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## Walking with God

*The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. - Psalm 37:23*

WHILE the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, they are not ordered in the sense of commanded, but rather ordained of him, set in order, marked out or chosen. Yet, were commanded the correct thought, the good man would be benefited, for the Lord's commandments are not grievous. The thought of a man's steps being ordained will prompt him to wonder when those steps were marked out; and a little retrospect on life's leadings will teach him that his path was known to the Lord long before he became a good man. In fact, the path he has been traveling along has made him the good man.

Again, the Psalmist says (Psa. 65:4): "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee." Let us have this truth in Bible order: It is not that the man approached God among others, and that from them God chose him, but rather that God foreknew him, prompted him, caused him to approach, and marked out his pathway, his walk in life, before the good man was conscious of Divine guidance. But having been in the heavenly way some time, he is able to look back in life and recall events which satisfy him of this truth, and with memory of the past he says: "He knoweth the way that I take," and he is content to leave the future path to him. Some of the present divine guidance he has not discerned yet, some leadings he thinks strange, but he will understand later in life. Some of his leadings are in answer to his prayer, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil," and he may not know in this life how he has been delivered or from what hazards.

This truth of divine foreknowledge and prior marking-out of the Christian path is well stated in Ephesians 2:10: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before *ordained* that we should *walk* in them."

The good man's first *conscious* approach to God is, as the Bible teaches, through faith, and even that was a divine gift to him. This coming to God is plainly expressed in Hebrews 11:6: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." How encouraging are these words. They are not words of warning; no demand of admission of guilt; no uncertainty of being received need be felt. Clearly from these words, he that cometh is

well-come. This verse is linked with Enoch, the first man of whom it was said that he "walked with God." Little is revealed of him. In the dark days before the flood, only the name of Enoch stands out between Abel and Noah, and these are the only three creditably mentioned. Enoch pleased God, and in his walk of fellowship with his God he must have inquired concerning the future of mankind. God answered him and in passing on to us all the Kingdom promise of Jude 14, he became the first of the long line of prophets. The next worthy mentioned in Hebrews 11, Noah, also walked with God, and so did the next, Abraham.

We have close ties with Abraham, for "he is the father of all them that believe" and "we *walk* in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." (Rom. 4:11, 12.) And so Abraham becomes an example of a good man whose steps are ordered by the Lord, and on the scriptural basis that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," we shall find incidents in his life that will teach us by picture of the Christian's walk *towards* and *with* his God.

Abram began his walk when the Lord God called upon him to leave his own country for an unknown destination, and by obeying he became an early example of the Bible dictum, "We walk by faith, not by sight. Hebrews 11:8 and 13 expresses the intensity of the faith of these ancients in the phrases, "having seen them afar off"; "*persuaded* of them"; "*embraced* them"; and "*confessed* them." Thus did Abram become a stranger and a pilgrim and thus did he begin his walk. He was quite unaware of the duration of his journey, and it happened that the journey to the promised land was but an early stage in life's walk. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord," and surely he was blessed in not knowing its duration nor the trials of the way. At last he arrived in his new land and the Lord God appeared to him and confirmed his word, *saying*, "Unto thy seed will I give *this* land." Abram's response was to worship and thank his God for "there he builded an altar unto the Lord." (Gen. 12:7.) Abram did not stake his claim, set up a boundary mark, or erect a milestone. Of course it was a milestone in his life, and a landmark in his journey, but uppermost in his heart was the altar to the Lord, for he was already walking with his God and must needs worship him. Much was to happen in his life before the promises were filled to the full, but he built his altar immediately, and it became a memorial to which he could always revert.

The account does not record that Abram made an offering on that altar, but such was customary, and it reminds us that Noah erected an altar and offered the burnt-offering when he went forth from the ark after the, cataclysm of the flood. (Gen. 8:20, 21.) From old time the burnt-offering (later becoming the continual sacrifice) was the returning of thanks, acknowledgement and worship of God. The flood of judgment, the end of the old world, the return to normal life, and the return of thanks by his faithful servant, pleased the Lord God. "He smelled a sweet savour" by this resuming of worship. This expression "sweet savour" cannot fail to remind us of the injunction to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." (Eph. 5:2.) Thus did Jesus walk in love towards his Father and toward us, and his sacrifice had the sweet savour of worship, loyalty, and love.

### **ABRAM WALKS INTO TROUBLE**

Then Abram because of famine moved to Egypt. This is the first time Egypt is mentioned in Scripture and rarely is it favorably spoken of. Away from his new land he prospered, but encountered trouble, for through domestic deception, fearing for his life and forgetting his God, he incurred the displeasure of Pharaoh. Possibly he was fortunate to escape with his life, but a power which he appeared to have temporarily forgotten was overshadowing all, and, unknown to Pharaoh, was overruling the whole episode, and Abram was "delivered from evil" -- the evil of

Pharaoh's wrath, and the evil of being away from his altar and his God and his land. (Pharaoh has yet to learn how he benefited the whole world by his clemency.)

That excursion into Egypt had blessed Abram materially, and had he stayed there, he might have failed his God. As a result of this discipline he became aware that he had not been walking worthy of the vocation wherewith he was called. There was only one thing to be done in the circumstances-to return. Abram retraced his steps to the altar he had built in his own land, "and there he called upon the name of the Lord." (Gen. 13:4.) And there he probably thanked his God that he had so supervised his life that he was able to return and resume worship. We may learn from Abram and be thankful that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down," and we find we are in danger of falling when *away* from the altar.

Providentially it was still an altar when Abram got back. Had it been a milestone, it might have said, "Ur of the Chaldees 1000 miles" and he might have considered returning there. But in spite of his temporary lapse, he gave no thought to the old home of his fathers. Had he done so, the warning of Hebrews 11:15 might have been carried out to him. But because it *was* an altar, not a milestone, not a boundary mark, he was reminded of his debt to his God, and his call, his faith and his walk, and so he stayed and called upon the Lord God.

Somewhere in our lives each of us has built an altar to the Lord; some station we can readily look back to with thanks and with faith, and then resume our walk -- some time when our hearts welled up in thanks to our Father for his mercy and grace, perhaps only we ourselves know it, but to us it is an altar. We may have erected it when first we tasted that the Lord was gracious, or when we began to see our wealth in Christ. This could be a milestone in our life, but it must be an altar -- always. And we must keep away from Egypt. The Prophet Isaiah vividly describes Egypt in Isa. 30:2 and Isa. 31:1.

It is possible that it was Lot or one among the collection of relatives with Abram who suggested that they go to Egypt while the famine was, in the land of promise. Lot is shown by the next recorded incident in Scripture to be grasping and selfish; for when their herdsmen quarreled (Gen. 13), and he was offered the choice, he chose the well watered land towards Sodom, and soon events vexed his righteous soul. But this break with nephew Lot worked to Abram's benefit, for when they separated, the Lord God appeared to him and gave him more details of his inheritance. Free of his nephew's advice he walked closer to his God and prospered more in the life to which he was called. - Gen. 13:14-18.

Abram promptly built another altar -- and well he may. (He built no altar in Egypt; none can build altars there.) Again it was not a milestone that he erected, though it was another milestone in life's journey; nor was it a boundary mark, even though he was then instructed to walk throughout his inheritance, now that Lot was separated from him. Thus the selfish choice of Lot resulted to Abram's benefit, for it was never intended that because of human relationship Lot, had a share in the promise to Abram. We too will see better the lengths and breadths of our inheritance in Christ when we are free of all ties, and can walk alone with our Father. Nor will we erect a boundary mark, for we shall find our inheritance to be boundless, limitless; but we shall erect another altar to our God and Father -- a very personal altar. According to the Apostle John, walking with God is synonymous with fellowship with him, and very personal fellowship may be had with him in prayer, communion, and thanksgiving. No one joins us at that altar; it is personal to ourselves, and we must be often there-like the fire of the burnt-offering, it must never go out.

