

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## Unity or Uniformity? Which?

AS WE watch with keen interest the developments in the ecclesiastical heavens, and note the fine Scriptural sentiments sometimes expressed, shall we not do well to examine our own hearts that no sectarian prejudices may hold sway there. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many is waxing cold, and today many are beginning to feel that if it is impossible for men to be united in the fellowship and service of Christ, then Christianity is either an idle dream, beautiful but impossible, or an empty fairy tale. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the scoffs and jeers of the world, and the bickering and wrangling of worldly-minded Christians; in spite of the irritation outside the Church, and the agitation within, all truly consecrated followers of Jesus long for a larger fellowship. When that longing becomes a determination, when the wish becomes a will, where there is a will there will be provided a way to overcome the lethargy that is upon us, to overcome the, sectarian vanity from which perhaps none of us is entirely free.

When the Gospel first began to be preached by our Lord and his Apostles, what a oneness was manifest in the Church, as 'the little band of followers sought to walk in the footsteps of the Master! They were only a humble folk, without wealth, or scholarly attainment, or social standing, but they seemed to catch the spirit of the Master, and after Pentecost such a spirit of joy and love and faith and hope possessed them, and such a fervor of missionary zeal, such a oneness of heart and action, that it seemed almost as if the prayer of Jesus would find speedy fulfillment, and that the whole world would soon believe on him. (John 17:21.) In the early centuries the Gospel message seemed to spread like fire. In the language of the Revelator: "It went forth conquering and to conquer." (Rev. 6:1.) \* Just to read the story of those early days is enough to make the heart beat faster. Well might the powers that were in those days be astonished as they witnessed the power of the Gospel in the lives of those who received it, giving to believers such a vision of our glorious hope as enabled them to stand undaunted in the face of cruel deaths, to meet the furious hate of their persecutors undismayed; nay more, to meet that hate with a gentleness, a love, a compassion, which only close followers of Christ can display.

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\* See Vol. 1, pages 305-309, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." (Published by our Institute.)

Alas! the rider on the white horse, which seems to symbolize that period of the Church's history, was followed by other horsemen, as those of us who are familiar with our Lord's revelation are aware, and ere long, as history shows, a great compromise was effected between the world and the Church. Since then, the story of the Church has often enough been a history of hatred, of narrowness and stupidity, of inconceivable bigotry and brutality. What crime against God and man has the Church not committed? How appalling is the record! As we read the pages of history, the outrages there revealed fill our minds with horror, remembering as we do, that they were perpetrated in the holy name of Jesus.

Yet through all the centuries, amid wrangling bigots and proud tyrants, the true faith was kept alive. Though the Church as a whole was not Christian, became indeed anti-Christian, some few were found at all times who had not defiled their garments. These have been the salt of the earth, the light of the world. As another has said: "If one seeks the Apostolic succession, here it is, unbroken and uninterrupted, a shining tradition of vision and service. It is in their gentle lives, silhouetted against dark backgrounds, that we trace the history of the hidden Church, the 'little flock.'" Though not inspired as were the Apostles, they were entrusted by God and by Jesus with the Gospel, and they guarded it, dear brethren, for us. They kept watch over it as of a sacred treasure, as keepers of a holy fire, which must never be stamped out. They yielded their lives to the sweet, mellowing influence of the holy spirit of love and truth, though it meant for them certain privation, loss and hardship beyond our experience, enjoying withal a fellowship of spirit which not even the curse of sectarianism could destroy. And if these, with their feeble light, were enabled to preserve a fellowship of spirit even in the midst of sectarian bondage and in the darkness of the Dark Ages, will not the Lord expect at least as much from us as we face the issues which confront us today?

For ourself, we are more interested in unity of Christian spirit, and in fidelity to Christ in thought and deed, than we are in unity of name, creed, or organization. Jesus said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. We are more concerned about attaining that sort of unity in the Christian family than about any other person's definitions, or -efforts, to limit the Church by any name or professed unity of his own.

Christian unity is a spiritual fact. (Eph. 4:3.) Christian uniformity will never come, and would not be a good thing if it did. There was unity without uniformity in the early Church. The message of the Church is more important than its machinery.

- P. L. Read.

## "God Seeketh Such"

### PART 2

*"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers." - John 4:23, R. V.*

REVERTING TO the suggestion in the former article that John had made choice of this illuminating episode from Jesus' life in order to persuade the younger generation contemporaneous with his old age that Jesus was indeed the Christ, it might now be germane to say -that the special purpose of his reference to this part of his evidence was to impress upon his youthful readers the imperative necessity for maintaining an attitude of sincere devotion and unfeigned reverence in their worship of Almighty God. In the same way that Jesus had led the Samaritan woman's mind step by step, towards that lofty height, so John also sought to do exactly the same thing for the brethren of his day, and, under the holy spirit's control, not for them alone, but for all who would believe in God throughout the entire Age. Sure it is, that it is just this *very* thing we need urgently today!

Perhaps it may help us if we trace the story through, for there are many precious lessons that may be of profit to us today.

The record of the story begins by stating that Jesus was withdrawing from Judean territory so that he might not further exasperate the authorities in Jerusalem by parading too insistently his success in winning converts to his cause. In our Lord's journey northward toward Galilee, John says, "He must needs pass through Samaria." This could not be for geographical reasons alone, for another route did exist. Had the Master been as other Jews, he could have crossed the Jordan in an easterly direction somewhere between the point where the river leaves the Samaritan border, and its entry into the Dead Sea. Skirting then the whole -length- of the Samaritan territory, he could have re-crossed the river at some point between Samaria's northern boundary and the Sea of Galilee. This was the route usually traveled by the Jew, for no self-respecting Jew would have chosen the shorter route through Samaria, lest he should become defiled by contact with some outcast of that detested race. The "needs be" of the shorter route does not seem to have arisen from any urgency to reach Galilee speedily, but for some other reason. After the conversation at the well, Jesus and his disciples (by request), delayed their journey two whole days, during which he persuaded the Samaritans to believe that he was not only the Messiah of Israel's expectation, but was to be the Savior of the world. It would seem more likely therefore that the "needs be" had been arranged and supervised by a Higher Providence, in order that he might sow some seed by this -Gentile wayside, which in some later day - could germinate and yield forth fruit to the Father's praise. - See Acts 8:4-8.

By the midday hour Jesus and his disciples had reached a point some ten miles inside Samaritan territory, though they had covered about twice that distance from the spot, on the river's bank, where he and they had been preaching and baptizing those who believed. If it was from this latter point they had started with the break of day, it was a very considerable distance they had traveled to arrive at the well by the middle of the day. Arriving there jaded and travel weary Jesus sat down to rest, perhaps beneath the shade of nearby trees, while the whole of the disciple band went forward to the little city, just on ahead, to buy food.

