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## The Crisis of the Christ

*"Father, glorify Thy name." - John 12:28.*

THE CIRCUMSTANCES under which this prayer came to be uttered were unusual, even in the unique life of our Lord, for it was His crisis hour, as the immediate context shows: "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name." - Ver. 27, A. R. V. (margin).

## THE BOY JESUS

'There had been other, lesser, crises in the life of our Lord, two of them, the Baptism and the Transfiguration, being marked, as was this one, by the approving voice of His Father from heaven. Even before He became the Christ, before He was anointed, when He was but twelve years of age, it would appear that He experienced something in-the nature of a crisis. The law under which He lived required all male Jews from twelve years old and upward to appear three times. a year in the temple at Jerusalem. And to the next occurring Passover, after Jesus had completed His twelfth year, He was taken by His parents. "The pilgrimage to Jerusalem," it has been observed, "would be regarded by the Jewish boys as a pleasant holiday, full of the wonder of travel, the freshness of novelty, the pleasure of, social intercourse, and the excitement of scenes and ceremonies peculiar to the paschal season, and toy the holy city." To the boy Jesus, however, the attraction was not "the hills that were round about Jerusalem, or the manner of stones and buildings which were enclosed in the city itself, or the gay and crowded street, nor yet the social entertainment, but that quiet spot in the temple court, where sacred history was recited, and Divine prophecy explained. And so absorbed did the Boy Jesus become, in converse with the learned in sacred lore, that the Nazareth caravan started without Him, and He seems to have been aroused from His absorption by the expostulation, 'Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold Thy Father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.' His reply intimates that He had expected to be set free from parental restraint, and to follow a prophet's mission, while yet, like Jeremiah, only: in His teens: 'How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about. My Father's business?' It is, however, revealed to Him that He must continue as a child of Nazareth, and with deep meaning it is recorded, 'He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.' Judea is more attractive than Galilee, and Jerusalem more interesting than Nazareth, and

the scenes of the temple more in unison with His spirit than the workshop, and the teachers of the law more congenial companions than the Nazarenes, and the study of truth more in harmony with His spirit than' agricultural carpentry, and the immediate entrance upon His mission more in accord with His zeal than delay; but if there were hesitation it was only for a moment; gracefully, as the moon falls back behind a cloud; silently and sweetly, as the star of the morning, still bright and beautiful, retires before the rising sun, so Jesus went back to the oblivion of Nazareth, until the time of His showing unto Israel, saying in His cheerful retirement, 'I am willing to be concealed and unknown. Father, glorify -- *Thy* name.'

## THE BAPTISM

Some eighteen years later our Lord passed another crisis. What happened between these two crises we would all be interested to know, but we have not been informed. All we are told is that He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Arrived at manhood's estate, which, under the Jewish law, was thirty years of age, He carried out the purpose, of which His boyhood days had given such glowing promise, and in full consecration to the Father's will presented Himself to the Baptist at Jordan. Acknowledged by the Father with a voice from heaven as His well-beloved Son; granted the Spirit without measure, which appeared in the form of a dove, He is led by that Spirit into the wilderness, there to be tempted of the Devil forty days. He is urged to relieve the hunger which He experienced at the close of His long fast, by working a miracle for that relief. He is tempted to presume upon His own destiny, and upon, the protection of Divine providence, and for self-magnification to expose Himself to useless danger by casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. He is enticed to do homage to the Adversary of God and man, and universal dominion is offered as a bribe. "This," as another has remarked, "was temptation, real trial, positive probation. He was tried as the sapling by the wind, and as the ship by the storm; as the vessel of clay by the stroke of the potter, and as gold by fire." And the result shows that the Man Christ Jesus was characterized by that perfection which consists in perfect love to God; for in the words: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God"; "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve";-in these words, we say, the glorious sentiment of our text is seen to be triumphant, and stronger than all other voices we hear the voice of Jesus in each temptation saying, "Father, glorify *Thy* name."

## THE TRANSFIGURATION

Another crisis would appear to have been experienced by our Lord during the week preceding His transfiguration on the mount. Only a week before this event He had announced to His disciples that He must suffer many things, and be rejected, and be killed. Of what transpired during that momentous week we have no record -- that is to say, during the week which intervened between the day He first formally announced to His disciples His approaching death and resurrection, and the day of His transfiguration, when again the voice of His Father was heard from heaven in tones and terms of warmest approval. But as an eminent writer has pointed out, since "St. Matthew tells us that '*from that time forth,*' from the very day, that is, on which He first announced His death to His amazed disciples, 'Jesus *began to show* unto them that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and scribes, and be killed'; it would seem probable that He spent this week in discussing with them [that which, in the vision, they beheld Moses and Elijah discussing with Him, namely, the decease, the departure], 'the *exodus* which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem;' " that 'He spent this week "in dissipating their foolish dream of a military triumph and an earthly empire; in answering their remonstrances, in soothing their 'fears, in proving to them the necessity and the expediency of His going away from them, and going by the dark road of death."

"We may be sure, we think, since Christ lived not for Himself but for others, that the glory came on Him, and the voice spake from the bright cloud on this occasion, for the comfort and teaching of the disciples as well as for His own. Yet who can doubt that in this strange and thrilling scene there was teaching and comfort for the Son of Man Himself? St. Luke tells us that it was *'while He was praying* that the fashion of His countenance- was altered.' And who can doubt what the theme of His prayer was? Who can doubt that, as afterwards in Gethsemane, so now on the slope of Hermon, He was crying with strong supplication and tears for a will at one with that of His Father, a will obedient even unto death? The thought of the Cross had never taken such a hold on Him as during the week in which He taught His disciples that the Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of men. What wonder if, as He spake, the prospect of death grew darker, more shameful and more abhorrent, to Him who was the Life indeed? What wonder if, when the week was over, His spirit grew faint within Him, so faint that He must needs go up into a mountain apart and pray, in order that, by communion with His Father, He might be reconciled to His Father's will and cheerfully make it His own?"

That this was the substance of His prayer we may infer from the answer it received. The Transfiguration was the answer. And what an answer it was! We cannot pause now to examine all its lessons of faith and hope and love. We must content ourselves at this time in noting that the Father, whose Name He desired above everything else to honor, granted Him then and there a foretaste of the honor and glory that should shortly be His. Moreover when the Father did this by causing His face to shine as the sun and His raiment to become white as snow, what a suggestion this was of the glorious character our Lord possessed! It was as though all the purity, all the splendor of His inner nature was breaking through the veil of flesh, while the voice from heaven proclaimed Him the beloved Son in whose devotion unto death the Father was well pleased!