### **ABRAM FALTERS AGAIN**

Then Abram became anxious over the two parts of the promise, and was reassured. It was then that the formula of justification was first stated. Thus he became the father of them that believe. (Gen. 15:2, 6 and 8.) But again he listened to the voice of another-Sarai, his wife, and Ishmael was born of Hagar. Thus another fateful link with Egypt! (Gen. 16:3.) Abram faltered then, for he had listened to a voice other than his God. Sarai meant well, but she too soon found her error. We cannot hurry the purpose of God which will be fulfilled only in his time and way. We must learn to possess our souls in patience, as did Abram, who became an example to his seed. (Heb. 6:12.) The Lord God did not rebuke Abram for thinking to advance his purpose; there was no need to, for the memory was always there in Ishmael. (And Abram always loved him.)

Then thirteen years passed, with apparently no communication between Abram and his God. During those years he did not ask again about the land or the seed: he was learning to wait upon his God. In spite of the fact that there seemed to be little or no progress, Abram's faith must have increased or the next stage would not have been reached. We have all been there (maybe we are there now), thinking that no progress is being made. Stay at the altar; walk with the Lord; and the answer will come in his time. Even when we see no progress in our walk of faith, still the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Then the answer came to Abram. Suddenly the Lord God appeared to him (Gen. 17:1), and said to him, "Walk before me and be thou perfect."

This prompts the question, What had Abram been doing those twenty-four years since he left Ur of the Chaldees? Had he not been walking with his God? Yes, he had; a little wandering at times, but in the main faithful. His faith had increased, and he had learned to wait, and he was still at the altar he built when he parted from Lot. We too should stay at our altar until the next step is revealed by our Father, whatever or wherever it may be. But what a step for Abram! Now the time had at last come for his God to fulfill his promise of the seed. Now his walk becomes closer, more personal. Now the promise and the covenant blossom out. Now his name and that of Sarai are changed to enhance the promise. Now he hears still more of the wealth of his inheritance, for he hears when his promised son will be born, and he too is named in advance. There was no Lot or Terah in the picture then; he stood alone before and with his God. He was walking in the light of Divine approval and fellowship. In fact, we may apply Bible words to him and ourselves in faith: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." (Psalm 89:15.) Abraham and we may hear and know the joyful sound of approval, and walk in the light of his countenance.

Now we can see why Abraham was called the friend of God. The friendship developed to such extent that God could, as it were, ask himself, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? . . . for I know him." (Gen. 18: 17-19.) Then follows the discussion, almost bargaining, when Abraham pleads for Sodom, gradually reducing the number whereby the evil city might be spared the wrath of God. These incidents show the closeness of the friendship that had arisen in Abraham's walk with God.

### **A THIRD ALTAR**

There was one more altar in Abraham's life, and this time not of his own choosing, but by the command of his God. (Gen. 22.) He was commanded to offer the child of promise, Isaac, as a burnt-offering. Again the burnt-offering-the traditional constant offering of praise and thanks to God! He had waited long for the birth of Isaac and his endurance had been rewarded. He had built altars to remind himself of his allegiance and debt to his God, but now he was required to build another altar, -and to give back to the Giver his child of promise as a burnt-offering-the one in whom his expectation rested. Seemingly it was the end of everything!

But note the amazing faith of Abraham. His submission was perfect. He did not murmur. He asked no question. He may have thought within himself that it were better if he, rather than the son of promise, were sacrificed. How this incident proves once more the complete unity, the fellowship, the walking with his God! His faith had so developed that he was able to reason within himself while he was preparing the burnt-offering, that the promise would not fail of fulfillment because God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. (Heb. 11:17-19.) And it may well be that he had beforehand come to the thought that there would be a resurrection of the dead. Verses 8, 9, 14, 16 imply that he and his seed would inherit the land of promise in which they still were strangers, when their God had made it a land of plenty and they could eat the fruit of it together as a nation. And it will be remembered how Abraham insisted on buying a parcel of land in which to bury Sarah. (Gen. 23.) This was sixty years after he had left Ur of the Chaldees. Surely he knew he had yet to inherit, and that only the resurrection could achieve that.

Abraham's hand was stayed, and in the end he was not required to offer Isaac as a burnt-offering, for the Lord God provided the ram as a substitute offering. It will be noted in the reading of Genesis 22 that his friendship with his God had broadened as the years passed, and also that his mind was more occupied with thoughts of the seed rather than the land. In fact, at this time there is no reference to the land promise. The seed is the paramount promise and the lesser promise depends on it. Here in this chapter the promise of God expands and this time it is sealed by an oath -- and that is for the heirs of the promise. - Heb. 6:13-18.

That was the climax of Abraham's trial of faith, which only by constant walking with God was he able to overcome; and we might well think that the story of his life was now closed, especially as there is no record of the Lord God speaking again to him. But there is one more incident in Abraham's life well worth mentioning. With thoughts of the seed and his loyalty to the promise, he desired that Isaac the child of promise should marry in the faith, and accordingly he commissioned his chief steward to journey to the old country to seek a bride for his son, now forty years of age. Eliezer is dubious of the success of the mission, but Abraham exhorts him and assures him that the Lord God will send his angel with him to prosper his way. (Gen. 24:40.) These are the last recorded words of Abraham and they show his firm faith in his God. The very words themselves: "The LORD before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way," are abundant confirmation of the Bible truth that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

Abraham is an Old Testament example of Romans 8:28. He was called according to his purpose, chosen and caused to approach. Over a long period of time he walked with God, and things "worked together for his good" and for our good by the loyalty that he showed. Four things stand out in his walk of faith-his failings, his loyalty, his submission, and his altars. His faith increased with the years, and his heart remained loyal in spite of his failings. Only rarely did he query the Lord God's leadings, such as in Genesis 15:2 and 8, when he questioned how he should know that he would inherit the land, and then he was answered but not rebuked; or when he burst out: "O that Ishmael might live before thee," and he was then told that Ishmael would not be his heir.

The three altars and the events associated with them would always remind him of his God and his debt to him -- the first when he had the initial fulfillment of part of the promise: the second when he parted from Lot and he received insight into the promise: and lastly when he was called upon to offer his son of promise as a burnt-offering and the promise was confirmed by oath.

The Christian can look back with thanksgiving to the example of Abraham's walk with God. He can be thankful that he is a child of Abraham, and that he is walking in the steps of his father in

faith; thankful that he is by divine pronouncement a child of promise, as Isaac was (Gal. 4:28); thankful that because he is in Christ he is an heir of God (Rom. 8:17) looking forward to a fulfillment of the promise, the same promise, the scope of which was not revealed to Abraham. Let us, then, as those called of God, walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness.

- *B. J. Drinkwater, Eng.*

## **"I Know That My Redeemer Liveth"**

*(Continued from last issue)*

*"I know that my Redeemer liveth, . . . whom I shall see for myself,  
and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." - Job 19:25-27.*

IN OUR previous study of this affirmation of job the effort was made to show the desirability of reaching this assured testimony in the matter of our own relation to the Lord. To this end attention was given to the fact that our risen Savior in giving those "many infallible proofs" of His resurrection to His immediate disciples, was at the same time furnishing us with indubitable proof on which we too could say with confidence, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." In His manifestations to Mary in the quietness of the garden alone, and to Peter in some unnamed place apart, we saw how in like manner, though invisible, Jesus still comes to us speaking words by which we may certainly know He lives, and loves, and cares for us also.

We propose now to follow on in the same way in considering others of these post-resurrection appearances, taking them in the order in which they seem to have taken place. In each of these we shall find unquestionable proof that our Redeemer lives, and that He is fulfilling to each one of us the selfsame promise, "I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." (John 14:21.) Just because He is the "same Jesus" yesterday, and today, and forever, we too may share with those "chosen eye-witnesses" of long ago the evidences whereby every doubt may be shattered, and every responsive fiber of our inner being greatly quickened with hope, enabling us also to return to our appointed tasks "with great joy, even as it is said of those favored ones who saw their Savior, and ours, ascend from them out at Bethany. - See Luke 24:50-53.