Now here is a most interesting little sidelight into the situation which John's descriptive words throw upon the scene, and which, with other data, seems to show something of the strain under which Jesus had lived. His disciples had made that same journey too, yet they went on still further to buy food! Were they not weary too, and also in need of rest? Had they more stamina and endurance than the Master and did not tire so readily? If Jesus was a perfect man (which other evidences prove he was) and his disciples were not, why did that journey weary him more, than it seems to have wearied them? The answer would be that it was not that journey alone which had wearied him, but the expenditure of vital force that had preceded it in his healing work. In this day-by-day ministry, the expenditure of their energy was but a trifle compared with his. He was almost always spending and being spent for the suffering multitude, for when virtue (or vitality) went out of him (Luke 6:19) it often (if not always) constituted a drain upon his own reserves of energy. So sensitively adjusted did these vital reserves seem to be, that when amid a thronging crowd, some woman, in an act of faith, touched his robes, the healing virtue passed and she was made whole. "Some one did touch me," he affirmed, "for I perceived that power had gone forth from me." (R.V.) He knew the power had passed, and was conscious of the drain within himself.

If we would judge of this strain by what it seems to cost some of the modern exponents of the healing art, who, by massage or the magnetic touch, impart of their own vitality to the sufferer, we would have to say that it cost Jesus very much of his energy every day, for even 'when he sought opportunity to recuperate, the eager crowds sought out his retreat, and brought their ailing folk along. "Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases" is Matthew's way of describing this healing work. So spent had he become by this expenditure of energy that after he had borne the ordeal of Gethsemane and the later "judgment" experience, and the time had come for him to bear his cross to Calvary, he fell exhausted beneath its weight, and another had to be conscripted to the task.

In view therefore of that intensive sacrifice of vital energy day by day 'we need not be surprised that a morning's journey, tolerably well borne by his followers, had left him spent and weary. But even here, his rest had scarce begun when "duty" and "opportunity" pressed in upon him, and first, to one solitary soul, and then to a mingled multitude he laid himself out to serve, and spend still more from his low reserve of strength.

Perhaps here is a sweet morsel of, comfort for those who, spent and wearied in the service of the Lord, may need to go aside and rest, permitting thus life's spent forces to be restored. "Rest" is not always "rust" -- it sometimes is investment for another day! Happy indeed this weariness when caused by loving service for his dear Name, and for those he loves! It is good to be touched with the feeling of his weariness!

Reclining thus from the noonday sun, his rest was broken by the sound of approaching feet. A woman with her water pot at the midday hour? Why was this? Exemplary mothers and virtuous maidens would be there soon after break of day, or wait until the cooler hours when the sun had sunk to rest. Only the ostracized and excommunicated would need to come at this meridian hour!

However, notwithstanding that this water seeker was a woman -- a Samaritan woman at that -- and, by all the conventions of the moral code, of doubtful chastity, Jesus did not hesitate to quell such rising fears as both place and circumstance might tend to raise, by asking her the favor of a drink. Regaining poise from the kindness of his voice, and recognizing him by dress and accent as of Jewish birth (and perhaps with some touch of scorn as though for once the advantage was with the Samaritan and against the Jew) she pertly said, "How is it that thou, being a Jew askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" Ignoring both her accent of the words "woman" and "Samaria" and the scornful pertness of her voice, Jesus overlooked her apparent readiness to do

battle on this time worn theme, and said in serious, friendly tones: "If thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is that said unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him ... "The gift of God"! In that sun drenched land that was just the cry of the peddling water carrier, as he bore his precious burden through the streets! Sparkling water from the living spring was "the gift of God" in very truth!

But Jesus had a further concept running through his words than mere reference to the "*aqua pura*" down the well, for he then went on to say, "He would have given thee living water." Uncomprehendingly and tauntingly the woman made reply, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave, us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" That was as if to say, This water was good enough for Father Jacob and his family, ought it not to be good enough for us? From whence has thou better water than this?

Again Jesus lifts the conversation right above the water in the well, assuring her "Whosoever drinketh of this water [even though as Jacob's gift] shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but, [it] . . . shall be . . . a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Still not understanding, but now somewhat subdued both by word and manner of this unusual Stranger, the woman then made request that he give her such supply "that I come not hither to draw."

Had she been of the Jewish race, with all the books of the Prophets available. (as well as the Decalogue) she might have understood more readily this reference to "living water." . From the words of Isaiah (Isa. 12:3 and Isa. 44:3), Jeremiah (Jer. 2:13), and Zechariah (Zech. 13:1 and Zech. 14:8), she could have learned that "living water" meant "water of refreshment" from God, showers and streams, of blessing from his hand-not that mere liquid compound gushing from the well.

By these few earnest, directly spoken words, Jesus had countered and subdued the pertly flippant heart, and was creating something near respect and expectation there instead.

Then to lead the woman on to some still deeper thing, Jesus made suggestion that she "go and call her husband." Not that the presence of the man was needed there to satisfy the proprieties of the situation; for this suggestion was nothing more than another turn of the probe, or another flash of the search light into the depths of her soul. Evidently Jesus wanted to, lead her on to the point where the water which he had to give could be given in response to her request. The "man at home," who was not a husband, was the "infection spot" of her life, and it was there the change must be made ere he could bestow such "water" as he had to give. Approving and responding to the candor of her reply, Jesus said, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband in that saidst thou truly." With so much she would rather hide, yet in this "presence" she could neither evade nor hide the truth, though only in a legal sense was this the truth. The revealing words, "Thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband," was startling in the extreme. How knew this Stranger this? Was he gifted with "Seer's" sight?

This was proving too much for her, for this man's words and insight were searching her inmost soul and revealing its hidden sin.

As John retold this story to his converts, in those later ways, would not his unspoken question be, "Was not that the Christ? Who save he could strip the soul of all its secrets and pretenses and reveal its hidden sin?"

Smarting under this piercing probe, the woman, with considerable adroitness; then sought to turn the subject of the conversation- from herself and fasten it upon the time-worn controversial point as to whether Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim was the place where men should worship God. On this new ground we can almost hear the thrust and parry of her threadbare soul in the words, "ye say" and "we say." "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, therefore, "we say" it is right for us to do the same, but 'I say" that .in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Was this just a matter of debate and expediency in order to side track the probe and sting in her heart, or was it desperation's last throw? Could she hope to argue that old question with, a man like this?