### THE FINAL CRISIS

But great though the previous crises were, and magnificent the manner in which He met them, they did but point to the last and chief crisis of His life to which our text relates, the crisis which Jesus speaks of as *the* hour -- this hour. In the words of another: "This was not only a crisis, and the greatest crisis, but the crisis of all former crises. He had been born for this hour. To this hour -- the hour of His agony and death -- all the hours of His past life had tended. He had suffered before, but now His soul was to become exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. He had often sweat the sweat of toil, but now He was to sweat the sweat of agony. He had been despised by men, but now He is to be crucified as a malefactor. He had been deeply grieved by men, but now He is to be wounded and bruised by God. Men had often hid their faces from Him but now God will forsake Him. He has lived acquainted with grief, but now He is to die of a broken heart. This hour was *the* hour of Christ's life, *the* hour of the hours of His sorrow, *the* hour in the earth's history to which the finger of time had pointed since the day in which man fell, and *the* hour upon the events of which rested the performance of God's chief promises, the fulfilment of centuries of prophecy, the realization of Divine symbols, and the salvation of the world. Knowing all that hung upon that hour, and already tasting the sorrow He was to endure, His soul was troubled, fear agitated Him, perplexity obscured His spiritual vision. He reeled and staggered beneath His burden," and He cried: "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? No! I will not say that. It was for this cause that I came unto this hour. I will say, [and God be praised, He did say] Father, glorify Thy name.

"His prayer is as simple as it is sublime. Throughout the Bible 'name' stands for 'character.' To 'glorify' a name, therefore, is to manifest a character, to illuminate it, to render it illustrious, to bring out its full splendor. Hence the prayer of our Lord can only mean: 'Father, manifest Thy *character*, especially Thy character *as a Father*; reveal Thy goodness; let Thy Fatherly redeeming love shine forth in forms so splendid that men shall be compelled to recognize and

respond to it. Let them see Thee as Thou art, that they may be changed into Thine image, and reflect Thy glory, by reproducing Thy goodness."

"And that which makes this prayer at once most instructive for us, and most pathetic, is the fact

that it could be answered, and that Jesus, even when He offered it, knew that it, could be answered, only by the sacrifice of Himself. On His lips it meant, 'Let me die for the sin of the world; let me bear the pain and shame of the cross, that men may know and believe that Thou art in very deed their Father, know and believe that Thy love is an everlasting love, a love which shrinks from no sacrifice, which can never cease to labor for their salvation and welfare, till their salvation be effected, their welfare secured.'"

"And thus perplexity did not crush Christ, fear did not enervate Him; but emerging from the cloud which for a moment obscured the cheerfulness of His endurance, and rising above the crisis which for a moment threatened to drag Him down, He proved that His ruling passion, strong even in death, is best expressed in the cry: 'Father, glorify Thy name.' The prayer of *the* hour had been the prayer of every hour, the cry of His agony had been the thirst of His joy, the aspiration of His last days had been His heart's desire through life, the desire at the crisis had been His aim at every step. 'Father, glorify Thy name.' This is the language of a perfect Son, of love with all the heart and soul, of filial affection culminating in self-annihilation." Could our Lord have said more? Thank God His character was such that to be consistent with all that was within Him he could not say less.

*(To be continued.)*

*-P. L. Read.*

## **By Thy Words Acquitted; By Thy Words Condemned**

*"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringing forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on a day of judgment. For by thy words thou wilt be acquitted; and by thy words thou wilt be condemned." -- Matt. 12:34-37.*

REALIZING THAT we, the Church, are at the present time under the inspection of our kingly Bridegroom, who is now present (Matt. 22:11) to gather out of His Kingdom (in its present embryo or formative condition) "all things that offend" (Matt. 13:41), and to gather unto Himself His jewels, His Bride (Mal. 3:17), we cannot too carefully consider the principles upon which this judgment and this selection are made.

The above words of our Lord indicate that the heart and the mouth are under very special scrutiny, the former representing the individual character, and the latter being an index of the character. It is in this same view of the matter that those words of wisdom were penned: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. (Prov. 4:23, 24.) The indication is clear that a right condition of heart is necessary to right words, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," as experience testifies to every man. It is therefore just that our words should be a criterion of judgment in the Lord's estimation, as He tells us they are. True, honeyed words are sometimes only the masks of deep hypocrisy, but the mask is sure to drop off sometime, as soon as selfish policy renders a change of tactics necessary. The fact therefore remains that the words, the entire course of conversation and conduct, are an index of the heart.

Our first concern, then, should be for the heart -that its affections and dispositions may be fully under the control of divine grace; that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, benevolence, brotherly kindness, love, faith, meekness, temperance, supreme reverence, for God and Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness, may be firmly fixed as the governing principles of life. If these principles be fixed, established, in the heart, then out of the good treasure of the heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom, and grace.

Concerning our Lord Jesus, whose heart was perfect-in whom was no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, it was said, "Grace is poured into Thy lips"; and again, "All bare Him witness, -- and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth." (Psa. 45:2; Luke 4:22.) Moses, personating Christ, foretold the blessed influences of the Lord's words, saying, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain; My speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." (Deut. 32:2.) And Jesus said,

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63.) So wise, just, and true were the Lord's words, that, though His enemies were continually seeking to find some fault, it is said, "They could not take hold of His words before the people; and they marveled at His answers and held their peace." (Luke 20:26.) And others said, "Never man spake like this man." - John 7:46.

Thus our Lord left a worthy example to His people, which the Apostle urges all to follow, saying, "Let your speech be always with grace [with manifest love and, kindness] -- seasoned with salt [a purifying and preservative influence]." (Col. 4:6.) And Peter adds, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" - wisely, and in accordance with the spirit and Word of the Lord. Again, it is written, "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile [deceit]." "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious words: but the lips of a fool [an unwise, reckless talker] will swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness." "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." - Psa. 34:13; Prov. 21:23; Eccles. 10:12, 13; 5:2.