### **Expounding Scriptures Concerning Himself Made Hearts Burn**

Two disciples, one unnamed, are the next to be favored with an experience whereby they can affirm with assurance that their Redeemer lives again. And once more we may see that same surprising distribution of God's favors by which our own ways are reversed so strikingly. That there is a possibility neither of these two disciples were of the Twelve could be gathered from Luke. In chapter 24:33 he tells us that immediately after they discovered they had seen Jesus, they "rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together." This again was no accidental arrangement by which two disciples may have taken precedence over chosen Apostles. This was the Lord's own doings, and marvelous it is in our eyes, yea, full of lesson for us. By His granting this precedence first to Mary, then to Peter, and now to these two brethren, how clearly Jesus is bringing the lesson home to each one of us that we are Wholly incompetent to decide whom the Lord will select for special recognition. Are we not by these very significant incidents made to wonder how many of our judgments regarding fitness for His presence will be reversed when the number of His elect Church has been completed. More important still, are we not led to wonder if we will experience any disappointing reversal of a too lenient or partial judgment of ourselves? This possibility is surely written plainly for us in these actions of Jesus, and to make sure of avoiding such a disappointment when the Lord makes manifest the secrets of all hearts, how important it is that we take to ourselves all such lessons now.

The story of the evening walk to Emmaus is full of lessons of which our hearts should never tire. The name of only one of these two disciple; is given us. Why not the other? Is the omission of the other's name in any way suggestive that we may think of that one as ourself? Are the identification marks not clear enough to most of us for thinking of ourselves as needing and receiving

some similar corrections because so slow to learn all that the Scriptures should teach us. Let us note a few of these. But first let us note that these two brethren were occupied with a theme well calculated to bring Jesus to them. It was because they were absorbed in the strange nature of His death, and so perplexed with regard to its significance that such words as these could be written concerning them: "Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them." No occupation of mind will ever bring the Savior so near to one's spirit as that which has to do with the meaning to oneself of His death. And no one can make the meaning of that sacrifice so clear, so heart-satisfying, and precious as He, who, "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

It has been well said, "Many of the loveliest songs of peace and trust and hope which God's children sing in this world have been taught in the hushed chambers of sorrow. . . . Afflictions, sanctified, soften the asperities of life. They tame the wildness of nature. They temper human ambitions. They reveal to men their own hearts, their own weakness, faults, blemishes, and perils. They teach patience and submission. They deepen and enrich our experience." And in all such "chambers of sorrow" through which we pass, no greater word of comfort can we find than the assurance the Apostle gives us that the Jesus of the Emmaus story is "this same Jesus" who can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," because of having been "tempted in all points like as we are."

How like Jesus it was to come to these two discouraged followers on the very day of His triumph over death. To Him it was a delight to walk with them on that Sabbath-day journey, and by revealing Himself to them cause their hearts to burn with His unfolding of Scripture, and revive their hope by the simple but significant act of breaking bread with them. Out of similar experiences of shattered hopes and unexpected trials how many of us have been led to know "what a Friend we have in Jesus." When through fiery trials our pathway has lain, what encouragement has come to us as we have heard Him say, "It is I; be not afraid." When made to feel the loneliness of the way, when none seem able to understand us, have we not known Jesus to draw near and go with us, and in recollecting His own lonely hours of earthly life we are given fresh courage, and led to find in Him and His words a satisfying heart's-ease. Have we not found it true, as a writer of note has said:

"It was in the character, not of reproof, but of a sympathizing friend that He spoke to these disciples, so let me think of Him as ready to sympathize with and comfort me, when I walk sad. It often does my sore heart no good to tell its sorrow to any earthly friend. To talk over all the incidents, all the hopes, all the disappointments, all the 'might-have-beens' connected with it, only deepens the gloom. I need a wiser friend than any just like myself can be, a friend who understands what perplexes me, a friend who himself sees and can show me 'the bright light that is within the cloud,' a friend who has not merely the love to sympathize with me, but the power to help. Just such a friend is this great Christ, who sometimes seems a stranger, but, coming to me and chasing my gloom away, reveals Himself as the very Lord who said, 'Ye shall weep and lament while the world rejoices, but I will see you again, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy!'

"It is just His love to me that brings Him to my side. He comes unrecognized at first; for to me, as to these sorrowing ones, He wears 'another form' than that in which I have known Him before. My eyes, like theirs, are sealed with grief, are so 'holden' that I cannot recognize Him in this new form to be the same as ever. He walks beside me, and talks with me, and makes my heart 'burn within me,' and yet, for a time, there is no 'lifting up,' till, in a moment, somehow, the scales fall from my eyes; I know Him; and ere He goes, He leaves with me His own deep, wonderful, satisfying, and unending peace. I am sure many of my darkest hours have been the birthplace of



my highest songs. It is often just when the water in my bottle was completely spent, and, Hagar-like, I felt that I could only lay myself down to die, that my eyes were opened to see the flowing spring that had been close beside me all the time, although I knew it not. When I go mourning without the sun, a few words from the risen Lord can easily put everything right; but I often need the darkness in order to appreciate the light."

And then it is that like one whose ears have heard the joyful sound, our hearts exclaim, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

### **He Lives to Bring His Peace into Our Hearts**

The next appearance of Jesus seems to have been in the upper room where most of the eleven were gathered behind locked doors. How significant His first words to them, "Peace be unto you." He had not said these words to the women whom He met at the grave. They had not deserted Him in His hour of trial and crucifixion and therefore needed no word suggestive of forgiveness for unfaithfulness to Him. But how different it was with most of those He found gathered in that upper room. Yet there was no rebuke, nothing to call to mind their shameful desertion, not even a suggestive pause as He appeared in their midst, but "Peace be unto you," immediately spoken. He had only His loving interest in them to speak. God had "brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep," and the first thing He did was to comfort His flock with His word of peace.

What a wealth of meaning, of comfort and strength, is bound up in this promise of Jesus, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace." (John 16:33.) In bequeathing His peace to us Jesus surely meant this legacy to be one of our best witnesses of His abiding presence with us, and those who enjoy it can testify out of a personal experience, "In Thy presence, is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psa. 16:11.) What peace we may enjoy when we take Him at His word. But with us, as with those disciples in the upper room, there is often a need that He should say to us-yes, even after His word of peace has been spoken in our cars-"Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Why are we so slow to take Him at His word? Because of the pleasing presentation of the lesson we need here, we quote again from the same writer as before:

"Let me be very still as I listen to the words that tell me that this Lord and Master is, to me also, the 'same yesterday, and today, and forever.'

To rid me of all my misgivings, He tells me, first, that He is no longer a dead, but a living, Christ; and He tells me, next, that though He has entered into His glory, He is the 'same Jesus' as of old -- the same in tenderness and the same in grace. I would be a brighter Christian than I am, if I thought of Him more as the living Christ. I sing with joy

'My faith looks up to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary';

but perhaps I think, not too much-I cannot do that-but too exclusively of the Christ that died, and not sufficiently of the Christ who lives and reigns, and is now my living Advocate and Friend forever. At least, Paul seems to have thought so when he spoke of the consolation of knowing the 'Christ that died, yea rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' The life of my Lord, did not end nineteen hundred years ago! Just that He might not be a local Christ, or a Christ for one age alone, He rose into that unchanging life that knows no periods, no epochs, no time, but is an Eternal Now; and He is with me today. I would

seek to live upon a present Christ, and find my comfort and my sanctity in that; and all the more when I remember that the past, the present, and the future are all in the one great Lord who is 'the same yesterday, and today, and forever,' so that my faith can cling to the -Christ who died, my love rest satisfied in the Christ who is risen, and my hope expect with joy the Christ who comes again; for, to the heart that knows Him, He is really 'all,' not merely the alpha and the omega, but all the letters between. My faith in the Christ of history is confirmed and intensified when I see that He is the Christ of experience also.

