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## Is Israel Emerging from Hell?

*"In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." - Luke 16:23.*

TWO assumptions are implicit in this question, namely, (1) Hell is a condition from which emergence or escape is a possibility, and (2) Israel, for some indefinite period, has been in hell. With both assumptions we are in agreement.

For a proper understanding of the significance of the term hell, as it is employed in the Bible, readers are referred to our new edition of the booklet, "What say the Scriptures about Hell?" (Free copy on request). In that booklet, every text of Scripture in which the word hell is found, is examined.

As to whether or not the nation of Israel has ever been in hell, and, if so, for how long; for light also on the additional question as to whether that nation may now be seen emerging from hell, we believe Pastor Russell's exposition of our Lord's Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, furnishes a satisfying answer. To our older readers, as well as to our more recent subscribers, we suggest a review of that exposition, at this time. To facilitate such review, we reproduce it, unabridged, in the following paragraphs. Notwithstanding the fact that it was written so long ago (1881), it throws a remarkable light on today's (and tomorrow's) headlines.

### **Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus - Luke 16:19-31**

The great difficulty with many in reading this Scripture is that, though they regard it as a parable, *they* reason on it and draw conclusions from it as though it were a literal statement. To so regard it involves several absurdities; for instance, that the rich man went to "hell" because he had enjoyed many earthly blessings and gave nothing but crumbs to Lazarus. Not a word is said about his wickedness. Again, Lazarus was blessed, not because he was a sincere child of God, full of faith and trust, not because he was good, but simply because he was poor and sick. If this be interpreted literally, the only logical lesson to be drawn from, it is, that unless we are poor beggars full of sores, we will never enter into future bliss; and that if now we wear any fine linen and purple, and have plenty to eat every day, we are sure of future torment. Again, the coveted

place of favor is "Abraham's bosom;" and if the whole statement be literal, the bosom must also be literal, and it surely would not hold many of earth's millions of sick and poor.

But why consider absurdities? As a parable, it is easy of interpretation. In a parable the thing said is never the thing meant. We know this from our Lord's own explanations of his parables. He said "wheat" meant "children of the kingdom"; "tares," "the children of the devil"; "reapers," his servants, etc. (Matt. 13.) The same classes were represented by different symbols in different parables. Thus the "wheat" of one parable correspond to the "faithful servants," and the "wise virgins" of others. So, in this parable, the "rich man" represents a class, and "Lazarus" represents another class.

In attempting to expound a parable, an explanation of which the Lord does not furnish us, modesty in expressing our opinion is certainly appropriate. We therefore offer the following explanation without any attempt to force our views upon the reader, except so far as his own truth-enlightened judgment may commend them as in accord with God's Word and Plan. To our understanding, Abraham represented God, and the "rich man" represented the Jewish nation. At the time of the utterance of the parable, and for a long time previous, the Jews had "fared sumptuously every day" -- being the especial recipients of God's favors. As St. Paul says: "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? Much every way: chiefly, because to them were committed the oracles of God [Law and Prophecy]." The promises to Abraham and David and their organization as a typical Kingdom of God, invested that people with royalty, as represented by the rich man's purple." The typical sacrifices of the Law constituted them, in a typical sense, a holy (righteous) nation, represented by the rich man's "fine linen"-symbolic of righteousness. - Rev. 19:8.

Lazarus represented the outcasts from Divine favor under the Law, who, sin sick, hungered and thirsted after righteousness. "Publicans and sinners" of Israel, seeking a better life, and truth-hungry Gentiles who were "feeling after God" constituted the Lazarus class. These, at the time of the utterance of this parable, were entirely destitute of those special Divine blessings which Israel enjoyed. They lay at the gate of the rich man. No rich promises of royalty were theirs; not even typically were they cleansed; but, in moral sickness, pollution, and sin, they were companions of "dogs." Dogs were regarded as detestable creatures in those days, and the typically clean Jew called the outsiders "heathen" and "dogs," and would never eat with them, nor marry, nor have any dealings with them. - John 4:9.