Job, in the midst of all his afflictions, was very careful not to sin with his lips. (Job 2:10; 31:30; 1:21, 22.) He knew that his words would be taken by the Lord as an index of his heart, and he was careful to keep both the heart and the words right, saying, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil [calamities, troubles-for discipline or refining]? . . . The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." There was no spirit of rebellion in a heart out of whose abundance -came such words of loving submission, patience, and faith under severe testings, and that, too, without a -clear apprehension of the divine wisdom in permitting them.

The Psalmist puts into the mouth of God's consecrated and tried people these words of firm resolution: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while -the-wicked- [who tempts and tries the righteous] is before me." - Psa. 39:1.

How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self-control which develops under a firm adherence to it. In an unfriendly world we can expect to receive only the reproaches of our Master, for the servant is not above his Lord. The world, the flesh, and the devil oppose our way: there are fightings within and fears without, and many are the arrows and fiery darts aimed at the righteous. But what is the safe attitude of the soul under afflictions and severe testings? Is it not in silence before God, waiting and watching first to see His leading, His will, in every matter before presuming to touch things that often involve so much? So the Psalmist suggests, saying, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good [even from doing or saying what seemed good in my own sight]; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, and in my self-communing there burnt a fire [description of a fiery trial]. Then spake I with my tongue" -- not to the revilers, nor to others, but to the Lord.

Yes, it is always our blessed privilege to carry our sorrows and vexations to the Lord;

"For He knows  
How to steal the bitter  
From life's woes."

He does it, as the Psalmist suggests (verses 4-6), by showing us, through experience, the vanity of all earthly things and their utter inability to satisfy the soul's cravings or to comfort the wounded spirit. Then comes the thought that the present life, with its cares, vexations, and sorrows is passing away, that our days are but as a handbreadth, and however vexing our experiences, they will soon be over; and if we permit them to do so, they only will work out in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and develop in us strong and noble characters, disciplined to thorough self-control, thoughtful consideration, patient endurance of affliction, and loving loyalty and faithfulness and trust in God. Then the assurances of the blessed rewards of righteousness in the life to come begin

to have a new and deeper significance, and we are made to realize that this is not our continuing city, but we seek one to come. Thus the heart is separated from earthly things and made to realize the superior worth of heavenly things. Nothing but the Lord Himself can satisfy the longings of the soul, which, tempesttossed and tried, comes to realize:

"How vain is all beneath the skies,  
How transient every earthly bliss,  
How slender all the fondest ties,  
That bind me to a world like this!"

Thus chastened and comforted, we learn to look beyond the present to the glory that shall by and by be revealed in the faithful overcomers, who, by patient continuance in well-doing in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, seek for the prize revealed to faith alone. Thus disciplined and blessed under fiery trials by going to the Lord for comfort and help, the child of God begins to realize what it means to be dead to the world and alive toward God, with a keen appreciation of His love and goodness and grace; and being thus separated from the world, and more firmly united to Christ, the language of the heart is, as the Psalmist further suggests, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee." (Verse 7.) Thus

"E'en sorrow, touched by heaven, grows bright  
With more than rapture's ray,  
As darkness shows us worlds of light  
We never saw by day."

Such is the blessed result of bridling the tongue under circumstances of trial and vexation, and humbly taking all our cares to the Lord in prayer, to the end that, when we speak, our speech may be with grace, seasoned with salt, and that under all circumstances we may speak as the oracles of God.

Considering our Lord's words above quoted that we must give an account for "every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word" -- in view of the fact that the present is our (the Church's) judgment day, we see what great importance attaches to our words. All our words are taken by the Lord as an index of our hearts. If our words are rebellious, or disloyal, or frivolous, or flippant, or unkind, unthankful, unholy, or impure, the heart is judged accordingly on the principle that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Thus our words, in all the varied circumstances of our daily life, are bearing testimony continually before God of the condition of our hearts. So our Lord's words imply: and in this view of the case how timely is the admonition: "Be not rash with thy mouth; and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God [And remember that "all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." - Heb. 4:13]; for God [our judge] is in heaven [upon the throne], and thou upon earth [under.. trial before the bar of God]: therefore let thy words be few." Let them be thoughtful and wise, as uttered before God, and not rash, hasty, and illy considered.

Again, in harmony with the Lord's statement of the responsibility incurred by our words, it, is also written, "He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." (Prov. 13:3.) What a fearful responsibility attaches to the tongue that wags in an evil or even in a flippant way, which is also dishonoring to God! And how necessary is the injunction of the Apostle Peter, "Be sober and watch unto prayer"! - 1 Pet. 4:7; 1:13; 5:8.

The Psalmist puts this prayer into the lips of all who feel this responsibility: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep a guard at the door of my lips. Permit not my heart to incline after any

evil thing." "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer." "My lips shall utter praise when Thou hast taught me Thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of Thy Word; for all Thy commandments are righteousness. Let Thy hand help me; for I have chosen Thy precepts. I have longed for Thy salvation [from all sin, and for the perfection and beauty of holiness], O Lord; and Thy law is my delight." - Psa. 141:3, 4; 19:14; 119:171-174.

That, as imperfect beings, we may always be perfect in word and deed is not possible. Despite our best endeavors we will sometimes err in word as well as in deed, yet the perfect mastery of our words and ways is the thing to be sought by vigilant and faithful effort. But, nevertheless, for every idle word we must give an account in this our day of judgment. If, in the daily scrutiny of our ways, which is the duty of every Christian, we discover that in any particular our words have been dishonoring to the Lord, we should remember that "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1); and in the name of our Advocate we may approach the throne of grace, explain to our heavenly Father our realization of the error, our deep regret at our failure to honor His name and His cause by a holy walk and conversation, and humbly request that the sin be not laid to our charge but that it may be blotted out through His gracious provision for our cleansing through Christ, humbly claiming that in His precious blood is all our hope and trust.