### **"My Lord, and My God"**

"How often has He said to trembling and dispirited ones just what He said in the upper room, 'Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?' All down the age His voice has been heard speaking peace, and His presence bestowing it. Have I not myself had experiences of His grace I cannot dispute, experiences I would not part with for a thousand worlds? I recognize His words of old in the very tone in which He has spoken to my own heart many a time. To me the Christ of history and the Christ of experience are one-'that same Jesus'; and I see that instead of its being difficult for me to trust this Christ whom I have never seen, because His earthly life now lies so far back in the past, it is becoming every day easier to do it. He stands before me now in a glory He never had before, a Savior whose grace has been tested and experienced." Therefore, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Again we come to the same upper room. Thomas, not being present when Jesus appeared here before, and having declared the only condition on which he could believe that Jesus was alive again, is now to have the proof he had demanded. There is no need for believing that Thomas critically tested the evidence he had asked for, but rather that he spontaneously exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God." All his doubts had vanished now, and he is satisfied that the "same Jesus" is alive for evermore. In thinking of Thomas demanding this evidence before he could believe, we have become accustomed to speak of him as the "doubting Thomas," and to think of him only in that manner. But from another viewpoint his insisting on seeing the evidence by which he could know that the crucified Jesus was risen again, has much in it that we may well consider. What he beheld drew from him a statement which embodied both assurance and complete dedication. "My Lord, and my God." And "this same Jesus" who "once to loving doubt showed hands, and feet, and riven side," and thereby gave permanence to a disciple's faith, continues to do the same today. And in what way can He more effectively produce in our hearts an abiding faith in His being our personal, living Redeemer, than by opening our vision to see Him crucified for us? What vision will cause us to cry, "O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice," like a clear, unclouded view of the wounds He bore for us? We turn to the Gospels and read the story of the buffeting and the mocking, of His long-lingering agonies on the cross; or perchance we turn to something like Dean Farrar's "Life of Christ," and with tears in our eyes reread a vivid account of the horrors of His death by crucifixion, and from our deepest powers of response we say, "He bore, He bore it all for me!" "My- Lord, and my God!" The tie by which we are bound to Him never seems stronger than when we meditate on the fact that "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." That sacrifice is the answer to all our doubts concerning His acceptance of us, and we cling- to Him in the assurance that

"If I ask Him to receive me,  
Will He say me nay?  
Not till earth and not till heaven  
Pass away!"

Let us, then, be not faithless but believing. "If while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," now that we have been accepted in the Beloved One, and He stands in God's presence for us, is it not ours to rejoice in a love 'that will not let us go? Only let ours be the complete assurance and dedication so well expressed in the words of Thomas, and our testimony will then be one of blessed conviction, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

### **He Careth for All His Own**

Our next appearance is a seashore morning meal prepared by the hand of Jesus. His disciples had been toiling all night without results. How very, often in after days, indeed, how often through all the days of the Church's toiling, it has seemed as though they had "caught nothing." Times innumerable it has seemed an utterly fruitless toiling, or one of very meager results. But perhaps when many a weary toiler has reached "the shining shore," a watching Savior will astonish him with a far greater measure of success than was ever dreamed of. Meanwhile, this appearance on the seashore has its encouraging lesson for us. In it we may find other proofs that ours is indeed a living Savior, One whose constant care is always assured us. Had He not taught these men that the God who cared for the sparrow, would likewise care for them? In how many ways He had illustrated His intimate care for all their needs, and given them His word of promise that they would never be forsaken. And now He comes to them in a time of their need, filling their net to gladden their spirits, and inviting them to a prepared feast with His gracious, "Come and dine."

Having promised that He would come to us and manifest Himself to us, can we not say of a truth, "And so we walk together, my Lord and I"? Surely one of the lessons He wanted to teach in this seashore appearance is that He cares for us in all that concerns us. "His loving thoughtfulness shows Him to be my brotherly Christ, who is deeply interested in the common business of my life, and who sits down beside me as I eat what His own bounty has provided, and what His presence sanctifies and cheers. That fire on the coals and that abundant haul must have seemed to these disciples to say-and they say it to me 'With Me to care for you, you will never want: be sure henceforth, that when you go forth to serve Me, I will look after the supplies.' His interposition often comes just when human effort has completely failed. Indeed, He lets the failure become absolutely disheartening, on very purpose to prepare the way for manifesting His power. His ways of grace have the same inscription as His ways in Providence, 'past finding out.'

"It is no wonder, surely, in view of this, that God's command to me is 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.' But if He promises to guide me not only in the broad highways of my life, but in its smallest and obscurest paths, because even in the smallest I need to be led, it is the least He can expect that I should ask Him to do it. Let me so honor my Master all along; and then, when the long night is past, and in the early Morning of the Eternal Day He provides for me a feast upon that Shore, I shall not doubt whose voice it is I hear, whose love it is I taste. I shall know in a moment that 'It is the Lord'-for none but He could do so gracious a thing as that-my Lord and Master thus fulfilling to me His promise, 'I will sup with him, and he with Me,' and saying on the shore of heaven, just what He said on the shore of the Syrian lake, 'Come and dine.'

Have we thus learned to know Jesus? Can we not by looking back over the years of His faithfulness bear testimony to this peculiar personal care and guidance? Then once again it is our blessed privilege to affirm, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

The last manifestation of-the risen Jesus to be witnessed by His disciples is more fully reported by Luke than by the other Gospel writers. Both in his Gospel narrative and in the first chapter of Acts, Luke has given us some details we may well prize very highly. And Luke is the one who

preserved these heart-cheering words for us, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11.) Jesus left His beloved followers looking "steadfastly toward heaven" as He departed from them, and He it is who has told us that He wishes to find us with the upward look in the day of His return. Speaking of the things we see about us today, He said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28.) This was no intimation that His waiting ones would be looking up into the sky overhead, but rather that theirs would be the spirit of abounding joy as the evidences of their near deliverance increased. And everywhere in Scripture this attitude of heart is urged as being the only consistent reaction in keeping with a prospect so glorious. If early disciples returned from the mount of ascension "with great joy" to take up their appointed tasks, that of carrying the message of salvation into all, the world, what an overflow of joy should characterize us today, when all the evidence provided us in prophetic fulfillments seems to clearly show that soon, yes, very soon. "Reapers and sowers will together come" in the glad Harvest Home above.

We remember that Jesus told those early disciples that if they properly understood the reason why He should leave them, they would rejoice. They would be glad over the coming of the Spirit and the work it would do in preparing them for the place He said He went back to God to prepare for them. Are we then failing to rejoice consistently? Is there anything in our vision obscuring in some measure the joy-producing reactions we should be experiencing today? With what earnestness and devotion we should in all of our deportment be "looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Lord," even as the Apostle admonishes us, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." "How can I keep the longing back" should be our habitual attitude and spirit in times like these. Holding such a hope, consistently held and encouraged by the very signs Jesus urged us to note, should be doing a marked work- of purification in each expectant heart. Thus will God's Spirit witness with our spirit a blessed assurance that when the silver cord of present life shall break, we shall then see face to face our blessed Lord, "in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Blessed possibility, since it is ours to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, . . . whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

- *Contributed by J. J. Blackburn.*

## **"Jesus in the Midst"**

### **The Graph of Love**

*(Continued from last issue)*

WE ARE accustomed to the graph method of depicting processes. In hospitals, for instance, the rise and fall of the patient's temperature is thus registered, the highest point being termed the peak. We have seen that two root causes contributed to the entrance of evil into God's moral universe: ignorance of the true nature of sin, and ignorance of the nature and extent of the love of God. To insure a stabilization which would be all-comprehensive and eternal, would require, as we saw, a demonstration of these to the utmost limit, one so absolute and final as to leave these questions forever settled. With regard to both Sin and Love, the process of demonstration reached the utmost possible peak at Calvary.