As to how these ate of the "crumbs" of Divine favor which fell from Israel's table of bounties, the Lord's words to the Syro-Phoenician woman give us a key. He said to this Gentile woman -- "It is not meet [proper] to take the children's [Israelites'] bread and to cast it to dogs [Gentiles];" and she answered, "Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." (Matt. 15:26, 27.) Jesus healed her daughter, thus giving the desired crumb of favor.

But there came a great dispensational change in Israel's history when as a nation they rejected and crucified the Son of God. Then their typical righteousness ceased -- then the promise of royalty ceased to be theirs, and the kingdom was taken from them to be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof-the Gospel Church, "a holy nation, a peculiar people." (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:7, 9; Matt. 21:43.) Thus the "rich man" died to all these special advantages, and soon he (the Jewish nation) found himself in a cast-off condition-in tribulation and affliction. In such condition that nation has suffered from that day to this.

Lazarus also died; the condition of the humble Gentiles and the God-seeking "outcasts" of Israel underwent a great change, being carried by the angels (messengers-Apostles, etc.) to Abraham's bosom. Abraham is represented as the father of the faithful and receives all the children of faith,

who are thus recognized as the heirs of all the promises made to Abraham; for the children of the flesh are not the children of God, "but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (children of Abraham); "which seed is Christ;" and "if ye be Christ's, then are ye [believers] Abraham's seed [children], and heirs according to the [Abrahamic] promise." - Gal. 3:29.

Yes, the termination of the condition of things then existing was well illustrated by the figure, death-the dissolution of the Jewish polity and the withdrawal of the favors which Israel had so long enjoyed. There they were cast off and have since been shown "no favor," while the poor Gentiles, who before had been "aliens from the commonwealth [the polity] of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise [up to this time given to Israel only] having no hope and without God in the world" were then "made nigh by the blood of Christ" and reconciled to God. - Eph. 2:12, 13.

To the symbolisms of death and burial used to illustrate the dissolution of Israel and their burial or hiding among the other nations, our Lord added a further figure-"In hell [hades, the grave] he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off," etc. The dead cannot lift up their eyes, nor see either near or far, nor converse; for it is distinctly stated, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave"; and the dead are described as those who "go down into silence." (Eccl. 9:10; Psa. 115:17.) The Lord wished to show that great sufferings or "torments" would be added to the Jewish nation after their national dissolution and burial amongst the other peoples dead in trespasses and sins; and that they would plead in vain for release and comfort at the hand of the formerly despised Lazarus class.

And history has borne out this parabolic prophecy. For eighteen hundred years the Jews have not only been in distress of mind over their casting out from the favor of God and the loss of their temple and other necessities to the offerings of their sacrifices, but they have been relentlessly persecuted by all classes, including professed Christians. From the latter the Jews have expected mercy, as expressed in the parable "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue;" but the great gulf fixed between them hinders that. Nevertheless, God still recognizes the relationship established in his covenant with them, and addresses them as children of the covenant. (Luke 16:25.) These "torments" have been the penalties attached to the violation of their covenant, and were as certain to be visited upon them as the blessings promised for obedience. - See Lev. 26.

The "great gulf fixed" represents the wide difference between the Gospel Church and the Jew-the former enjoying free grace, joy, comfort, and peace, as true sons of God, and the latter holding to the Law, which condemns and torments. Prejudice, pride, and error, from the Jewish side, form the bulwarks of this gulf which hinder the Jew from coming into the condition of true sons of God by accepting Christ and the gospel of his grace. The bulwark of this gulf which hinders true sons of God going to the Jew-under the bondage of the Law-is their knowledge that by the deeds of the Law none can be justified before God, and that if any man keep the Law (put himself under it to try to commend himself to God by reason of obedience to it), Christ shall profit him nothing. (Gal. 5:2-4.) So, then, we who are of the Lazarus class should not attempt to mix the Law and the Gospel, knowing that they cannot be mixed, and that we can do no good to those who still cling to the Law and reject the sacrifice for sins given by our Lord. And *they*, not seeing the change of dispensation which took place, argue that to deny the Law as the power to save would be to deny all the past history of their race, and to deny all of God's special dealings with the "fathers" (promises and dealings which through pride and selfishness they failed rightly to apprehend and use); hence they cannot come over to the bosom of Abraham, into the true rest and peace-the portion of all the true children of faith. - John 8:39; Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:29.