Thus we should render up our account for every idle word; and by our words of repentance, supplemented by the merits of Christ applied by faith, shall we be acquitted. Otherwise, the idle words, dishonoring to the Lord, will stand against us and condemn us, and we will be obliged to suffer the consequences. The first consequence will be selfinjury, for every evil thought or word indulged hardens the character and inclines it the more toward unrighteousness. The second consequence is a bad example to others and the stirring up of evil in them. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." (Prov. 15:1.) Thus, as the result of unwise or unkind words, we may stir up about us difficulties which will become the agents of retributive justice to teach us the lesson of selfcontrol and consideration for the feelings and opinions of others. It is often the case that the Lord (or the devil) is blamed for sending trials which are simply the natural results of our own mistakes And those who fail to locate the root of the trouble (*in themselves*) pray in vain for the Lord to remove miraculously what they themselves could obviate by obedience to the Word and vigorous self-discipline. "If we would judge [and correct] ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord [largely by the experiences through which our own faults put us], that we should not be, condemned with the world." (1 Cor. 11:31, 32.) But even should it be admitted that the difficulties are not directly caused by God, or the devil ("every man is tempted [tried] when he is drawn away of his own lusts [desires] and enticed") the natural tendency is to blame the matter on some one else, and to, think that our loss of patience, our hasty word or act, was the fault of another. How many deceive and encourage themselves with the thought: "If everybody else had as reasonable and as generous a nature as I have, our family or church gathering or community would be a veritable heaven upon earth!" Beloved, let us examine *ourselves*, let us be very humble, lest the very words of self-congratulation and self-satisfaction which we consider in our hearts (if we do not utter them aloud) bring our condemnation. "If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye [what merit is there in it]?" (Luke 6:33-38.) It is only when we "endure grief, *suffering wrongfully*," that our suffering is acceptable to God as a sacrifice of sweet incense. "What glory is it if, *when ye be buffeted for your faults*, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called." (1 Pet. 2:19-21.) Beloved, let us see to it that our sufferings are for



righteousness' sake only, and let us not charge God or our neighbors for tribulations resulting from the indulgence of our inherited or cultivated faults.

"In many things we are all faulty. If any one does not err in word, he is a perfect man, able to control the whole body." (Jas. 3:2.) But such a man does not exist. We all need and must continually plead the merit of our Redeemer and Advocate, while we strive daily to bring every thought into captivity to the will of Christ, and to perfect holiness in the fear (reverence) of the Lord.

In view of this fact, which we trust all of the Lord's people will endeavor more and more fully to realize, viz., that we now stand before the bar of judgment, we inquire, in the words of Peter, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" Godlikeness certainly cannot include any harmful gossip, any unclean or unholy conversation, any disloyal or rebellious words. Let such things be put far away from all who name the name of Christ in sincerity and truth. And let us remember daily to settle our accounts with the Lord, to make sure that no record of idle words, unrepented of, and consequently unforgiven, stands against us. "Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Thus out of the good treasure of the heart we shall be able to speak the words of truth and soberness, .to honor our Lord by a godly walk and conversation, to subdue the evil tendencies of our fallen nature, and to have our conversation "honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers; they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." - Phil 1:27; 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:12.

If daily we render up our accounts to God and seek His grace for greater overcoming power with each succeeding day, we shall be acquitted in judgment and stand approved before God through Christ, having the testimony of His Holy Spirit with our spirit that *we* are pleasing and acceptable to Him. R1937, *Feb.* 15, 1896.

## "Be Ye Holy"

*"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." - Heb. 12:14.*

SUCH AN instruction from God's Word must be possible in some way, or it would never have been given. Before examining into the matter, however, let us first inquire: Why is the human race unholy in God's sight? They, as represented in Adam and Eve, were never created so. Then why are not all their offspring holy? We reply: The disobedience of Adam, his sin against God, is the explanation for it all. In man's relationship with God, obedience or disobedience, makes all the difference, manifestly. However, Adam not only disobeyed, but he did so deliberately, knowingly, of his own volition; this wilful transgression of God's instructions made him unholy. He yielded his members as instruments of unrighteousness, he sold himself under sin, and sin began to reign in his mortal body; and the wages of sin is death. Thus, not only did Adam commit an unholy act, but he himself thereby became unholy. Eve was in a similar state, for she too transgressed; the result being that the law of heredity became evilly effected. Had sin never touched the human race, it would be holy in God's sight today.

By nature we are all members of this fallen, unholy race. How, then, can we be holy? Can we determine that we will never sin? Well, yes, we may so determine, and may use our best endeavors to fulfil our determination, but we must not be too deeply disappointed when we fail; for "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8.) How, then, can we be holy? To be so looks about as possible as for a camel to pass through a needle's eye. Yet we take comfort in the words of Jesus, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Only God can bring a clean thing out of an unclean; but this is what He is doing for us; of course with our cooperation. He does not coerce, because such a course would not effect His purpose.

Seeing that we are addressing those who have already been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, and have obeyed His instruction, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," we can here concentrate our thoughts on how it is possible for such to be holy whilst dwelling in the contaminated flesh. To be contaminated by sin is to be unholy; to be uncontaminated by sin is to be holy. Therefore, for new creatures to walk according to the flesh, to let the old man rule, is to be unholy. To walk according to the Spirit, to let the new mind rule, is to be holy. Here is one view of our conflict: "The Spirit warreth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." However, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," remembering God's view of us: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Therefore, for us to walk according to the flesh means death; to walk according to the Spirit means life, and life abundant. These conditions cannot be questioned by us, but they need not cause us to be fearful, for, as Jesus remarked in another connection, "Ye believe in God," that is, in a God of mercy, compassion, love; therefore, "Believe also in Me," in Jesus who is our wisdom, our justification, our righteousness. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." For, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." So, then, for the sake of our Redeemer, our Advocate, our High Priest, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Such are the mercies of God for those who trust Him, and obey His commands. Every true Christian knows full well that according to the flesh he is undone, condemned. It may appear strange, therefore, that this admonition, "Be ye holy," should be addressed to such. Of course when heaven is reached we shall be holy, and all doubts and fears will have gone forever. But these words are intended for application now; and those who are thus holy form the holy nation St. Peter addresses, saying, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath

called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."

What a lesson God has set us, to hate sin, and to love righteousness -- to be holy! Therefore, "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye ... are under grace" --under God's favor. Therefore, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." My beloved brother, be assured you need not; if you are living up to the fulness of your privileges, you will not be troubled, nor afraid. "Let not." "Neither let." Perhaps these words of Jesus seem as difficult of fulfilment as those we are considering, "Be ye holy." In each case fulfilment calls for the intelligent exercise of our own volition; we must appreciate our privileges and act accordingly; and this brings us to the crucial point: Are we faithfully doing our part, and not allowing failures, disappointments, nor any other thing to discourage us? Let us be assured that God will answer our prayer for help in every time of need, and that His grace will be sufficient in all cases.