But: Jesus was not interested as a mere Jew in the old controversy, only to say that the Samaritans worshiped they knew not what, while the Jew was well informed as to his worshiping:

Again, with an insight clearer and deeper than any other man possessed, whether Jew or Samaritan, Jesus then proceeded to assure his challenger that though Jerusalem had long enjoyed that indisputable privilege, it would not continue to do so indefinitely, for "neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem shall men worship the Father" in that old exclusive sense, An hour was to come in the Father's purposes, yea that hour was even now come when the true worshiper should worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father would seek only such to worship him. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

In this way Jesus elevated the disputed point to its highest level, and deprived the threadbare, controversial theme of all point and purpose for Jew and Samaritan alike. Realizing that this amazing Stranger was talking her still more out of her depth, the bewildered woman sought again to turn the point of conversation by saying unto him: "I know that Messiah cometh ... when he is come he will tell us all things." Here presumably she felt on safer ground, for though she lacked the insight given by Israel's prophetic literature, she had been taught to expect, on the testimony of the Decalogue alone, the advent of one whom Samaritan teachers had called "The Revealer." Hence feeling how far she had been outmatched by this deep sighted Jew, she comforted herself by the assurance that when he whom they, like Israel, called "The Messiah," should come, he would explain and educate them in all these deep mysteries of God. And presumably she wanted him to know that when Messiah at last did come, they of Samaria would welcome him as warmly as would the Jew -- a fact which the events of the next two days would amply demonstrate.

And then, in approving reply, a statement in calm and measured tones of the most amazing character fell from his illuminating lips -- "I that speak to thee am he." This open affirmation of his Messiahship' at this time and in this way indicates a most open: departure from his usual mode of declaring himself and his mission, seeing that at other times he forbade his disciples to make him known to the Jews as he that was to come." - See Matt. 16:20, 17:9.

Not only did he announce himself thus to the woman alone, but presumably he both stated and amplified it to the people, during the next two days, for at his departure from their midst, these citizens of this small. Samaritan town made full and open confession of their belief that not only was he indeed the Christ so long expected by Israel, but also would, be the Bringer of Salvation to all the world. Truly when Messiah "came" to that little city he did indeed "tell them all things" necessary to make them know how the salvation of the world would come. How greatly honored was, that Samaritan city -- and that because an outcast sort of woman went to the well at an unusual time of day! And "He must needs go through Samaria" to be there also at that time of day! Verily there is a Divinity to shape the ends "rough hew them how we may"!

Thus runs the course of this illuminating story with its uniquely wonderful consummation. But what have we here to serve John's purpose in pressing home the claims of his Beloved Lord to the

Messiahship of Israel? Are we to think that John's repetition of his Master's words would be proof enough to that later generation that Jesus was the Christ?

We are inclined to think that the proof lies elsewhere, and that the repetition of Jesus' actual words would only stand as evidence when other facts had proved the claim.

In the course of his conversation Jesus had stated three specific facts relative to the Nature and Work of God which no one could enunciate except he had come from God, and had been taught by him. In addition there are two facts relative to "the times and seasons of the Plan" which were not due to be fulfilled; till Christ himself should come. The first three facts are:

(a) That God, in himself, was essentially a spirit Being.

(b) That God from henceforth was revealing himself as a "Father" towards "sons."

(c) That the Almighty God of the Patriarchs was now about to overstep racial bounds and "seek" for his worshipers outside the ancient race.

Here are points of fact, both as to the essential Being of Almighty God, and concerning his unsearchable works that no man could have found out, by any deduction or inference of any kind. . Only One who had dwelt "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18) could have declared it. That the God of Israel was "one" (one only God), and that he was possessed of many moral qualities, had been made known to the Prophets of Israel, but to none had it been disclosed that God was, in essential being, a spirit entity. To Moses he had "back parts and "hands." (Exod. 33:23.) To Isaiah he had a "train" (or skirts) (Isa. 6:1.) To other Prophets he had "eyes" and "heart" and many properties usually attributed to man; and likely to produce impressions that he was in some sense, a super-sentient archetype to man.

It was the particular prerogative of the Man of Nazareth to disclose the fact that man, on the earth, could neither understand the nature of the Divine, nor look upon' it to see if it had shape or parts. To have "life in himself" is just one brief but inscrutable statement by which Jesus declared "something" that he "had," yet even that could not tell us what he "was. "God is a spirit" -- that means that he is not a man -- and that is the limit of the finite mind. Beyond that it cannot go. Yet Jesus *knew*, by long experience, in his exalted pre-human days; and its memory "came through" with his transference down into flesh. He had "seen" and "experienced" as "a God" with "The God," and came down to "declare" and make testimony of what he knew. In that he bore the true stamp and impress of the Christ.

It had not dawned upon the minds of men to look up to the Omnipotent and call him Father. Only in a few oblique references here and there (and then from the standpoint of future things) do we have any references to the Fatherhood of God; as for instance in Isa. 43:6; Jer. 31:9; and Hosea 1:10. To the ante-diluvian world of men he was "*El or Elohe*," the great Creator; to Melchizedek he was "*El Elyon*," The Most High God (Gen. 14:18, 19); to Abraham he was "*El Shaddai*," God Almighty (Gen. 17:1); to Israel he was "*Yahweh*," Jehovah (Exod. 6:31); to Isaiah he was "The Lord of Hosts" (Isa. 6:3); but to none save that wonderful Stranger at the well had he become really known as a Father, or had he acknowledged any beside as a Son.

Hitherto everywhere all men had to seek their gods and placate them with sacrifices. Even Israel had to go up to Jerusalem to find their God. Never before, during the long reign of sin had God set out to be the seeker of men, as now! Henceforth the eyes of the Lord would run to and fro

through the earth to seek and accept men of faith as his sons and receive the devotions of their hearts as incense sweet.

Not only did Jesus attest these new disclosures as definite facts, but he also evinced an understanding of two further aspects of the divine dealings with men which none could declare unless he were illuminated by the spirit of the living God. These two further features were:

(a) An hour had been arranged in the Divine Program when a change would occur-"the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship "

(b) That hour had already dawned . . . the hour cometh and *now is* when true worshipers shall worship . . ."; he himself being the first to receive that opportunity:

It was because he had the deeper understanding of these tremendous new facts concerning this divine relationship to believing men; which, could now be attested as present facts -- the due time having now come -- that he could bear the testimony which the Christ was intended to bear (see Isa. 61:1-3), and thus demonstrate himself to be the One sent of God. He alone, in all the world, had been entrusted with the secret of these mysteries of God; and thus by his illuminating words, as well as by his healing works, he could afford proof that he was the Christ, the Son of God.

- *T. Holmes, Eng.*



## Living Where the Fruits of the Spirit Grow

*"His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." - Psalm 1:2, 3.*

AMONG the very instructive and deeply significant illustrations used by Jesus during his earthly ministry we have the beautiful presentation of the Christian's possibilities drawn from the vine and its branches. As used by our Lord (John 15) it embraces in the closest relationship, the Father as Husbandman, our Lord as the Vine, and ourselves as the branches -- all absorbed in the same great objective -- the production of fruitage. And be it noted, this illustration is particularly used to emphasize the fruit-bearing expected of the branches. To this end the Husbandman watches over their union with the Vine, taking care to prune away all unfruitful branches, and giving still more special attention to such as are fulfilling his purpose in bringing forth increasing measures of fruit. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth *more* fruit." And to make sure that we get the real import of the lesson thus illustrated, there comes that final reiteration of the Father's purpose, and this time with such impelling persuasiveness as to impart to our hearts something of the joy experienced by the Vine in bearing fruit for God: "Herein is my Father glorified, *that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*" Could there be a stronger appeal made to hearts at one with Jesus than this?