True, a few Jews probably came into the Christian faith all the way down the Gospel Age, but so few as to be ignored in a parable which represented the Jewish people as a whole. As at the first, Dives represented the orthodox Jews, and not the "outcasts of Israel," so down to the close of the parable he continues to represent a similar class, and hence does not represent such Jews as have renounced the Law Covenant and embraced Christianity or such as have become infidels.

The plea of the "rich man" that "Lazarus" be sent to his five brethren we interpret as follows:

The people of Judea, at the time of our Lord's utterance of this parable, were repeatedly referred to as "Israel," "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," "cities of Israel," etc., because all of the tribes were represented there; but actually the majority of the people were of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, but few of the ten tribes having returned from Babylon under Cyrus' general permission. If the nation of the Jews (chiefly two tribes) were represented in the one "rich man," it would be a harmony of numbers to understand the "five brethren to represent the ten tribes chiefly scattered abroad. The request relative to them was doubtless introduced to show that all special favor of God ceased to all Israel (the ten tribes, as well as to the two more directly addressed). It seems to us evident that Israel only was meant, for no other nation than Israel had "Moses and the Prophets" as instructors. (Luke 16:29.) The majority of the ten tribes had so far disregarded Moses and the Prophets that they did not return to the land of promise, but preferred to dwell among idolaters; and hence it would be useless to attempt further communication with them, even by one from the dead-the figuratively dead, but now figuratively risen, Lazarus class. - Eph. 2:5.

Though the parable mentions no bridging of this "great gulf," other portions of Scripture indicate it was to be "fixed" only throughout the Gospel Age, and that at its *close* the "rich man," having received the measurement of punishment for his sins, will walk out of his fiery troubles over the bridge of God's promises yet unfulfilled to that nation.

Though for centuries the Jews have been bitterly persecuted by Pagans, Mohammedans and professed Christians, they are now gradually rising to political freedom and influence; and although much of "Jacob's trouble" is just at hand, yet as a people they will be very prominent among the nations in the beginning of the Millennium. The "vail" (2 Cor. 3:13-16) of prejudice still exists, but it will be gradually taken away as the light of the Millennial morning dawns; nor should we be surprised to hear of great awakenings among the Jews, and many coming to acknowledge Christ. They will thus leave their hadean state (national death) and torment, and come, the first of the nations, to be blessed by the true Seed of Abraham -- Christ, Head and Body. Their bulwark of race prejudice and pride is falling in some places, and the humble, the poor in spirit, are beginning already to look upon him whom they have pierced, and to inquire, Is not this the Christ?, And as they look, the Lord pours upon them the spirit of favor and supplication. (Zech. 12:10.) Therefore, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her appointed time is accomplished." - Isa. 40:1, 2, margin.

In a word, this parable seems to teach precisely what St. Paul explained in Rom. 11:19-33. Because of unbelief the natural branches were broken off, and the wild branches grafted into the Abrahamic root -- promise. The parable leaves the Jews in their trouble, and does not refer to their final restoration to favor-doubtless because it was not pertinent to the feature of the subject treated; but St. Paul assures us that when the fulness of the Gentiles -- the full number from among the Gentiles necessary to make up the Bride of Christ -is come in, "they [natural Israel] shall obtain mercy through your [the Church's] mercy." He assures us that this is God's covenant with fleshly, Israel (who lost the higher, spiritual promises, but are still the possessors of certain earthly promises), to become the chief nation of earth, etc. In proof of this statement, he quotes

from the Prophets, saying: "The deliverer shall come out of Zion [the glorified Church), and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob [the fleshly seed]." "As concerning the Gospel [High Calling), they are enemies (cast off) for your sake; but as touching the election they are beloved for the fathers' sake." "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