To attain to holiness, as we are enjoined, may appear to be almost beyond our hope; yet Jesus sets before us a still higher state, saying: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It should be appreciated by us all that these admonitions of the Lord have, necessarily, to be a first claim upon us, upon our time, our strivings, our devotion. Regarding this matter we must not allow ourselves to be deceived, for nothing short of it will constitute us overcomers, and gain for us God's full acceptance. As the Apostle informs us, it is for us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. So, then, "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart"; but, rather, bring it under the full impulse of the Holy Spirit; by watchings, by prayers, and by supplications, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Later we will consider how, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, these seemingly impossible states of holiness and perfection are attained in this life.

For our encouragement can we discover up to date evidences of this work of holiness proceeding? Is there any fruitage thus far? Any approach to holiness? Well, let us examine our position for a moment. At least it can be said that we have shown repentance for sin, and, by God's grace, have been forgiven; we have been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." These are important steps. But further, by God's grace we have been privileged to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and have presented unto God a living sacrifice, and have been accepted in the Beloved. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." Again, we have been begotten of God with the Word of truth, "that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." We have been anointed of God, who, by His grace, has honored us to come under the anointing of the great High Priest; and besides all this we have been kept by the power of God through many a time of test. These are some of the many blessings which God has bestowed upon us hitherto, saying: "Be ye holy," be ye a saint, separate, set apart.

Of these people of God, enjoying His rich favors, the! Psalmist writes: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." The Apostle enlarges on this theme in the fourth chapter of Romans, saying: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying: Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not-impute sin." Speaking of Abraham in this connection, the Apostle says: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had

promised, He was able also to perform, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus from the dead; who was delivered up for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." "Having been justified, therefore, by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have been introduced into this favor in which we stand; and we boast in hope of the glory of God." From this vantage point the Apostle proceeds to show that, by God's grace, we triumph also in various and trying experiences necessary for the development in us of holiness; that we may become conformed to the image of our Lord, who, through sufferings, became perfected. On account of this grace wherein we stand, the Apostle was led to write: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh-but after the Spirit." "Therefore we glory in the Lord, who of God is made unto' us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Accordingly our wisdom cannot be held in doubt, for it is in our Head, in Jesus, who is the wisdom of God we are told. However we can rely on acting and speaking wisely only when we allow our gracious Head to govern us, quite naturally. The lack of wisdom of our own is entirely offset by our having God's wisdom available for the seeking. This wisdom of God is provided to lead us in ways of righteousness and holiness all our days.

The robe of Christ's righteousness, which by God's grace covers our unworthiness, is not seen by human sight, but by its virtue it hides our unrighteousness from our merciful judge. Our sanctification is made possible in Christ alone, and is not just an act like our consecration; it is a process which calls for determined effort on our part, a warring a good warfare. As God said to His typical people of old, "Sanctify yourselves," and "I will sanctify you." God will sanctify us by His truth. Truth is received by, and operates in, a consecrated heart; the more complete the devotion, the more advanced truth can be received, and the more of holiness follows.

So, then, our wisdom, our justification, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption, our sonship, and our life, are all, hid with Christ in God. If nothing on our part ever interferes with this blessed state, then, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
Bow down before Him, His glory proclaim;  
With gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,  
Kneel and adore Him, the Lord is His name.

"Low at His feet lay thy burden of carefulness,  
High on His heart He will bear it for thee,  
Comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,  
Guiding thy steps as may best for thee be."

Now, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word"; "Pursue peace with all, and, that holiness without which no one shall see the Lord."

*-H. J. Shearn.*

## Prayer and Study of the Word

Dear Brethren:

I am enclosing a quotation from George Mueller that has been such a help and blessing to me that I hope you will see fit to publish it in the "Herald." If it were as much help and comfort to even one of the Lord's people as it has been to me, it would surely be worth while.

A year ago Brother Hollister suggested a plan for Bible reading that my husband especially has found so very helpful, namely, reading the four Gospels, through monthly. Brother completed a year of reading the Gospels monthly, and others I know have found the plan beneficial. I can't read that much and keep up with other things I need to read, as my vision is defective, but I do like to read daily from both the Old and the New Testaments. In following George Mueller's plan I have found it most helpful to consider the Sermon on the Mount, or other sayings of Jesus, or a favorite Psalm or chapter.

Everything you dear brethren can do to encourage prayer or study of the Word is, to my mind, one of the most helpful things you can do for the Lord's people. God bless you as you seek to build us up in the most holy faith. With warmest Christian love, and with many prayers on your behalf,  
Yours in our glorious hope; Mrs. E. A. -- Kans.

### GEORGE MUELLER'S SECRET

"It has pleased the Lord to teach me a truth, the benefit of which I have not lost for more than fourteen years. The point is this: I saw more clearly than ever that the first great and primary business to which I ought to attend every day was to have my soul happy in the Lord.

"The first thing to be concerned about was not how much I might serve the Lord; but how I might get my soul in a happy state, and how my inner man might be nourished. For I might seek to set the truth before the unconverted, I might seek to benefit believers, I might seek to relieve the distressed, I might in other ways seek to behave myself as it becomes a child of God in this world; and yet, not being happy in the Lord, and not being strengthened in my inner man day by day, all this might not be attended to in the right spirit. Before this time my practice had been, for at least ten years previously, as an habitual thing to give myself to prayer after I had dressed myself in the morning. Now I saw that the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of "the Word of God, and to meditate on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warmed, reproved, instructed; and that thus, by means of the Word of God, whilst meditating on it, my heart might be brought into experimental communion with the Lord.