The graph of divine love began to rise with the permission of evil. Paradoxically as it may appear to be, the permission of evil is the greatest possible proof of the love of God. We only possess a spark of that divine love, yet how distressed we are when brought into close contact with all the suffering continually going on, in our hospitals, infirmaries, mental institutions, and prisons. With heavy hearts we return from a visit there where we may have been in touch with some of the particularly sad cases. What must it have meant to the heart of the Father, to have known all about the suffering of every single one of his sinful children for sixty centuries! Why did he allow it to continue? For the same reason that a tender and loving earthly parent will consent to a painful operation on a darling child if it is the only way to save its life. Sin having entered into the world, there was no other way than to permit it for a time regardless of the cost in suffering to himself and to them.

For four thousand years the heart of divine love suffered with his fallen family. Then the graph of love began to rise steeply. At the solemn assize in Eden, when the Great judge pronounced sentence of death, he was pronouncing sentence of death, he knew, upon the Logos, his only begotten Son. Salvation could be procured in no other way because none other was worthy. God, the judge, was thus arranging to meet the penalty himself in the person of Jesus. It was impossible for the Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible God to become man, to be the babe at Bethlehem, the boy at Nazareth, the Carpenter working at his trade till the age of thirty, or this is the course that the Father would have taken. Although it was impossible for God himself to come, we must not think that because of this he suffered less than Jesus. What mother, inspired by the God-given principle of true mother love would not gladly suffer herself than witness helplessly the agony of her child? In the nature of things the one who of necessity must suffer most by reason of the permission of evil and all that that involves is the heart of Infinite Love.

### **LOVE'S TOPMOST PEAK**

More steeply still did the graph of love rise during our Lord's ministry. His own received him not; the multitudes melted away; despised and rejected, the very topmost peak was reached at Gethsemane and Calvary. It is impossible to conceive of any circumstances where the love of God could go any further than this. Here was love to the uttermost. On that central cross, dying in unutterable agony and shame, hanging between earth and heaven as if by both rejected and obnoxious, God was in Christ reconciling the world of his fallen family unto himself.

In the temptation in the wilderness, we see Jesus the target for the enemy's attacks. These continued throughout his ministry, but so strong was the Lord in his faith and love, that we never suspect the terrific forces of evil that he was resisting all the time. We watch as we should watch

the skilled craftsman performing his work. So easily is it done that we would never imagine it was so difficult, unless we tried to do it ourselves. In Gethsemane, however, the veil is lifted, here we see the strong Son of God, tested to the utmost limits of endurance, so that even he has to say, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." And this, not once but three times in an agony of spirit beyond all our understanding. What must it have cost the Heavenly Father to be unable to grant this one request to the Son, dearer to him than life, daily his delight before time began, and now how much more dear that he has so faithfully carried out every jot and tittle of the Father's will in representing him on earth! But why could the Father not have granted his Son's request? Because divine love is love which holds nothing back; it is love to the uttermost, even to the agony of Gethsemane, the torture and shame of Calvary, and the momentary hiding of the Father's face that wrung from the heart of the Son the terrible cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The love of God had always been like this, but the entrance of evil required now the fullest possible expression of it. Higher than this sublime peak of divine love the graph of love could not possibly go.

### **THE GRAPH OF SIN**

As with love, so with sin, the ultimate, the peak, is Calvary. Sin has its pleasures. The fruit of the forbidden tree looks attractive. Inherent in us is the God-given love of discovery and adventure. Sin has thrills to offer in the unknown and untried. Even war has its appeal in the stirring martial music, the smart uniforms, the rhythmic sound of marching columns of men, the massed might of great navies and air fleets. But to see what war is, we must look at what it does. What horrors there are that follow in its wake! Great cities reduced to rubble; the countryside scorched and wasted; the millions of displaced persons, homeless and friendless; the multitudes of the maimed; the countless number of the desolated hearts and homes of the bereaved.

In like manner, to see what sin is we must see what it does, and is capable of doing. What is sin, all sin, yours and mine included? Stripped of all its camouflage, it is a monster so hideous and horrible that allowed to come to full maturity, it would take the very God of Love himself, as perfectly represented in Christ, and subject him to a death, the most shameful and excruciating that wicked men and demons ever devised. And this, too, when he was in the very process of laying down his life in sacrifice for them. "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" the negro spiritual asks. Yes, we were all there. It was sin, our sin, the sin of the race of which we are a part and for whom he died, that nailed him to the tree.

This is sin's ultimate; its graph can register no higher, and now a demonstration is on record once for all of its true nature for time and eternity.

### **THE NEW POWER AT WORK**

Notwithstanding all the massed forces of evil arrayed against him, preparing to do their worst in a final assault, Jesus expressed his complete confidence of victory, as recorded in John 12:31, 32: "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Draw, not drive or drag, but draw by the mighty, magnetic power of that love to the uttermost of God, which reached the climax of its demonstration when Christ was "lifted up" at Calvary. At Pentecost, this new power began to operate. Let us look now at three texts which speak of Jesus in the midst, not of Israel, but of the Church. The first gives us a picture of Jesus in the midst of the assembly of those earliest disciples who formed the nucleus and foundation of the Church. The second demonstrates how Jesus has been in the midst of every assembly of those, no matter how small their number, who



meet together in his name. The third shows us Jesus in the midst of the Church universal and throughout the whole period which was to elapse, "till he come."

### **IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCH**

The three texts are (1) John 20:19, 20: "Then came Jesus, and stood *in the midst*, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." (2) Matthew 18:20: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I *in the midst* of them." (3) Revelation 1:12, 13: "And I saw seven golden candlesticks, and *in the midst* of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man." This fact of Jesus being in the midst is the explanation of the miracle of the Church's survival throughout the past nineteen centuries in fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus that the gates of hell should not prevail against it.

When steel is being manufactured for a specific purpose, it is always guaranteed to be able to sustain a pressure very much in excess of the maximum strain which it will be called upon to bear. In his dealings with the Church, God has been providing just such an assurance of the mighty power of his love, to all future ages and generations. It is not a normal requirement of God, that all who will do his will should suffer for his sake. On the contrary, the law of God is that those who do his will shall be blessed. This was the expression of his law to natural Israel and the experience of the heavenly hosts throughout the untold ages of the past. When Christ sets up his Kingdom and proceeds to reconcile all things unto himself, no one will suffer for doing God's will. Suffering for righteousness' sake is abnormal, and due to the permission of evil. How foolish is the popular idea that now is the day of salvation for all men! How short sighted the view, that God, having purchased salvation for all men at such tremendous cost to himself, is giving to men their only opportunity of obtaining that salvation under such abnormal conditions!

### **TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY**

In the Book of Job, Satan is represented as calling in question the love given to God by his people. Does job serve God for naught, he asks. See how you have heaped your blessings on him. Take these away, and instead of loving and serving you, he will curse you to your face. This was his taunt, and the inference was that the love that God received from all his loyal family was cupboard love. They loved him for what they got from him. As job gave the lie to Satan, by trusting and loving God to the end, so has it been with all the Old Testament saints and also with the Church of God.

In Ephesians 1:12 Paul says that God's predetermined purpose for the Church was "that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." The difference between the Old Testament saints and the New is illustrated in Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who died as his Master died, praying for his enemies. The possibility of attaining to a love like this by which to glorify God, came at Pentecost with the endowment of the holy spirit. God's people are called upon to suffer sometimes, in ways so hard that they wonder why God should allow it. They do not see how it is accomplishing anything towards the upbuilding of the individual concerned, nor yet for others. It may be a source of strength to all such to remember this important reason for the sufferings God permits, that as in the case of job, we can glorify God by vindicating his good name in loving and trusting him to the end. And this irrespective of any benefit accruing to the individual sufferer or others.