## Half Hour Meditations on Romans

### No. 19

*"God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" - Acts 10:34,35*

IN THIS "half hour" we commence the consideration of chapter two of our Epistle. It is plain that throughout the whole of this chapter the Apostle has the Jew in view. However, it will be a most difficult, a most delicate, task to prove to the elect people that in the sight of God they are as much in need as the Gentiles whose degradation he has just described. And so he proceeds cautiously. At first he expresses his thought abstractly: "Thou who judgest, whosoever thou art."

The true name of this collective personage, whose portrait St. Paul proceeds to draw, will be pronounced later in Rom. 2:17: "Now if thou Jew." Meanwhile he says many things that are as much for the Gentile sinner as for the Jew.

### Judge Not That Ye Be Not Judged

As we proceed with the study of this chapter, we shall see that in the first sixteen verses the Apostle lays down the principle of Gods true or impartial judgment. In the remainder of the chapter he applies this principle directly to the Jew. Moreover, as in the "Gentile" passage (Rom. 1:18-32), we found the Apostle stating in condensed form in verse 18 all of the ideas developed in the remaining verses of that chapter, so now in this "Jewish" chapter he condenses in the first two verses the theme he will unfold in those which follow.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things" (Rom. 2:1, 2).

"*Therefore*," the opening word, would seem to be logically connected with the closing verse of chapter one. There we saw that "with all the blindness which the Apostle charges on the . . . [Gentiles], and with all the dislike of retaining God in their knowledge which he ascribes to them, there was still one particular of this knowledge which they did retain. They still knew as much of Gods judgment as to be conscious that what they were doing, in the sinfulness and reprobacy of their minds, was worthy of death." Moreover, it was there said of the people who committed things worthy of death, "that they not only did the same, but had pleasure in them that did them. This last marks a higher and a more formed depravity than the direct commission of that which is evil. To be hurried along by the violence of passion into some deed of licentiousness may consist with a state of mind that feels its own degradation and mourns over the infirmity of its purposes. But to look with connivance and delight on the sin of others -- to have pleasure in their companionship -- and to spirit them on in the ways of disobedience, after perhaps the urgency which prompted his own career of it had abated; this argues not the subjection of one faculty to another but the subjection of the whole man to sin." If then to sin while applauding the sin of others is to aggravate the crime, would not men be still more inexcusable if they joined in the sin which in others they condemned? Most surely. "In the former case there is at least agreement between thought and action -- the man *does* what he expressly *approves* -- while in the second there is an internal contradiction and a flagrant hypocrisy."

"*Therefore* ," argues the Apostle, "thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest . .

. for thou that judgest doest the same things." Yes, whosoever thou art, "what ever name thou bearest, were it even the glorious name of Jew. Paul does not say this, but it is his meaning."

### **Natural Religion**

Coming now to verse two the question arises: To whom does the Apostle refer when he says "We are sure." Since the Epistle is written to the Christians in Rome, some say that they are referred to. "We, Christians, are sure." But a statement concerning knowledge possessed by Christians would avail nothing against the Jewish point of view that St. Paul is here combating. Others say that the reference is to the Jews themselves.

"We, Jews, are sure." But it was precisely the Jewish conscience the Apostle was seeking to convince on this subject. To our understanding the Apostle is referring neither to Christians nor Jews as a class nor yet to the Gentiles but is referring to every child of Adam. The matter in question, namely that "the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things" is a truth "inscribed on the human conscience as such, and which plain common sense, free from prejudices, compels us to own."