"I began therefore to meditate on the New Testament from the beginning, early in the morning. 'The first thing I did, after having asked, in a few words, the Lord's blessing upon His precious Word, was to meditate on the Word of God, searching as it were every verse to get a blessing out of it, not for the sake of the public ministry of the Word, not for the sake of preaching upon what I had meditated upon, *but for obtaining food for my own soul.*

"The result I found to be almost invariably this, that after a few minutes my soul has been led to confession, on to thanksgiving, on to intercession, on to supplication; so that, though I did not as it were, give myself to prayer, but to meditation, yet it turned almost immediately more or less into prayer. When thus I have been for awhile making confession or intercession or supplication, or have given thanks, I go on to the next words or verse, turning all as I go into prayer for myself or others as the Word may lead to it, but still continually keeping before me *that food for my own soul is the object of my meditation.*

"Formerly I often spent a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, or even -- an hour on my knees, before being conscious of having derived comfort, encouragement, humbling of soul, etc., and often, after having suffered much from wandering of mind for the first ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or even half an hour, I only then began really to pray. I scarcely ever suffer now in this way; for my heart being nourished by the truth, being brought into experimental fellowship with God, I speak to my Father and to my Friend (vile though I am, and unworthy) about the things that He has brought before me in His precious Word. It often now astonishes me that I did not sooner see this point."

## Another Question of Interest

Question:

Will you please discuss John 7:52? Were the chief priests and the Pharisees right when they told Nicodemus that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet?

Answer:

The context shows that Jesus was being condemned without a hearing. In verse 32 we read that the Pharisees and chief priests had sent certain officers to arrest Him. It seems that these officers had happened to come at a time when Jesus was speaking to the people. His words, as they listened, had been so persuasive, had contained so much evidence of truth, so much proof that He was from God, that the officers had been impressed and awed by Him and did not dare to take Him a prisoner. They returned without Him, saying, verse 46, "Never man spake like this Man."

Instead of questioning the officers to ascertain what they had heard, whether they had been convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, and, if so, on what evidence the Pharisees ridiculed the idea, saying, "Are ye also deceived?" At this point Nicodemus, who was one of them, reminded them that the law in which they boasted, but in which, alas, they did not delight, gave every man the right to a fair and impartial trial (Exod. 23:1, 2; Lev. 19:15, 16). His words were: "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and knoweth what he doeth?" In verse 52 we read their reply: "Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look; for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

If Nicodemus had followed their advice and had searched sufficiently, he would have found the chief priests and Pharisees in error. On this point we will content ourselves with quoting the Diaglott footnote to John 7:52, which reads:

"This conclusion [that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet] . . . was incorrect. Jonah was of Gathheper, in Galilee; see 2 Kings 14:25, compared with Joshua 19:13. Nahum was a Galilean, for he was of the tribe of Simeon, and some suppose Malachi was of the same place.

However, while they were wrong in saying that no prophet was of Galilean origin, they would have been correct had they limited their contention to the statement that the Messiah was not to come from that province. This point had been made already, by some of the multitude, in their discussions concerning our Lord. Their opinions are recorded a few verses earlier. We quote from verses 40 to 42:

"Many of the people, therefore, said: Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said: This is the Christ. But some said: Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?"

The Scripture had, indeed, so declared. We quote:

Psa. 132:11

"The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne."

Jer. 23:5, 6

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days shall

Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called: The Lord our Righteousness."

Micah 5:2

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

These Scriptures, however, while making it clear that the Messiah was to be a descendant of David, and was to be born at Bethlehem, in Judea, contained nothing to conflict with the thought that the Messiah, having been born of David's line, at Bethlehem, could be removed therefrom to spend His early years elsewhere. Nor' do they offer the slightest suggestion that Messiah's ministry must begin at Bethlehem, or for that matter at Jerusalem, or at any other city of Judea. Had they been in the proper attitude of heart the members of the Sanhedrim would have examined the evidences. So doing they would have found that Jesus was a descendant of David and that He had been born in David's city, Bethlehem, even though it was also true that He had been brought up in Nazareth of Galilee. Moreover, by searching, they would have found a certain passage in Isaiah respecting Galilee, which found a striking fulfilment in the ministry of our Lord. It is found in Isaiah 9:2. There we read:

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

Who were the people referred to by Isaiah as those who "walked in darkness"? The previous verse supplies the answer to this question. They were the people of Galilee.

Isaiah, in the closing verses of chapter 8 and the first verse of chapter 9 had been predicting, first a time of trouble and then a time of joy, for Israel.

The pathway of trouble would be where no light would dawn; where they would suffer hunger, not only bodily hunger, but deep craving of heart for help that fails them and for relief which never comes. Their sufferings, he tells them, in 8:21, would be *so* great that they would curse both their earthly and their heavenly king. Later, however, all this gloom would be dispelled; the anguish of the nation would be removed.

Where did Israel experience the distress and darkness here predicted? Isaiah tells us, in considerable detail, in Isa. 9:1. First he mentions the land of Zebulun and Naphtali; then he continues his description of the region to which his prophecy refers by saying it was "by way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations." Let us read his account, beginning with Isa. 8:21 and ending with Isa. 9:1, using the American Revised Version, margin:

"And they shall pass through it, sore distressed and hungry; and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and turn their faces upward; and they shall look unto the earth, and behold distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness they shall be driven away.

"But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time He brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath He made it glorious; by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations."

The word "Galilee" means a "ring" or a "circle," and since in Isaiah's day the land was encircled by Gentiles, it was well named the Ring of the Gentiles, or the Galilee of the nations. Moreover, with many Gentiles dwelling also in their midst, and cut off, by this circle of Gentiles, from Judea, the great religious centre of their day, the people of Galilee were, as Brother Russell has observed in R4557, "in greater darkness than their brethren, in the very shadow of the death-darkness that was upon the Gentiles."

The people of Galilee, then, were the ones to whom Isaiah referred as those "who walked in darkness." Did the time ever come when these people saw a great light? Let an inspired writer supply the answer. We turn to Matt. 4:12-26:

"Now when He [Jesus] heard that John was delivered up He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum; which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the Prophet, saying,

'The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
Toward the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles,  
The people that sat in darkness Saw a great light;  
And to them that sat in the region and shadow of death,  
To them did light spring up."

But while Isaiah's prophecy found its *first* fulfilment in the earthly ministry of our Lord, in a large sense it has yet to be fulfilled. While the light did, indeed, shine brightly, at our Lord's first advent, the darkness comprehended it not. Only a few—just one here, one there—appreciated the light then or since. As a nation Israel rejected the Messiah. Blindness has continued upon her to this very day, and will continue "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (until the full number has been selected out of every kindred, tribe and nation, to complete the Gospel-Age Church). Then, the people "who walked in darkness," that is to say, the whole world of mankind, both Jew and Gentile, shall see "the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in His beams." (Mal. 4:2, margin.) Already:

"We begin to see the dawning  
Of that bright Millennial day;  
Soon the shadows, weary shadows,  
Shall forever pass away."