How much the Church of God has had to endure in suffering for Christ's sake, is illustrated in the Book of Revelation. The long line of martyrs under Pagan Rome's persecution, and the multitudes more under those of Papal Rome, when that Satanic power did its utmost to wear out the saints of

the Most High, are graphically represented. Like the blood of Abel the terrible sufferings and death of the saints, like blood shed on the altar, cry aloud saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?" History shows that every fiendish device of torture that wicked men, inspired by the wicked one himself, could think of, was employed in causing suffering and death to the true Church. Yet in spite of all, the Church has persisted, because as the frontispiece to the Book of Revelation. in Chapter One shows, Jesus has been in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, exercising towards her all the attributes represented in the symbolic description of his appearance.

If divine love, manifested to the utmost at Calvary, has been raised to such a high potential of power that it is able to keep his children loyal and loving when subjected to such a strain as illustrated in Revelation and corroborated by reliable history, how much more will it be enough when normal conditions are restored and suffering for righteousness' sake will be no longer possible.

### **IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE**

In the steps towards the reconciling unto himself of all things we have seen Jesus in the midst of Israel and then in the midst of the Church. Now we have the climax in Revelation 5:6, which depicts Jesus in the midst of the throne.

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb as it had been slain." . The previous chapter describes the magnificence and splendor of the One who sits on the throne and the gorgeous spectacle presented by the rainbow, the sea of glass, the thunders and lightnings, the crowned elders, and the living creatures. In the right hand of God is a book or scroll sealed with seven seals. Proclamation is made asking for some one to come who is worthy to open the book, and to break the seals. To this there is no reply from any either in heaven or on earth, and John says, "I wept much."

The emergency calling for this dramatic scene, arose with the entrance and continued permission of evil. For four thousand years the situation had been deteriorating. What was God going to do about it, and when, was the burning question in the minds of both good angels and good men. Was there no one in the ranks of the mighty angels or a Moses or a David amongst men, who could enter the lists as God's champion and rout the forces of evil? Representative of all in heaven and in earth who had been longing for so long for the overthrow of evil, John is overcome with grief. At last, however, a champion for God is found. "Weep not, behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah . . . hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof." This book represents the Divine Plan as epitomized in the Book of Revelation, which features both the High Calling of the Church and the restitution of the world, together with the overthrow of all evil. As Elliott, the able expositor of Revelation, suggests, the seven trumpets and the seven vials are, so to speak, telescoped into the seven seals, so that when these are broken, the others are released, and thus the concealed purpose of God is carried on in fulfillment by Jesus towards the grand finale of the closing three chapters, when the universe is cleansed of sin.

After being bidden not to weep, because the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed, John gazes with wrapt attention at the scene unfolding before him. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the majestic king of beasts, what an inspiring thought! And now Rev. 5:6: "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne . . . stood a Lamb, as it had been slain." The lion, a lamb; a slain lamb! What an anticlimax! Could there be an antithesis more complete than this! Yet the slain lamb was the emblem of the mightiest dynamic in the universe-none other than the love of God to the uttermost. This explains why no one was found worthy to champion God's cause but one. Had it been, the power represented in the lion, many could have come forward from among the ranks of



the mighty angels who excel in strength. But to have wiped out sin simply by destroying the sinners, would have accomplished nothing in the way of securing a permanent cure. Only the only begotten Son of God, of all beings in Creation, was able to make this cure possible and permanent by that ultimate of all powers, the power of sacrificial love to the uttermost, symbolized by the slain lamb.

## **MISSION AND COMMISSION**

Having completed his *mission* on earth, the throne scene now dramatically describes our Lord in the act of receiving his *commission* from God, as represented in the Sealed Scroll. The terms of this commission are briefly summed up in Colossians 1:20, and are to the effect that having made peace through the blood of his cross, he was to proceed to reconcile in himself all things, whether things in earth or things in heaven. What 'a stupendous task! There never was such a commission given before, since the earliest dawn of creation, and there never will be another like it again. We have no means of knowing what condition the things in heaven are like that require reconciliation. Regarding the things on earth, how dreadful they are and how hopeless the prospect seems of getting these vast millions of mankind so transformed that they will love God with all their heart and soul and mind and strength and their neighbors as themselves.

There is, however, no doubt whatever about the issue. Listen to the three hallelujah choruses embracing all things in heaven and in earth that will be the ultimate result. First, Revelation 5:9, 10, which concerns the Church in glory: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."

Now Rev. 5:11-12, concerning the angels: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

And now Rev. 5:13, embracing all creation in heaven and on earth: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, . . . heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." What a transporting prospect! And to think that after six thousand years of the dark and dreadful night of sin, every indication around us today heralds the approach of that short but darkest hour that precedes the glorious dawn of the Millennial Day of Christ's Kingdom.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

While the permission of evil, with all it involved of suffering, demonstrated to the fullest possible extent the love of God the Father, and the awfulness of evil, it underlines with emphasis the sovereign nature of the gift of freedom of will with which he has endowed his children. As illustrated in pure human love, love cannot be bought or coerced. Only love can beget love. The question then is, will this love of the Father beget returning love in all his children, without exception? Will there be none whom it will be impossible to renew to repentance? (Heb. 6:6.) How we should love to think so, but when the curtain falls on this great drama of the permission of evil, it shows some for whom the last act of God's mercy will be the withdrawal of that life, the further continuance of which would neither be a blessing to themselves nor to others. How solemn are the words of the Lord himself in Matthew 23:33, *Diaglott*: "Serpents, progeny of vipers! how can you escape the judgment of the Gehenna." This Gehenna is the Lake of Fire in

the symbolic language of Revelation, described as the Second Death, into which after the final judgment the unworthy are consigned. - Rev. 20:14, 15.

We have seen how God has set Jesus in the midst. As individuals and as communities, the practical question for us to consider is, Have we done so?

*Have we set Jesus in the midst?*

If we have done so, it means that we have set love in the midst. This means unselfishness; thought, consideration, concern for others, manifested in self-sacrificing service to the extent of our ability and opportunity. It means also intercessory prayer on behalf of others, and all expressed in:

"A life which Jesus guides alone,  
O'er which He has control,  
A life which others seeing, say,  
That Jesus owns the whole."

- *A. D. Kirkwood, Scot.*

## Half Hour Meditations on Romans

### No. 14

*Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord. -- Isa. 54:17*

HAVING expressed his feelings with regard to the Gospel (that Gospel he loved so dearly that elsewhere he writes "though we or an angel from heaven preach any other, let him be accursed, . . ." [Gal. 1:8]) the Apostle proceeds to its fundamental theme, which he intends to unfold. Though many are ashamed of the Gospel, he has said that he is not, for he knows it to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Even his words, "To the Jew first and also to the Greek," are not without their deep significance, for they suggest at once his recognition of the special covenant relationship that "for the fathers sakes" (Rom. 11:28) the Jewish nation had enjoyed, as well as the fact that now a new era had dawned in which favor would no longer be to them only but would be world wide. Having thus in two lines indicated the source of the Gospel (God), its effect (salvation), its condition (faith), and its universality (to Jew and Greek), he proceeds to sum up its essence. "Therein" he says, "is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

### **The Righteousness of God . . . from Faith**

To understand the meaning of the individual words in this text it is necessary only to study their derivation and usage. To understand the meaning of the theme itself, however, which is contained in the phrase made up of those individual words, is another matter.

Undoubtedly it is best appreciated by those who study it in the light of the Apostles personal experience.

This we have to some extent considered in our previous meditations (see especially No. 2).