But care is taken in this forceful illustration to once more emphasize the inflexible purpose of the Husbandman. It is one of those Scriptural lessons calculated to disabuse any mind of whatever lax ideas there might be regarding the seriousness of being a castaway. There is nothing whatever in the picture to encourage the thought that even if the fruitage is not all that it should be, there is nothing to be seriously concerned about. On the contrary it has everything in it to remind the meager fruit bearing branches of other Scriptural warnings of the "goodness and severity of God." It is here made very clear that unless there is a continual growth toward greater fruit bearing, there will be a severance from the Vine. Unless there is "more fruit" and "much fruit," the Husbandman must cease his expectations of a harvest, and then, how significant the words, "*Men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*" To get more of the force of the lesson let us remember that a vine branch has but one use, that of bearing fruit. We are keeping in mind, of course, that our Lord is thinking of a grape vine. Had he used any of the larger fruit bearing trees, the lesson would not have been so definite, for it frequently happens that the branches pruned from trees have a further use. They may be used for fuel where firewood is needed. But vine branches are entirely useless except for the one purpose for which the husbandman grows them; failing in this they are unprofitable. Thus, Paul tells us, God dealt with the Jewish nation, and so also will he deal with us should we fail to bring forth the fruit expected: "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." - Rom. 11:21.

### GROWTH IN GRACE -- HOW ATTAINED

How manifest it is from a study of the Scriptures that it is God's will for the new life which is begun in us by our being begotten of the Spirit, to be constantly growing into greater fulness from day to day. Plainly it is revealed that God desires not merely to give life, but to give it more and more abundantly. The new life is to be vitalized continually by an appropriation of the exceeding great and precious promises of the Word. And it will grow just in proportion to the measure that the sunshine of divine truth and the showers of heavenly grace are received and thus appropriated.

The possibilities of growth are in proportion to our willingness to receive. God in his marvelous grace has unnumbered blessings awaiting our willingness to accept, and as we receive and use these blessings, we will experience expanding powers of growth "from grace to grace, and from glory to glory." Progressively, this will mean, first, a recognition on our part of our redemption through the precious blood of Jesus, and by virtue of that full atonement accomplished for us, we can rejoice in a standing of "no condemnation." Then there must be a personal faith in and dependence upon all the promises of the Father made to us through Christ Jesus. By thus cultivating faith there will surely follow a blessed, intimate communion with our Father and our dear Redeemer in our daily life of prayer, and in our study of the Word to learn our possibilities in the purpose of God. If such be our constant attitude of mind and heart, there will not fail to be a constant ripening of the fruit of the spirit, making us more and more pleasing and acceptable to the Lord. Thus he leads us on and on into an abiding sense of his favor and acceptance, day by day imparting to us an increasing measure of joy in fulfillment of the promise: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." - John 14:23.

"We will come unto him, and *make our abode with him.*" What a depth of meaning there is in this promise! Does it not literally mean that the one great desire of the Father and the Son is to have a permanent abiding place in our hearts? Are they not saying to us in this and other similar entreaties, It is not yours I want, but you. Let our giving of time and means be ever so great, and our work ever so zealously performed, yet we may be robbing our gracious God of the greatest joy we can give him the joy of supping with us in quiet communion in the innermost chambers of our hearts. He does not say, We will make our abode *in you*, and that will be all we want. Ah no, that would never satisfy the heart of him who has given us all we can know of longing for intimate fellowship. Jesus means much more than just abiding in us as one who has had a place of residence given him. What he asks of the Christian is the joy of abiding *with him* in intimate communion. And if we would experience a real consciousness of attaining growth in grace, we must find ourselves irresistibly drawn away from all other things, to find ourselves alone with him-yes, alone with him-not to the neglect of work to be done, but to receive that power to work according to his will, which is indispensable to all who would enjoy his sweet "Well done."

### **INTO A DESERT PLACE APART**

Not of himself alone did the poet write when he gave to the Church these expressions of soul hunger for God:

"I love to steal a while away  
From every cumbering care,  
And spend the hours of closing day,  
In humble, grateful prayer.

"I love in solitude to shed  
The penitential tear,  
And all His promises to plead,  
Where none but God can hear.

This desire to be alone with God is so much a part of the life of abiding in true union with him that to be devoid of such longing would seem to be a matter of real concern. To enjoy oneness with our Lord, and as our opening text suggests, to "be like a tree planted by the rivers of water," there must be a desire to be with him where he loves to be. And does he love to be "in a desert place" with his own? Indeed he does! The evidence of this fact is too great to, leave any one in

doubt. It was in the lonely Midian wilderness that God appeared to Moses, and there revealed himself and his purposes concerning Israel. And it was there in *that solitude* where God reminded Moses that "the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground." When God came down to hold converse with his servant in this way, it transformed "the backside of the wilderness" into a holy retreat and rendezvous alone with God. Yes, and it prepared his trembling instrument for his future service to his brethren held fast in the degrading chains of bondage. And we may well observe that being alone with God characterized much of the life and service of Moses. May it not be that even in this he was a type of the greater Prophet he foreshadowed-our Lord Jesus. He too spent much time in the solitudes apart from all but God.

In later years as Moses became burdened with such great responsibilities, we find God calling him apart. He was called up into the mountain to spend a prolonged season of close contact with the Lord, and with what wonderful results! His face was made to shine with a glorious reflection of the Divine character with which he had been in communion. Down on the plains amid the multitudes he could know much of God's purposes in delivering Israel and using them ultimately to carry forward his plan to bless all the families of the earth, but when God would reveal the hidden secrets of the "better sacrifices," and "the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow," he called his servant away from the plain, up into the mountain height. The minutia of the "great salvation" came to him when alone with God, and as he went forth to perform his ministry to Israel, and to us, he left that holy rendezvous with these deeply significant words in his ears: "See . . . that thou make all things according to the pattern *showed to thee in the mount.*" - Heb. 8:5.