- P. L. Read.



## Keep Hold of God's Hand

Keep hold of God's hand, O Pilgrim!  
The way stretches far ahead;  
And clouds of the night, long-coming,  
Over the highways have spread;  
But He leadeth on in wisdom --  
There is nothing to fear nor dread.

Keep hold of God's hand, O Christian!  
Be constant. Be true. Be strong.  
The "joy of the Lord" shall strengthen,  
Filling with gladness and song.  
He knoweth the way we have taken,  
And leads through the midst of the throng.

Keep hold of God's hand, O Christian!  
We enter the atmosphere  
Of Love's most holy environ,  
Far up from the earth-ways drear;  
And here in His heart He shall keep us --  
The treasure He holds most dear.

And see! On the far horizon  
The Star of our Hope appears.  
It shines from the heaven of heavens  
And the upper highway clears.  
Lead on, O Pilgrim, triumphant  
The end of the journey nears!

- *Nellie Florence Jolly.*

## Holy and Reverent His Name

*The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." - Hab. 2:20.*

FROM EVERLASTING to everlasting our God is the same unchanging Being, dwelling in a light to which no man may approach. He remains the same yesterday, today, for ever. The starstudded heavens never cease to reveal His glory, and a far-flung firmament displays the marvels of His handiwork. In wisdom He is infinitely perfect: His justice and power beautifully co-ordinated therewith, and His love beyond any measure of man's mind. His flawless judgments "are a mighty deep," and the multitude of His wonderful ways "past finding out." To know Him is life eternal, and for those who are His, "at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore." He is our God, and because we are what He has made us-beings gifted with powers of mind and heart answering to His own -- the unfolding revelations inherent in His Being, and His purposes embracing the eternal ages, are now, and ever shall be, the undiminishable, joyous realm of discovery for all His intelligent creatures. As for the present, no mount of transfiguration glory; no third-heaven vision possible to us, "whether in the body, or out of the body," -- nothing could carry one beyond knowing only in part, and as seeing through the haze of darkened glass. Mysteries would yet remain in the great untouched realms of God's secret counsels. From regions unseen and numberless a multitude of voices might yet be heard revealing that the half had never yet been told.

While eternal ages roll along, our wonderful Creator will continue to unfold the wonders of foreknown purposes, and manifest "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:7.) His pleasure has ever been in giving pleasure to His creatures, human, angelic, and His predestinated divine family. Of the eternal pleasures designed for all of these, nor tongue, nor pen can portray more than a dim outline. The eye may scan the known universe, and faith penetrate beyond the seen and visible into the celestial spheres, "And all this is the mere fringe of His force, the faintest whisper we can hear of Him! Who knows then the full thunder of His power?" (Job 26:14, Moffatt's translation). Thus it is that our God and His beloved Son appear more and more wonderful as our spiritual perceptions become more matured. As we progress from knowing about God, and reach the plane of intimate relationship where we can say with Jesus, "O righteous Father, . . . I have known Thee," then it is that we see God as He desires we should.

Drawn into this nearness to God through the study of His Word, we find Him coming nearer to us, revealing Himself in ways calculated to completely humble us before Him, and yet lifting us upward into the heights of His sanctuary where His presence is felt most manifest, and where every power of response we possess is affected by His loveliness, goodness, and grace. Here the prayer becomes intensely fervent, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Here it is that we learn best how little we are, and how little is yet seen n of the possible unfoldings of an inexhaustible God through endless ages to come.

But how profitable is this realization of present limitations! How sublime the reverence for God it creates within the heart! This is the condition of heart most pleasing to God, and this is the heart into which He will bring "the spirit of wisdom and knowledge of Him." (Eph. 1:7.) Thus from grace to grace, from knowledge to knowledge we follow on to know the Lord, finding each fresh revelation of His grace an inspiration to "dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His tabernacle." - Psa. 27:4.

"At the beginning of our Christian experience we may have thought that the sense of mystery in connection with spiritual knowledge would pass away as we grew older. At the beginning there were many things we could not understand: but, we thought, I shall understand all presently. How different has been the real influence of advancing spiritual knowledge! If the Lord has called us, with advancing years, still further into His marvelous light; if, as He gave to Peter on the transfiguration mount, a new and more magnificent view of the person of Christ and the relation of the law and the prophets to Christ, He has also given us brighter and fuller vision of Jesus; it is therefore no more true of us than it was of Peter, that all sense of mystery has passed away under the brighter vision of the truth. No! with the marvelous light has come to us, as to him, the marvelous cloud, the more overwhelming sense of the infiniteness of God; of the tremendousness of the infinite purposes; of the impossibility of comprehending all that God is, all that God means.

"Think not that spiritual knowledge means the reduction of the infinite truths of God to the easy and familiar terms of every-day life. Spiritual knowledge means to be drawn step by step into the marvelous light of the glory of God, and in that light to realize the infiniteness of truth, till a man sinks down before his God and worships with holy fear. Though each step in the marvelous light unfolds more that makes us feel how little we are, and how vast Christ is, we know that here, and only here, have we found the peace the world can neither give nor take away. 'Though pressed to earth by the weight of truth we cannot grasp, the consciousness of having reached a nobler life burns within us, and our soul testifies to Christ, 'Lord, it is good to be here.'"

Is this our experience? Do we want it to be so? We should so desire it, for it represents nearness to the infinite Being whom we are graciously permitted to call our Father. It is good to be here! It is good to be here for the humbling of our spirits. Job was here when, out of his further discovery of God he confessed, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5, 6.) The holy Prophet was here when his intimate vision of the Lord brought from his lips the cry, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Isa. 6:5.) The Apostle Paul was standing here as he reviewed the marvelous sweep of the divine purposes for Jew and Gentile, and under the inspirational influences of that great, magnificent spectacle of the stately steppings of our God, his pen indited words so expressive of his admiration and joy: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor?" - Rom. 11:33, 34.

