing through the crowds to the place which is called Calvary bearing His Cross, some spit on His face; others mock Him and smite Him; some pluck the hairs from His cheeks. They come to Calvary. He is weary after the long unjust trial and smarting from the painful scourging; but on they hurry Him to His death, crying, "Away with Him, away with Him." Roughly the soldiers handle Him, greedily dividing His garments as they disrobe Him. They look at His beautiful seamless robe and decide to cast the dice for it. Oh, what suffering and maltreatment He endured as they seize Him and nail Him to the Cross:

Hark, I hear the dull blow, of a hammer swung
low;
They are nailing my Lord to the tree:
And the Cross they upraise as the multitude gaze;
On the blest Lamb of dark Calvary.

He had told them He was a king and mockingly they platted a crown of thorns which pierced His lovely brow. Crucified now between two malefactors "with Jesus in the midst," He looks down with pity upon His tormentors and prays for them, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do" Luke 23: 34. Oh, what a tender loving heart has the Saviour of sinners. But see! a darkness has come over all the land. Christ the loving Saviour is taking the sinner's place and bearing the sinner's guilt. The price is His precious blood to atone for sin and provide salvation for a guilty world. He has paid to the "uttermost farthing." Divine justice is satisfied: the perfect Sin Offering has been accepted. Now Jesus cries with a loud voice, "It is finished!"

Ne'er again shall God Jehovah, smite the Shepherd
with the sword,

Ne'er again shall cruel sinners, set at nought our
glorious Lord.

Jesus said, "I am the Way . . ." John 14: 6. The Way to God. The Way to Salvation. But see now! He is rising from among the dead the third day as He said. He leads His own disciples out to Bethany. After instructing them concerning the Kingdom of God He ascends into heaven. The prophetic Scripture is fulfilled. "God is gone up with a shout" Ps. 47: 5. Higher He ascends, beyond the first and the second heaven which by His word He had created. Satan and the evil powers fall back: angels welcome Him—the King of Glory. What a sight for earth, hell and heaven. He is now "**far above all.**" Honoured by God; worshipped by angels; feared by demons, and adored by the multitude of redeemed ones. What a mighty work was done at Calvary. One has well said, "It is a work done in a day and wondered at forever." Exalted in heaven now He is a Prince and a Saviour, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

What is your response, dear reader? He is waiting for you. He extends to you a Royal pardon from His own pierced hand. Will you accept it? Will you accept Him? "God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" Acts 3: 26.

Believe it, O sinner, believe it:
Receive the glad message—'tis true:
Trust now in the crucified Saviour,
Salvation He offers to you.

You can be saved:

- * **BY A LOOK**—"Look unto Me and **BE YE SAYED**"
Isaiah 45: 22.
- * **BY A CALL**—"Whosoever shall call upon the Name of
the Lord shall **BE SAYED**" Rom. 10: 13.
- * **BY BELIEVING**—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and thou shalt **BE SAYED**" Acts 16: 31.
- * **BY COMING**—"I am the Door: by Me if any man
enter in, he shall **BE SAYED**" John 10: 9.

"He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life:
and he that believeth not the Son shall not see
life: but the wrath of God abideth on him"
John 3: 36.

*The above address can be had in leaflet form from the Author.

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