### **SAVIOR, LET ME WALK WITH THEE**

"Lofty thoughts and great deeds are invariably the outcome of meditative silence. Look at Christ himself. Although he did not begin his public ministry until he was thirty years old, and although it lasted only for three and a half years, yet during that brief period, he often left behind him the busy haunts of men and even the companionship of his disciples, and went away into the lonely places of the land to commune with his own heart and enjoy fellowship with his Father. Thence he returned refreshed and invigorated to teach and heal the people, and carry forward to its sublime fulfillment the divine mission of his earthly life. Has he not in this, as in other things, left us an example to be imitated? If Christians really desire to be Christlike in character and conduct, progressive in themselves and useful to others, let them frequently retire into solitude and silence, to ponder the Word of God, contemplate the divine character, imbibe the divine spirit, and be built up into Christ. It is not more meetings they need with more talk and excitement, but more of quiet meditation and secret prayer. 'Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father who seeth in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, *shall reward thee* openly.' Thou shalt come forth thence into the social life of men with clearness of vision, warmth of heart, and inspired by noble purposes, to live for Christ, speak for Christ, labor for Christ, and do good unto all men as opportunity offers. Jesus also said unto his disciples, 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile.' And today as then, he would have it understood that such quiet pauses even amid whitened fields, may not be neglected without depleting our spiritual strength, and diminishing our power for effective service.

As the Vine, our Lord Jesus partook so continuously of the power and life of God, that his life fulfilled the inspired statement of the Psalmist: "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers, of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." How beautifully we find Jesus acknowledged this dependence upon God: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. (John 5:19.) It is no marvel, therefore, that we find abundant evidence being constantly given him that his life and work had the Father's approval. Understanding his need, then, and being wholly concerned about doing

God's will in God's time, as well as in God's way, Jesus cannot but seek the place where God's voice is heard most distinctly -- the place apart, where the humble, teachable heart loves to pause and inquire afresh, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

### **UP IN THE MOUNTAIN TO PRAY**

It will be profitable to review just here a few of the incidents in our dear Lord's life wherein we are shown how he connected prayer with the great crisis periods of his life, and the results secured thereby. Luke informs us (Luke 6:12) that before selecting the twelve who should thereafter constitute the complete apostolic order, he spent a night alone in prayer. And in after days what consolation must have been his in remembering that he had not chosen his own twelve disciples. The guidance sought in the night watches alone in prayer had resulted in so complete an accord with the Father's providences that he could say without qualification, "Those whom *thou* hast given *me*." And this faithful guidance he promises to all who in all their ways put God first, and who have learned their constant need of wisdom from above.

At another time we find him in the midst of a multitude toward whom he "was moved with compassion," and to whom he had given freely. On this occasion it is the people who are 'in "a desert place," and his disciples are urgent that they be sent away to secure for themselves whatever they may need of food. But Jesus says, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." (Matt. 14:16.) Then followed the miraculous "feeding of" five thousand men, beside women and children." To those who are disposed to give close' attention to the details of our Lord's habits of life, there is a depth of significance in the record immediately following: "*And straightway* Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, . . . and when he had sent the multitudes away, *he went up into a mountain apart to pray*: and when the evening was come, he was there alone." In John's record (John 6:15) we have what may be considered another account, of this same miracle, and John adds the information that at this time there was a decided disposition to *take Jesus by force and proclaim him king*. And, "What would Jesus do?" Ah, yes, well might it have been if throughout the Age his professing followers had pondered more faithfully such lessons as these, and been more alert to the, danger lurking in what seems like the sure evidence of success and triumph.

### **MY SOUL BE ON THY GUARD**

Jesus was living too close to the Father to be deceived by any spurious fruitage. He knew too well the genuine from the false, and therefore recognized the need of adhering faithfully to the principles -- and standards fixed in his Father's Plan. Satan had tempted him in the outstart of his ministry by suggesting a more speedy way to world rulership than by way of obedience to God, but that, and all subsequent temptations to adopt quicker methods, was promptly rejected. And let it not be overlooked that almost invariably Jesus is found resorting to prayer when these crisis periods appear in his life. In connection with the incident we are now considering, we feel constrained to quote a few interesting observations from Farrar's "Life of Christ":

"The miracle produced a profound impression. It was exactly in accordance with the current expectation, and the multitude began to whisper to each other that this must undoubtedly be that Prophet which should come into the world': the Shiloh of Jacob's blessing; the Star and the Sceptre of Balaam's vision; the Prophet like unto Moses to whom they were to hearken; perhaps the Elijah promised by the dying breath of ancient prophecy, perhaps the Jeremiah of their tradition, come back to reveal the hiding-place of the Ark, and the Urim, and the sacred fire. Jesus marked their undisguised admiration, and the danger that their enthusiasm might break out by force, and precipitate his death by open rebellion against the Roman government in the attempt to

make him king. *He saw too that his disciples seemed to share this worldly and perilous excitement.* The time was come, therefore, for instant action. By the exercise of direct authority, he compelled his disciples, to embark in their boat, and cross the lake before him. . . . So in the gathering dusk he gradually and gently succeeded in persuading the multitude to leave him, and when all but the most enthusiastic had streamed away to their homes or caravans, he suddenly left the rest, and fled from them to the hilltop alone to pray. He was conscious that a solemn and awful crisis of his day on earth was come, and by communing with his Heavenly Father he would nerve his soul for the stern work of the morrow, and the bitter conflict of many coming weeks. . . . The storm which now began to sweep over the barren hills; the winds that rushed howling down the ravines; the lake before him buffeted into tempestuous foam; the little boat which -- as the moonlight struggled through the rifted clouds -- he saw tossing beneath him on the laboring waves, were all too sure an emblem of the altered aspects of his earthly life. But there on the desolate hill-top; in that night of storm, he could gain strength and peace and happiness unspeakable; for there he was alone with God. And so over that figure, bowed in lonely prayer upon the hills, and over those toilers upon the troubled lake, the darkness fell and the great winds blew."

### **CHRIST THINS RANKS OF HIS FOLLOWERS**

By a careful study of the harmony of the Gospel records, the same writer concludes that the next day following this wave of enthusiasm, and haste to make Jesus king, was to witness "one of the saddest episodes of our Savior's life. It was the day in the synagogue at Capernaum on which he deliberately scattered the mists and exhalations of such spurious popularity as the miracle of the loaves had gathered about his person and his work, and put not only his idle followers, but some even of his nearest disciples to a test under which their love for him entirely failed." And what was that test? Ah, it is the test of all who profess relationship to him, it is the test by which the secrets of the heart are laid bare, and the real objectives made manifest: "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever," and, therefore, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." This, as the record shows, was "a hard saying" to many, and a most effective means of thinning the ranks of our Lord's followers. And is it not "a hard saying" still, and one calculated to serve the same ends today as then? Surely so! Who can doubt that the recording of such things as this, has been a part of God's method of warning us of the certainty of repetition in the history of his professed people. By such sad failures on the part of other favored ones, he would put us on guard, lest we too fall after the same example of unbelief. And so, as many then seemed "not far from the Kingdom" before the test, because of their enthusiastic zeal to make Jesus king before the time, so it *must* inevitably be again. And just as the utterance of the great truth underlying complete union with Jesus and appropriation of all that such union involves, was distasteful to the many then, so it will most assuredly be again and again. The Kingdom and its positions of honor have ever been more attractive than the blessed privilege of complete surrender to and complete association with the Lord of glory. It will therefore follow that the experience of Jesus on this occasion, will be repeated in the lives of those who really do the thing he insists must be done. As, thereafter, "many walked no more with him so it will be with the faithful, even yet. "The disciple is not above his master," and so the pathway of true discipleship will continue to be a lonely way. But it will be a most blessed way, for it will be the way of vital contact with the Living Bread, and the way of daily enjoyment of the living water which flows into hearts to invigorate and cleanse them; yes, and then out of such to the blessing of others -- "*rivers of living water.*" These are they of whom the Scriptures speak so confidently, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