It is as though he had said: "Now every one knows, or every one is sure that," etc. And what is it that every one knows? It is what has commonly been called "natural religion," that is to say, practically, "it is the religion that appeals straight off to the conscience of almost all honest and civilized men. It is natural religion to believe that God will judge men with absolute power and insight and *impartiality* according to their *conduct* and *characters* ; that there can be no making believe, no substitute for a good character, no escap ing with a bad one. The Prophets are full of this principle. Our Lord reasserts it."

It is emphasized by the Apostles. Now we *know*, we are sure, every one is, that the sentence God pronounces on every man is agreeable to truth. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" "There would be no more truth in the universe if there were none in the judgment of God; and there would be none in the judgment of God if, to be absolved ourselves, it were enough to condemn others." The words "according to truth" have sometimes been explained "in the sense of *really* ; that there is really a judgment of God against those who . . . . But what the Jews disputed was not the *fact* of judgment; it was its *impartiality* -- that is to say its truth. They could not get rid of the idea that in that day [the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2:5)] they would enjoy certain immunities due to their purer creed and the greatly higher position they held than that of other nations."

### **Greater Light Brings Increased Responsibilities**

Now St. Paul "recognizes that primacy which in the history of Redemption is really . . . [ theirs]. It is the primacy of the race chosen to be the organ of revelation and the birth place of . . . [ Messiah]. It was given sovereignly, not according to the works or to the numbers of the nation but according to the unknown conditions in the mind of God. It carried with it genuine and splendid advantages. It even gave the individual righteous Jew (so surely the language of Rom. 2:10 implies) a certain special welcome to his Masters Well done, good and faithful; not to the disadvantage in the least degree of the individual righteous Greek, but just such as may be illustrated in a circle of ardent and impartial friendship, where in one instance or another, kinship added to friend ship makes attachment not more intimate but more interesting.

Yes, the Jew has indeed his priority, his primacy, limited and qualified in many directions but real and permanent in its place; this Epistle is the great charter of it in the Christian scriptures (see

Romans 11). But whatever the place of it is, it has no place whatever in the question of the sinfulness of sin, unless indeed to make guilt deeper where light has been greater. The Jew has a great historical position in the Plan of God. He has been accorded as it were an official nearness to God in the working out of the worlds redemption. But he is not one whit the less for this a poor sinner, fallen and guilty. He is not one moment for this to excuse but all the more to condemn himself. He is the last person in the world to judge others.

Wherever God had placed him in history he is to place himself, in repentance and faith, least and lowest at the foot of the cross.

"What was and is true of the chosen nation is now and for ever true, by a deep moral parity, of all communities and of all persons who are in any sense privileged or advantaged by circumstance. It is true, solemnly and formidably true, of the Christian church and of the Christian family and of the Christian man." It is especially true of those who have been privileged to enjoy the light of "Present Truth."

Let us not fail to take home to our own hearts, and to make personal application to our own lives, the lessons the Apostle here would teach. Does there not lie in the moral failure of the Jew a much needed warning to us of today against censoriousness? Let us ask ourselves: Does not "judging" and unkind, not to say unfair, criticism of others still find a place in our ordinary conversation? "It is of the utmost consequence that before we judge others, we should have judged ourselves. And to have done so truth fully has a tendency to make us charitable in our estimate of others, because we are deeply conscious of our own need of merciful and lenient consideration."

Again, is there a tendency with us to spiritual pride as with the Jew of old there was to religious pride? Does the impression gain ground with us at times that because of the great privileges we have received and the knowledge of Gods great Plan we have enjoyed; because of the scriptural purity of our theory of salvation and the close association we have had with the "Truth" movement; because of the patient courage under contempt and exclusion of the little group with which we may be associated, which some call our denomination or sect but which is to us indeed our Church; because we have successfully stood the tests of recent years; because of our loyalty to order; because we have stood for liberty and continue to be loyal to its principle; because of these things, therefore, no matter what happens, it will be well with us in "that day." If so, let us beware.