Blessed indeed, are those pure in heart who thus see God as did Job, Isaiah, and Paul. Such know how "the reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." They know that walking reverently before the Lord is the humbling way, but the most blessed way. The way too by which the heart realizes most clearly that only by walking with God and dwelling in the light of His face can transformation and translation into the Kingdom of His dear Son become a completed experience. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what cloth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly before thy God." - Micah 6:8. - *J. J. Blackburn.*

## God Sends His Love to You

I bring to you the love of God!  
I found it covered up-hid  
'Neath a mass of misapprehension: then  
It emerged.

The Springtime told it to me as  
Sun and shower brought the trees to life,  
And the birds mentioned it as they  
Called to each other from the thickets,  
And the tree tops.

Summer throbbed with it as  
Shimmering heat forced out the heads  
Of grain -- His, promise to provide.  
And Flowers, waved by light breezes,  
Breathed it far and wide.

Autumn was full of it: did you not  
Hear it in the rustle of the leaves that,  
In their dying, whispered it?  
Their tints seemed gladly telling too,  
That they had served His purposes.  
I found it in the fields of ripened grain  
That bowed to reapers' sickle, to provide  
His winter's store; and the ripe fruit  
Of orchards thrilled me with it.

Winter approaches:  
Tree, and bud and bee and blossom are  
Asleep; soon frost and bitter winds, will  
Drive the last of migrant birds to  
Warmer climes -- the swallow long since  
Left -- and squirrels scurry -- busy with  
Their stores of nuts and seeds.

And you, my friend, and me?  
How much have we? How stands our industry,  
What have we brought of it?  
What may we bring?

How much of earth's fair surface  
Has been scarred by wars and strife;  
The voice of God in bud and flower,  
And song of bird, is drowned  
By cannon's roar for some.  
And pain-wracked bodies, cut and bruised,  
And maimed. And broken hearts  
Are everywhere.  
How stands the case with you?  
And how with me?

The message He has, given me to bring,  
I pray that we may much more fully  
Realize; and bear it forth with  
Evidence that crowns all proof -- from  
Bethlehem's cradle and Gethsemane;  
And then -- as diadem  
Of crown: from awful Calvary.

This is the message God would send,  
To cure the world of sin, and blight, And pain.  
This simple message -- at such cost Confirmed!  
That God loves you-and me-and them.

- *W. F. Jones*, November, 1944.

## Encouraging Messages

My, dear Friends:

A little while ago I happened to have placed in my hand a magazine entitled: "The Herald of Christ's Kingdom." After reading it I decided to write you, because on the inside cover I saw, "This Journal and Its Sacred Mission," and, "To Us the Scriptures Clearly Teach." When I looked at it, I said, This is what dear Pastor Russell had in the *Tower* when he preached the Gospel of the Kingdom, and I have missed it these many years. I had no idea that this title was still being used by some one, and the same epitome of the faith once delivered to the saints, the same teachings Pastor Russell so ably laid down as the Bible clearly shows. I have not been able to comprehend how this was going on and I did not know about it. . . . I now have great cause for rejoicing that after these years, sometimes doubting, not the Lord but myself, sometimes almost despairing, in expectation of the Kingdom, but feeling there was something wrong-aware of my own shortcomings, receiving but very little outside encouragement and not being satisfied with what I did hear, and now to realize that what we once rejoiced in as truth is still being preached, is really like one turning to his first love. You will pardon me for opening my heart to you whom I have never met and of whom I have never heard. It seems you are aiming at the same Gospel which is old but ever new the Gospel of the Kingdom....

I would like to ask you to tell me how and why the change came about at Brooklyn after Pastor Russell died. What can you tell me about this? . . . And what are you doing? Is the work progressing, and what is the Scriptural leading? Of course I am not now doubting. I feel that the way is secure. After all it is an individual matter. It is between ourselves and the Lord we stand or fall. An organization will not suffice if we have lost contact with the Lord and His Spirit-the Holy Spirit. Would like to hear from you brethren.

Yours most sincerely,  
E. B. -- Ont.

Dear Folks:

Recently I saw a copy of one of your pamphlets, entitled "Why Does God Allow People to Suffer?" I am a letter carrier here and several of my patrons received one of these booklets recently. I hadn't the time to read the entire work because of having to go on with my work, and I suppose the receiver of the one I hastily glimpsed would have allowed me to take it home and finish reading it there. However, I would rather have my own, and in fact could probably use a few more than one, as I often meet with folks who wonder just why God permits sickness, sin, failure, etc., to be on earth. That little treatise tells *why*, in better language than I can tell them.

I'm not sure about the exact wording of the title but it is close to what I have stated it to be above. Please tell me the price of this treatise singly and in nominal numbers. In this day of turmoil, unrest, and uncertainty with no great mass repentance, as I can note, it's a wonder God allows the world to exist at all.

Thank you very much for your kind answer.

Sincerely yours,  
E. L. K. - Pa.

## **SERVICE COMMITTEE NOTES**

*"I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against Me. . . . And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them." - Ezek. 2:3-5.*

The following will give an idea of the kind of responses we are receiving from the letter and literature we are sending out:

Dear Friend:

I knew it was the "Truth" as it was called thirtyfive years ago. We attended Sunday meetings and the weekly Bible Study.

Since my son died I have been so dazed that I don't know what I believe. I prayed for him so much, and had so much faith that my prayers would be answered....

[One of the local friends is calling on this dear one.]

Dear Sir:

We are writing to tell you we received the Bible reading you sent at the time of the death of our dear son. ... The Bible reading was a great comfort and help and we thank you so much for your kind thoughtfulness. It is nice to feel that there are others who are willing to share the sorrow with us. . . . Thanking you again, I remain

Yours sincerely,  
Mrs. H. L.

Dear Ones.

Your letter enclosing copy.y of "When the Morning Cometh" was appreciated. It surely did help and it was so thoughtful of you. Our hearts are broken but our faith keeps us going. He was a splendid boy and a Christian....

Sincerely,  
N O. -- Fla.

Dear Friends:

We thank you for your letter and tracts. Am enclosing \$1.00 for which please send me a copy of the "Divine Plan of the Ages," and "Where are the Dead?"

Mrs .L -- Ill.

We would like to have every lost Service man's mourner receive a note of comfort with appropriate Truth literature. When that work is completed there will still be obituary notices in every paper that can be similarly served. If you need tracts or help in any way, let us know, If the names come too fast for you to handle them all promptly, send what you cannot handle to us.

The Service Committee,  
P. O. Box 3473, Mdse. Mart Station,  
Chicago 54, Ill.