## **DANGER LURKS IN THE HOUR OF SUCCESS**

Being much alone with God, as this incident shows, fortified Jesus against accepting any premature Kingdom rights, and it safeguarded him against any substitution of quantity for quality. The recognition of his great need of the Father's continual guidance surely protected him against ever attempting any modification of the conditions under which he himself or his disciples might hope to gain the approval of God. The stern requirements of the Law he knew were binding on him, and failure in one point would constitute him guilty of all. And he is no less severe in demanding of his disciples a similar demonstration of fidelity to the will of God. As he must be faithful to God's standard to the full extent, of his ability, so also must -his followers. With them, all of life must be a demonstration of the fact that vital union with him, and consequent progression toward the perfections of the Father's character, have become the definite purpose of life -- the work within taking precedence above all other things. If therefore the realization of dependence on God, and the habit of seeking that assistance in the quiet place of retirement, was so marked in the life of Jesus, how much more so is it needful for us. The praying, solitude seeking Master, would still remind us that our wily foe is very near us when least expected. Our Lord would still check much of our enthusiasm by warning us that danger lurks in the midst of what we might be disposed to consider our greatest triumphs. When we would talk of having "routed the enemy" and of crumbling his defenses before our onward march, if we are close enough to Jesus, and quiet enough 'to hear' him, we will discover that the Devil is not in nearly as great danger Of defeat just" then, as we are ourselves. He will tell us a little of ancient history, of one who fell like lightning" from heaven through self exaltation. And then will come his usual emphasis on the greater realities: "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:18, 20.) The proper ground for those who are incapable of being anything other, than "unprofitable servants," is that, ground where "what the Lord has done for me," extinguishes all desire to boast of what "I have done for him."

## **THEY SHALL BRING FORTH FRUIT IN OLD AGE**

As in nature, so in grace, the early and latter rains contribute strength to grow into maturity. The Scriptures abound in promises and assurances in which the seeker after righteousness may well, rejoice. God guarantees to give the increase, if we see to it that -our hearts are prepared to receive his Word and spirit in progressive unfolding, and quickening power. He has assured us that if we draw nigh to him he will draw nigh to us, and above all else, this is what he longs to do. Could we but realize this more, with what earnestness we would prove the sincerity of our frequently expressed desire: "Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee." Oh for more of that understanding heart and attentive ear, to catch that same expression of desire for nearness, in God's address to us. In a multitude of ways our Father is asking for a greater nearness to those who call him by that wonderful name. As one who realized this has well said, "Put together all the tenderest love you know of, dear reader, the deepest you have ever felt, and the strongest that has ever been poured out upon you, and heap upon it all the love of all the loving human hearts in the world, and then multiply it by infinity, and you will begin perhaps to have some faint glimpses of the love and grace of God!" Could anything satisfy the deep love of a mother's heart like the intimate spontaneous caress of her child? Even so, our Father in heaven waits for just such assurances from us of the consuming love we feel for him. To this end he has given us "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." He has brought us nigh by the blood of Jesus, that being hidden in him we may be

"So near, so very near to God,  
Nearer we cannot be;  
For in the person of His Son,  
We are as near as He."

To the maturing saint nothing is so precious as the inward assurance that this nearness is becoming more and more a blessed reality. The years of walking as he walked, and walking in fellowship with him, have developed an acuteness of discernment which enables the mature to catch the clearest vision of his will. To these there will come a growing love for the things God loves, and correspondingly, a hatred for all that God cannot love. Inward purity will become such a vital issue that there will be no more desire to "make provision for the flesh." Its weaknesses will be dealt with in a determination to achieve victory, and to be cleansed "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." While others may continue to emphasize the development of the intellect, and to stress the exterior things, the one living close to God will more often be heard confessing,

"If clearer vision Thou impart,  
Grateful and glad my heart shall be;  
But yet to have a purer heart  
Is more to me, is more to me."

It is of just such as these that the Psalmist writes:

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." - Psa. 92:12;14.

### **BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

With what wonderful consideration for our infirmities the Lord has provided against any discouragement that might arise through contemplating so happy an experience as the text just quoted promises. Like beacon lights along the upward way, there shines forth with beckoning encouragement such assurances of God's power as these words of Paul: "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, he hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness); being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God," (2 Cor. 9:8-11.) Multiplied tests supply the same ground for confidence. And these heights of Christian experience can be attained by faithfully drawing from the river of divine grace, beside which the Lord has planted us. Its reality will come to those who seek it, and not only the possessor, but the beholder also, will be ready to confess the power of God thereby revealed. For it is important to remember that the life "hid with Christ in God," though hidden as to its inner springs, cannot be concealed as to its outward manifestations. As the Apostle is frank to tell us, "If we say we are in him, then we ought also so to walk even as he walked." Profession must be witnessed to by the evidences of possession. Other saints have attained this, shall not we also?

In concluding this review of truths so well known by many today, we cannot do better than to direct attention to a beautiful word picture, truly descriptive of a Christian character wrought out, in us by the power of God:

"Into all this we shall undoubtedly be led by the spirit of God, if we give ourselves up to his guidance., But unless we have the right standard of Christian life set before us, we may be hindered by our ignorance from recognizing his voice; and it is for this reason I desire to be very plain and definite in my statements.

"I have noticed that wherever there has been a faithful following of the Lord in a consecrated soul, several things have, sooner or later, inevitably followed:

"Meekness and quietness of spirit become in time the characteristics of the daily life. A submissive acceptance of the will of God, as it comes in the hourly events of each day, is manifested; pliability in the hands of God to do or to suffer all the good pleasure of his will; sweetness under provocation; calmness in the midst of turmoil and bustle; a yielding to the wishes of others [where principle and integrity are not involved], and an insensibility to slights and affronts; absence of worry or anxiety; deliverance from care and fear -- all these, and many other similar graces, are invariably found to be the natural outward development of that inward life which is hid with Christ in God. Then as to the habits of life: we always see such Christians sooner or later laying aside thoughts of self, and becoming full of consideration for others; they dress and live in simple, healthful ways, they renounce self indulgent habits, and surrender all purely fleshly gratifications. Some helpful work for others is taken up, and useless occupations are dropped out of the life. God's glory, and the welfare of his creatures, become the absorbing delight of the soul. The voice is dedicated to him, to be used in singing his praises. The purse is placed at his disposal. The pen is dedicated to write for him, the lips to speak for him, the hands and the feet to do his bidding. Year after year such Christians are seen to grow more unworldly, more serene, more heavenly minded, more transformed, more like Christ, until even their very faces express so much of the beautiful inward divine life, that all who look at them cannot but take knowledge of them that *they live with Jesus* and are abiding in him.