Let us "Think not to say within ourselves, We have Abraham to our Father; for . . . God is able of these stones to raise up seed unto Abraham." For us there is only one altogether safe "glorying." "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

-- *P. L. Read*



## Humility

*"He that is least among you, the same shall be great." -- Luke 9:48, A.R.V.*

TO the Greeks meekness was a deplorable lack of courage, so they had no word that Christian writers could use to represent humility as a virtue. For that purpose, therefore, they appropriated two Greek words, one meaning "gentleness," and the other meaning "to depress." The first of these our translators have usually given as meek, and the second as humble. Perhaps because the ancient Hebrews were of a different spirit, the writers of the Old Testament had at their disposal eight words to express these qualities. The most frequently used of these is translated both meek and humble. However, as in English, each of these words is given as a synonym of the other, so in our consideration we will not have to make any fine distinctions between them.

One of the holy angels, seeing the prospect of an empire on a tiny globe in a vast universe of suns, with only a little garden and its two occupants as a nucleus on which to start a world, a kingdom, developed the unholy ambition to be its ruler. Since one with angelic powers could 'develop such a devastating, traitorous ambition, we poor, weak humans will need divine protection to save us from a similar course, and to keep us in that "lowliness of mind" which was in him who "made himself of no reputation," but "humbled himself," and was "obedient unto death."

Some manuscripts favor the *King James Translation* of our text, "shall be great," and some favor the "is great," of the *American Standard Version*, and since both are teachings that can well come from our Divine Instructor, we need not take time to decide in favor of either. In our heavenly judge's eyes the one who is humble is already great, and will be great through the eternal *future*, if he has the faith to appropriate the "grace sufficient," thus maintaining that humility to the end of this period of testing.

Pride was raising its ugly head when the discussion arose among the disciples as to which would be greatest in the Kingdom. (Matt. 18:1.) Evidently supreme intuition saw some sentiment deeper than that which the mere words conveyed, for in Luke 9:47 we read, "When Jesus saw the reasoning of *their hearts*, he took a little child" "in his arms"-a child not yet old enough to have been contaminated much by the pride of the elders-and taught them the lesson of humility, a lesson necessary for every Christian of the entire Age. "Whosoever shall *humble* himself as this, little child (thus taking an active part himself in cultivating this virtue, not leaving it entirely to the Lord or circumstances), the same is the greatest in the Kingdom."

The inspired record tells us that not all of the early Church profited by this instruction, for there were some who thought to make themselves great by becoming "lords over God's heritage," supposing that such lordship would add glory to themselves; though the brethren were then only a "little flock," as the true Church has always been. Our Lord's gentle reproof to those who asked to be appointed to a high position in the heavenly Kingdom, assures us of his strong disapproval of such false desire for pre-eminence in the earthly, embryo kingdom. The Apostle's condemnation of unholy ambition in the teachers of his day, stated in much stronger language, and also under inspiration, indicates the divine condemnation sure to fall upon any who strive for prominence by any road other than that of humility. To his "dearly beloved son," Timothy, he said, "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and

beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. If *any* man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men ... from such withdraw thyself." (1 Tim. 6:1-5.) Again in his Second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:1-3) the Apostle warns of still greater dangers in this our day, when "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, false accusers, despisers of those that are good, ... from such turn away." The end of all the proud, the Wise Man tells us (Proverbs 16:18) is "destruction."

## **THE HUMBLE WALK WITH GOD**

Jesus' lesson on humility which we have been considering seems to have been imparted soon after Peter, James, and John had been with him in the Mount of Transfiguration. This and other similar favors shown them could easily have caused the three to fall under the ' temptation to be proud. Heeding Micah 6:8 would have spared them, and us, that danger: "He hath showed thee, O man, *what is good*; and what doth the Lord *require of thee*, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and *to walk humbly with thy God*?" One can be sure his walk with God is entirely too limited, or not at all, if being in his presence, the presence of the Emperor of the universe, has not had a humbling effect. Even being in the presence of one of the so-called great of earth, will usually leave on the mind of one of the thus honored ones an impression of his littleness.