### **In the Light of His Experience:**

"There are men of whom it is especially true that their teaching is the outcome of their own personal experience. If a mans teaching is to have any real force, this must be in a measure true in any case. But in some men the personal experience has set an exceptionally strong impress upon the intellectual convictions and so upon the teaching. Such an one was St. Paul. His intellectual theory is on fire with the emotions bred of a personal experience, both bitter and sweet, but always intense. And if there is professedly more of autobiography in the Epistle to the Galatians, yet in fact we know St. Paul's interior life, both before and after his conversion, so far as we know it at all, mainly through the generalized account of it in the Epistle to the Romans. For the doctrine of justification by faith not by works of the law developed in this Epistle is the record of his personal experience reduced to a general principle. St. Paul had on the lines of his Pharisaic education in the first half of his life zealously sought to be justified by works and had found out his mistake.

### **Justification by Works -- What Is It?**

"What is the real meaning of the phrase justification by works? Ordinarily we find it natural to appropriate St. James common sense language about justification rather than St. Paul's and say that faith is surely of no moral value without works or good actions and that we can be justified by nothing else except our conduct. Or if the Pharisees are pointed to with their rigid

ecclesiastical observances as types of men seeking to be justified before God by the merits of their works, then in this sense of works we feel that the idea of justification by such means, apart from deeper moral effort, is one that has passed out of our horizon. Yet if we get to the moral essence of the Pharisaic idea, we may still find it lying very close at hand to us, even though we do not know what a phylactery means and are at a safe distance from fasting twice in a week or giving tithes of all that we acquire."

### **Phariseism As It Exists Today**

Most people have a strong sense of respectability. In every walk of life men have a code of duty and honor that they are at pains to observe, and they "make really great sacrifices to fulfill the requirements of their respective codes. Their conscience requires this of them, and they would be miserable in falling short of it. But their conscience is also limited to it. They resent the claim of a progressive morality.

*Conscientious within the region of the traditional and the expected, they are often almost impenetrable to light from beyond . They are nervously afraid of the very idea of subjecting their life to a fundamental revision in the light of Christ's claim or to the idea of surrender to the Divine light wherever it may lead. But this frame of mind -- conscientious ness within a limited and well established area accepted by public opinion, coupled with resentment at whatever more complete and diviner claim may interfere to disconcert ones self satisfaction and bid one begin afresh on a truer basis, is that very attempt to be justified by works which appeared in the case of the Pharisees, only dressed in very different guise to that in which the conditions of modern life clothe it.*

*"It is the characteristic of the Pharisaic attitude that a man holds by a strict code enforced by the public opinion of his church or circle ; a code which he diligently and even painfully obeys. But it is characteristic of this attitude also that it resents new light. Thus the Pharisees resented the Christ when renewing the voice of the old prophets, without respect of persons, he exposed the moral weaknesses of these religious leaders and bade them in effect begin again and think afresh what Gods will really meant. They resented and rejected the Christ because he made the unlimited Divine claim upon them: he spoke to them as God to the human soul and not as the representative of the tradition. Seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3)."*

### **In Christ's Teaching Paul's Restless Heart Finds Repose**

In such an atmosphere -- a "mixture of subservience and independence, of religious humility and human pride, Saul of Tarsus had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem. "

"Meanwhile, he was becoming conscious of the claim of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ. Under what conditions that claim began to confront him we do not know. *But he must have known in the period before his conversion that the severest attack on the spiritual position of the Pharisees ever delivered had been delivered by him who claimed to be the Christ and that the Pharisees in consequence had thrown all their influence into the rejection of his claim. If they had not been the most direct instruments of his death they had encouraged and sanctioned it. Thus the more dissatisfied he became in his own conscience, the more zealous he grew for the Pharisaic position and the more fanatical, therefore, against the followers of the crucified Jesus. At what point it began to dawn upon his conscience that perhaps Jesus was right and not the Pharisees, that perhaps it was in his teaching that his own restless heart was to find repose, we can only wonder. He certainly passed through some struggle such as this dawning consciousness would*

*involve*. It was hard for him to kick against the goad (Acts 26:14).

At last and at a definite moment God triumphed over him in Christ, and he gave his allegiance to Jesus as the Christ on the road to Damascus.

"Hitherto he had stood on the basis that pride in his religious position gave him and had sought starting thence to erect the spiritual fabric of a life acceptable to God. But the more he had known of God and the more he had struggled the less satisfied he had become. God seemed to be in no other attitude towards him than that of a dissatisfied taskmaster. Now he had surrendered into God's hands. He had no position of his own to maintain. He had put himself in God's hands. In his sight he was content to be treated as a sinner, just like one of the Gentiles: to be forgiven of his pure and unmerited love . . . endued with a spiritual power for which he could take no credit to himself, for it was simply a gift. Once more he had henceforth no prejudices and recognized no limitation on what he might be required to bear or do. His life was handed over to be controlled from above.

*"Thus when St. Paul sets justification by faith and faith only in opposition to justification by works of the Law, he is contrasting two different attitudes towards God and duty, which in the two halves of his own sharply sundered life he had himself conspicuously represented. The contrast may be expressed in four ways.*

### **Faith, Pregnant with Good Works, Justifies Before They Are Brought Forth:**

"1. The man under the Law of works is mainly concerned about external conduct and observances: the making clean of the outside of the cup and the platter; the man of faith is concerned almost altogether with the relation of his heart to God at the springs of action. Faith is a disposition of the heart which indeed results in a certain kind of outward conduct but which has its value already, prior to the outward conduct, because of what it inwardly is. Faith, as Calvin said, pregnant with good works justifies before they are brought forth. . . .

### **Justification by Faith World Wide in Scope**

"2. Inasmuch as the Law was a *national* thing, so works of the Law were supposed means of justification *confined to Israel* and an occasion of contempt for other nations. Faith, on the other hand, the mere capacity to feel our own wants and to take God at his word, is a *universal* quality and *belongs, or may be long to all men*. Thus justification by faith is opposed to justification by works of the Law, as the universal to the merely Jewish, and in this aspect the contrast occupies a great place in St. Paul's thought and teaching.

### **Independence or Dependence, Which?**

"3. But it is not in the things it is occupied about, or in the range of its activity, that faith is most centrally contrasted with works. It is in the attitude of man towards God which it represents. The worker for justification always retains his own independence towards God. He works upon the basis of a definite covenant by which God is bound as well as himself.

He has the right to resent additional claims. Faith, on the other hand, means an entire abandonment of independence. It is self-committal, self-surrender. I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day (2 Tim. 1:12). The man of faith throws all the responsibility for life on God and

says simply and continually, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

"It is of the utmost importance to notice that this is the only attitude of man towards God that corresponds with the ultimate facts of human nature as science and philosophy are bound to represent them. Man is, in fact, an absolutely dependent being, physically and spiritually. *His virtue must lie not in originativeness but in correspondence* . Supposing him a free agent in Gods universe, his freedom can consist only in a power to correspond with Divine forces and laws intelligently and voluntarily; or on the other hand to disturb the Divine order of creation in a measure by willfulness and sin. Now faith is simply the faculty of loving correspondence with God. Justification by faith is the only conception of justification possible in the light of the root facts of human nature. But of course the practical appeal of this conclusion to the heart and will is immensely increased if men can be shown to have acted as if they were independent and have found it a failure; if life lived in independence of God with God as it were withdrawn from the actual scene of life to its far off horizon is found to have resulted in havoc, weakness, and despair. So, in fact, St. Paul's doctrine of the true means of justification is based on an appeal not so much to the ultimate constitution of our human nature as to the experienced results of our independence of God, to the facts of sin, whether among Gentiles or Jews.

### **After This Manner Therefore Pray Ye: Our Father**

"4. Finally, the principle of justification by faith is contrasted with that of justification by works of the Law in the view which it involves of the character of God. The Law, as St. Paul interprets it, views God as a lord and taskmaster. Faith presents him as the Father of our spirits, always waiting upon us with his eternal, unchangeable love: bearing with us; dealing with us even on a false basis we have forced upon him by our sins in order to bring us to a recognition of the true; anyway acting or withholding action if by any means we can be won to recognize his true character and our true life.