Blessed Lord and Master, henceforth in deeper soul hunger we fervently pray,

"So let our daily lives express  
The beauties of true holiness;  
So let the Christian graces shine,  
That all may know the power Divine."

- J. J. Blackburn.



## The Power of Prayer

Who knows what marvels happen when we pray!  
What forces stir: what victories may be won!  
What things transpire when we can humbly say:  
"In Jesus' precious Name 'Thy will be done!"  
We cannot comprehend with mortal eyes  
That Source Divine! We cannot find our way  
To, answer prayer: yet oft with sweet surprise  
The darkest hour is changed to brightest day!

We cannot come with virtue when we pray.  
No merit ours on which to lean and trust!  
We have naught else except a need to say:  
"We are but faulty creatures of the dust!"  
God has been good and goodness is the theme  
Of those who claim Him as their greatest Friend  
Whom they love with a love which is supreme,  
Because of one who loved them to the end!

Prayer brings within its train a deep repose,  
An inward calm abiding in its strength.  
It seeks the truth because it gladly knows  
That wisdom's ways are opened up at length!  
Prayer must be pure to burn with Holy Fire!  
The incense right if sacred be its flame!  
The heart sincere: ennobled with desire  
To honor God in Jesus' precious Name.

And oh the joy and solace which it brings  
As Gates of Love spring open to our view!  
Transcendent the Almighty King of kings:  
The Source of all that's holy, good and true!  
His angels watch to bless each heart and mind  
With promises imparting hope and peace.  
His chast'ning Hand for those who wish to find  
That mercy for the righteous does not cease,

'Tis prayer that brings true comfort from above:  
Forgiveness and His Spirit to refresh!  
Yet all the Springs of His Eternal Love  
Are freed to serve and then to freely bless!  
Then we can say, arrayed with faith and power:  
"We shall not harbor e'en the slightest care;  
Nor shall we dread the dark foreboding hour,  
For pleased is God to hear and answer prayer!"

- *Frederick LarDeut.*

## Eventide

*"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven."*

HOW RESTFUL and serene was the Master's heart. Nothing could disturb its peace and trust in God! Look at his quiet confidence at the close of that searching day when he said to "the twelve," *"Will you also go away?"* The crowd had ebbed away dissatisfied, and now only these twelve stood near him. Would the searching words he had spoken prove too "hard" for these to hear and understand?

Only yesterday he had fed the hungry multitude. He had given them satisfaction in an hour of need. Out of a handful he had created more than enough. *"Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world"* was the verdict that passed from lip to lip. Like Moses, whose words they had in mind, he had provided bread in the wilderness.

With hunger appeased, approving tongues began to talk. *"This is the man we need for our King"* -- this was the conclusion of all. Only Jesus' adroit withdrawal from amongst them frustrated their plan. (John 6:15.) Now they had found him in Capernaum again, but instead of breaking bread, he drew the deeper moral of the occasion yesterday for them. He told them that he was the "bread of God"-- of which, if they would eat they would have life indeed within them. With yesterday's repast in mind they eagerly exclaimed, *"Lord, give us this bread."*

In response Jesus said, "I am that bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger. He who believes in me shall never thirst."

In conversation and discussion the Jews pondered over what he said. Taking up the theme again in their synagogue (John 6:59), Jesus amplified the former utterances, and said that the Bread which God would give would be his flesh, and the "drink" would be his blood. - John 6:52-58.

A hard saying indeed! How could it be done? "Bread and fish religion" they could well understand, but food for the deeper nature was too hard and abstruse. He was not after all the man to be their King! And so with scornful lip, they turned away and went back to their drab way of life, while he was left with none but the "twelve" attending him. Was Jesus unduly perturbed at this? Not a bit of it. Enthusiasm, created by "loaves and fishes" was not the kind he had come to create. He wanted men who were ready to take up a cross and follow in his steps.

It was not an easy thing for Jesus to watch them depart, for he knew what the end of this would be. The Man of Compassion who could feed them with bread perforce had to stand, but, because of their unbelief, watch them begin to drift towards the rocks of doom. The trends of thought which led them soon to take his life, had already set in-and, in due time led them also to clash with the might of Rome.

Jesus stood among them as the "Gift of God," yet notwithstanding that, there was nothing he could do to save them from that impending crash. No word nor act of his could change the trends of self interested religious thought. It was not easy thus to stand beside the quickening currents and watch them accelerating down the rapids to their final plunge -- and be himself at peace and unperturbed. Only a heart at rest in God, and in his promises, can look forward from the darkening scenes, and know that an "afterwards" is provided for in which the broken hearts, beyond the cataract, can be hushed to quietness and sanity again.

We, too, have that same experience again today. Another generation, amid the closing scenes of another Age, with that same fateful inability to believe, is rushing with quickening impetus to its final plunge, and we, who know the Gift of God, stand powerless to avert the inevitable. No effort of either tongue or pen can turn aside the deep drawn tide that bears our generation on its crest. What of ourselves? Does it sap our peace of heart and mind? Have we learned, like Jesus did, to leave our people -- with our own loved ones, perhaps in the midst -- to the hands of God? It is a lesson still not easy to be learned, to have to stand onlooking and see the fateful drift, down the steepening rapids, yet unable to lend a hand. Day by day we see and feel the cold reaction to God's gifts in grace. Everywhere, the wide world through, awakening nations say, "Give us bread, -give us fish" here and now -- not in God's way! Whether the channel be democratic or totalitarian, the sequel is the same. The Son of God is not wanted either as the Bread of God or as a sacrifice for sin!

But if we would know the peace which in his day kept the Master's heart at rest, we must also bide within the sovereign will of God, knowing the while, that his way is the best. At close of day, let us therefore retire for a little while with him to permit the fret and worry from the world's cold callousness to subside. Has this been a day of worry and perplexity? Let the *"blood of Jesus whisper peace within."* Have we been "by thronging duties pressed"? *"To do the will of Jesus -- this is best."*

Perhaps our path has had "sorrows surging round"! *"On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found."* Have we "loved ones far away"? *"In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they."*

Let us leave them there, assured that Jesus has vanquished death and all its powers -- and that he is on the throne!

*"It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease  
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace."*

*"O rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him,  
and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart."*

- *Bible Students Monthly*, Eng.

## The Question Box

### *Question:*

Will you please explain Philippians 3:20, 21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

### *Answer:*

This passage has been generally misunderstood to teach that our human bodies are vile things, but that, in the Lord's due time they are to undergo a miraculous change, becoming like the glorified body of Christ.

It is true that we, the Church, if faithful, are to be made like our Lord (1 John 3:2), but that thought is not under discussion in Phil. 3:20, 21. Here, as in all true Scripture study, we must first satisfy ourselves that we have a correct translation, and then study it in the light of its context. A preferred translation is given in the American Revised Version:

"For our citizenship [margin commonwealth] is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself."

In studying this text in relation to its context two points are at once apparent: (1) The word "body" is in the singular, not the plural, and (2) the Apostle is contrasting, not the body of one member of the Church on earth with the body that member will have in heaven, but the status of Christ's Body (the Church) on earth with its status when the Lord returns for her.

St. Paul's general line of argument seems clear: In the company of professing Christ followers there are two main groups—the true and the false. They are easily distinguished, not by slight differences of viewpoint on some "hard to be understood" points of doctrine on which even inspired Apostles differed (2 Pet. 3:16), but by the general tenor of their lives. The false are described as of earthly mind—who live as enemies of the cross of Christ. (Phil. 3:18, 19.) The true are not to be content with merely adding to their store of knowledge, but, as Moffatt's choice translation puts it, "We must let our steps be guided by such truth as we have attained." (Phil. 3:16.) This must be true both of the mature and the immature. (Phil. 3:15.) It is mandatory in the Christian experience that each fresh item of truth understood be promptly put into practice. At once it is to have its place in "guiding the steps." This principle was so elementary with Paul that he could, in all humility, consistently urge upon the brethren not merely that they pay attention to his teaching, but that they copy him -- and even were to take note of those who lived by the example he set. - Phil. 3:17, 18, Moffatt.

Then comes the great contrast, which we may well believe was ever present to his mind -- the state of humiliation in which the true Church, the Body of Christ, was to complete its course, and the state of glory to which she would be changed. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4.) "Then," as Brother Russell has so well expressed it, "the Church shall in reality be a glorious body, a body suitable in every way for the high position she shall fill as the Bride of Christ—the companion of the Son of God for all eternity, his joint-heir in all things, and his efficient and thoroughly capable co-worker in the great mission to which Jehovah hath appointed the Christ -- Head and Body -- Bridegroom and Bride. Together they shall constitute the great Prophet, Priest, and King whom Jehovah hath anointed; and their glory shall appear to all intelligent creatures in heaven and earth." - *Reprints*, p. R1102.

- P. L. Read.

## Words of Encouragement

Dear Friends:

Loving greetings in Jesus' precious name.

I am just writing this little note to again express to all the dear brethren who did so much to make us all comfortable and happy while in Brooklyn, our deep appreciation for the service so lovingly rendered, we know, as unto our Lord and Head, Jesus Christ. How honored we are to be numbered amongst God's people, and how truly glorious The Christ, Head and Body, will be! The discourses were very helpful, and it is just wonderful to have such lovely memories of all the dear faces gathered together to worship our Lord in spirit and in truth.

"And whensoever He again introduceth the First-begotten into the habitable earth, He saith, 'And let all of God's messengers worship Him.'" Are we not glad Christ has opened unto us through the New and Living Way the privilege of beholding even in a measure the glory of God and also the glory of his dear Son in all His loveliness, that we, too, may worship and adore Him.

Jesus said unto Martha concerning Lazarus, "Saith I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe thou shouldst see the glory of God!" How full of meaning were His words concerning the resurrection, so soon to follow, of Lazarus from the dead. O may we not be slow to believe, but rather let us pray that we may so fully believe that we shall behold yet more and more of His glory, as we are more, completely emptied of self.

Most lovingly, and with warmest Christian love to you all.

G. G. -- Mass.

## Interesting Selections

### Prayer

What is prayer? A species of begging? A mere device for solving difficulties? A mechanical tool to be left unused until difficulty confronts us and drives us to use that tool? He who reserves prayer for personal emergencies, has not learned what prayer is.

Prayer is a fixed habit, a constant experience, the Christian's vital breath, the bulk of his life, the practice of fellowship with God, a normal, incessant, ever-widening and inevitable outflow of one's entire nature as a child of God. It involves praise, adoration, conference, intercession, refreshment, serenity, joy, confident expectation, love, compassion for one's fellows, devotion to the work of the Lord, forgetfulness of self in serving, tenderness of heart, an increasingly abounding trust, a lively sense of the heavenly Father's presence -- and whatever goes to make it up-the name, habit, and character of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why? Because all prayer is in Jesus' name; and in the Scriptures, "name" stands for character. We pray in proportion as we lead the Christian life; the one dims and goes out with the other. We pray as we live -- as devoted to and absorbed in the Great Enterprise. Selfishness disappears. Personal petitions become a very minor factor. Petition for purely personal ends is not thought of. We have difficulties to meet, but they stand related to God's ends, which we have made our own. They still have a personal tang as did Christ's plea in Gethsemane, but our sense of personal ordeal melts into the sense of the Kingdom and so our will is merged into God's will. When we *really pray*, God and we are thus far *one*, and victory is sure.

- *A Veteran Pastor.*

### A Powerful Testimony

Passing the narrow bounds of obscure Judea, and breaking down the walls of national prejudice and isolation, Jesus made the sublimer teaching of the Old Testament the common possession of the world, and founded a great Brotherhood, of which the God of Israel is, the Father. He alone also -has exhibited a life, in which absolutely no fault could be found; and promulgated a teaching, to which absolutely no exception can be taken. Admittedly, he was the one perfect man-the ideal of humanity; his doctrine the one absolute teaching. The world has known none other, none equal. And the world has owned it, if not by testimony of words, yet by the evidence of facts. Springing from such a people, born, living and dying in circumstances, and using means, the most unlikely of such results-the Man -of Nazareth has, by universal consent, been the mightiest Factor in our world's history; alike politically, socially, intellectually, and morally. If he be not the Messiah, there has at least been none other, before or after him. If he be not the Messiah, the world has not and never can have a Messiah.

- Quoted from *Alfred Edersheim.*

## Peace

Peace is love in flower -- it is love reposing on the green pastures and beside the still waters. It is that sweet restfulness that can leave everything in a Father's hand and be satisfied. I believe that "everything" means *every* thing, and that nothing is excluded. Peace is that calm confidence that trusts the Lord's goodness and wisdom "at all times." (Psa. 34:1) It is the abiding sense of his love that does not lose heart, because others are disturbed -or unreasonable. It is the "very" peace God puts into the heart; and can that be ruffled because circumstances are trying, or because people don't suit us, or because our wills are crossed? No! God's peace is not a happy sensation coming now and then, but it is an abiding thing, a habit of soul and mind which makes the possessor wondrously independent of man.

- *Selected.*