### **The Faith of the Christian Is the Faith of Abraham**

"In what has just been said justifying faith has been treated as if it were simply, as it is really, faith in God; whereas in St. Paul's language the object of justifying faith is constantly *Jesus* . (Cf. in 22, 26, etc.) The explanation of this is that God in Jesus Christ has manifested his character as Father and has come near to men, reconciling the world unto himself by the atonement wrought through his Son and giving conspicuous evidence of his saving power by raising him from the dead (2 Cor. 5:19). Thus, if Jesus is the proximate object of justifying faith, *it is Jesus as manifesting the Father* and St. Peter is strictly interpreting St. Paul when he represents the object of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection in the phrase, that your faith and hope might be *in God* (1 Pet. 1:21).

*The faith of the Christian is the old faith of Abraham and Habakkuk, the faith in the Lord Jehovah only now made manifest in a new and more complete manner, in a more intimate relation to human life, and with a more winning appeal to the human heart."*

-- P. L. Read

## The Weekly Prayer, Praise, and Testimony Meeting

*"We went ... where prayer was wont to be made." - Acts 16:13.*

*New subscribers are invited to write us for a free copy of the July 1955 "Herald." Therein, on page 109, a brief introduction is given, bearing directly on these Reprint excerpts, and on the value of the weekly Testimony Meeting: "The one meeting most helpful in spiritual growth." - Ed. Com.*

### MANNA TEXT-JUNE 7 -- 1 PETER 5:10

*"The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."*

All chastenings are testings, but all chastenings are not necessarily punishments. We should judge of the purpose of our experiences by self-examination, that we may ascertain whether in our conduct there has been something out of harmony with the Father's will. In every case our experience is a test of our loyalty of heart-as to our willingness to learn the lessons which the Lord is seeking to teach us and our recognition of the source from which they come.

The trials and difficulties of the consecrated child of God are not to be esteemed as the results of Divine carelessness or indifference in regard to his interests, but rather as the out-workings of Divine providence in his behalf. Those who can see the matter from this viewpoint are thus enabled to learn some of life's most helpful lessons, and are thereby prepared for the glorious future which God has arranged for those who faithfully carry out their covenant of sacrifice.

Ordinarily the word chastisement is used to signify correction for wrongdoing. But in the Bible, it is especially used to convey the thought of discipline or instruction in righteousness.

Let us be thankful that we are of those who appreciate the privilege of being trained in the School of Christ of suffering with him now and of reigning with him by and by.

*- Reprints, p. R5147.*

### MANNA TEXT-JUNE 14 -- 1 PETER 5:5

*"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."*

As those who have received divine grace and the knowledge of the divine purpose, the Lord's people have certain ambitions which are right and proper, and which should be rightly exercised, regulated, and governed. No one should be without a laudable ambition. We cannot imagine God to be without ambition. Those who have little or none, pass through life in a kind of maze, accomplishing very little for themselves or others, and usually fail in all they undertake.

There are, however, noble and ignoble ambitions. Some people are ambitious to become great, renowned; others are ambitious to rule; still others are ambitious for wealth, for social distinction, or for titles and honor amongst men.



There is a disposition on the part of many to be rather boastful on account of the truth, as though we had originated the truth. How foolish this is! We have made no truth. We have merely gotten rid of some of the errors that formerly blinded our eyes. The truth is God's. He has allowed us to see out of the darkness of ignorance and superstition into the truth of his plan. If a man who had seen a beautiful picture should then boast as though he had painted it, we would say, "Foolish man! You did not make that picture. You merely looked at it. You have nothing to boast of concerning it."

We did not make any part of God's plan of the ages. If we had attempted to do so, we would have made a failure of it.

Our proper course, therefore, is to make it plain at the very beginning that we are of the right spirit-the meek, humble spirit of the Master. God is permitting us to see things in his Word, concerning which it is his due time to turn on the light. The picture was there all along, but the clouds and darkness made it so dim that we were not able to discern its beauties.

- *Reprints, pp. R5185, R5186.*

### **MANNA TEXT-JUNE 21 -- MATTHEW 11:29**

*"Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."*

We trust that all our readers have indeed taken upon them the yoke of Christ, and that they have been learning of him, not only in an intellectual way, but also through the medium of the heart. Not until we have taken the Lord into our daily life as our living, personal companion and confidential friend and counselor and comforter and guide, as well as our Redeemer and Lord, can we fully learn of him those precious lessons which give to his disciples a joy which the world can neither give nor take away.

May this intimate communion and fellowship with Christ impart to us each more and more of his own spirit, so that the world may take knowledge of us, as they have of others (Acts 4:13), that we have been with Jesus; and let the prayer of each be,

"Lord Jesus, make thyself to me  
A living, bright reality!  
More real to faith's vision keen,  
Than any earthly object seen;  
More dear, more intimately nigh,  
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie."

- *Reprints, p. R1789.*

### **MANNA TEXT-JUNE 28 -- PROVERBS 3:7**

*"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil."*

The Scriptures everywhere make prominent the fact that those who would be in harmony with God must be humble. The Lord bestows blessings upon the humble, the meek, the teachable. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek." (Matt. 5:5.) The Apostle exhorts, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." - 1 Pet. 5:6.



The Word of God points to the fact that Jesus was meek and lowly. (Matt. 11:29,30.) This humility of mind and heart was, in many respects, the secret of his success. If he had not been humble, he would not have attained to the glorious station to which he was exalted.

There is a marked contrast between Jesus and Satan. The one thought to exalt himself, and the other to humble himself. (Isa. 14:13, 14; Phil. 2:8) Satan said, "I will be like the Most High." Inspired by this wrong spirit, Satan became ambitious to make an exhibition of what he could do.

The Scriptures give us to understand that Satan's inordinate desire to gain distinction was the secret of his fall.

Our Lord Jesus took a different course from that of Satan. Instead of trying to exercise power, he had supreme reverence for Jehovah. He said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." (Psa. 40:8.) Following this course of humility in the presence of the great eternal One, Jesus was led of the Father as he would not have been if he had had a self-sufficient spirit. Under the Father's guidance he was humiliated. He "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8); and after his death and resurrection he received the reward of the Divine nature. He became heir of all the gracious promises of God's Word, "heir of all things." - Hebrews 1:2.

These two great examples afford us an impressive lesson. They show us that if we copy the ambitious and self-wise attitude of Satan, it will estrange us from God. We should realize the wisdom of God and submit ourselves fully to his will. If we walk obediently in the footsteps of the Master, we shall attain glory and honor with our Lord.

- *Reprints, p. R5186.*

## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING**

As announced in our March and May issues, the Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute, Inc., is scheduled to be held on Saturday, June 2, at 2:00 p.m., in the parlors of the Institute, 177 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, New York.

While only members of the Institute may vote (in person or by proxy), all those who love our Lord Jesus and his appearing are welcome to attend.

The Agenda will include a report by the Chairman, reviewing the activities of the Institute for the preceding period. Following his report, the election of Directors for the coming year will take place. Opportunity will be given for the consideration of such other matters as may properly come before the meeting.

## Recently Deceased

Sr. Ethel Bentley, Tacoma, Wash. (Apr.)  
Sr. Julia E. Gaylord, Santa Monica, Cal. (May)  
Sr. Daisy Gilbert, Oxford, Ala. (Feb.)  
Sr. Ethelle Kelsey, Seattle, Wash. (Jan.)  
Bro. Elmer Klug, Baltimore, Md. (Apr.)  
Bro. Adolph Newman, Lake Mills, Wis. (Apr.)  
Sr. Lottie Novak, Chicago, Ill. (May)  
Sr. Winifred Peel, Redlands, Cal. (Mar.)  
Sr. Frank Stenzel, Riverside, Cal. (Dec.)