The margin of the *King James* Version has a reading just as essential for our instruction: "Humble thyself *to walk with thy God*." For the privilege of entering into his presence, it is necessary to be humble; not, "thankful that I am not as other men are," but thankful that he is willing to receive me though I am a sinner just as other men are-making me acceptable in his Beloved.

## **PRESENT ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY**

The one who is humble is dead to pomp, foolish show, safe from the danger of pride because of honors the world can impart, which are but fading laurels.

That humble one is without malice, without rivals and competitors -- so far as his own mind is concerned; and so he is a Christian that can say, "None of these things move me." He knows that if there should be any attacks of the Adversary that might overthrow him, or any permissions of service granted by the Lord that might lead to pride, as we can imagine the three previously mentioned might have been tempted, the Lord will have some antidote to administer, just as the invitation of Saul, the arch-persecutor of the brethren to become the successor of Judas, may have protected the "eleven" from the sin of pride.

One of the very greatest of our assistances to humility is the consciousness that God knows our works and our thoughts (Isa. 66:18), doubtless even including those thoughts that receive no welcome from us, but flit through our minds to be banished instantly upon arrival; but even so, always an occasion to petition mercy, and confess our undone condition, thankful that he who knows our thoughts, also knows "our frame, that we are dust." This consciousness humbles us and also helps us to be more merciful toward our brethren, our companions in affliction. Pride takes pleasure in beholding the weaknesses of another; humility rejoices in covering "all sins" with the mantle of love-an absolute essential method for each of us to use as regards others if profitable fellowship with them is to be our privilege; even as essential as it is to have our heavenly Father use it for us if we are to be received into his fellowship.

Closely related in greatness and in kind is the assurance of Mark 9:37: "Whosoever shall receive one of such children [disciples are evidently meant] *in my name* [regardless of his imperfections, or the imperfections of the one who receives him] *receiveth me.*" How out of all proportion is this reward for humility on the part of one who has not one thing in himself to be proud of, but abundant reason for shame and humility!

### **JESUS' HUMILITY**

As though receiving himself were not honor enough, Jesus, demonstrating his own humility, adds to the reward for the humility that accepts to fellowship those whom he receives, the assurance that the one who receives him receives the Father. To us the privilege of receiving him would be reward enough, but not so to his humble mind. He knows that the greatest of all blessings is to receive the heavenly Father into our lives. But that, too, like the receiving of Jesus into our hearts, is dependent upon our being humble enough to receive as fellow-members of the Body those whom God has invited into sonship. "If we walk in the light [if we are truth brethren, living the truth] *we have* fellowship one with another." Evidently one is not really "in the truth," "in the light," in the complete sense, *if there is one called one that he is depriving of his fellowship*, except on Scriptural grounds.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship [partnership, gives the thought more accurately] one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," Brother John adds. Evidently if we do not practice such a partnership, the cleansing blood ceases to be ours. Perhaps this is the key to the reason we cannot have our heavenly Father and Bridegroom in our lives if we do not take our brethren into our fellowship, into our partnership. We, without that blood, are still condemned sinners, and such cannot be partners of the Father and his Son. The standing that acceptance of the cleansing blood gives us, must be maintained. There is no entrance into the heavenly presence for law breakers, but "love is the fulfilling of the law." Love never fails to: *desire* the fellowship of the ones loved. Therefore, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." - 1 John 1:7; Romans 12:10.

In this last text we have an excellent means of testing ourselves on two points -humility, and love for the brethren. Can we honestly say, and can we prove, that it gives us greater pleasure to see another brother taking a higher place than ourselves in the Lord's service?

If so, we *are* near the end of the way in Christian development. And if all the brethren of our association have attained that same degree of Christlikeness, never again will we see difficulties among brethren, never any separations. Those who fail to learn the lesson of childlikeness will fail to be of those who enter the Kingdom. This is Jesus' dictum: "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted [think of his saying this to a disciple!], and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven." - Matt. 18:3.

Jesus, "being fashioned as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea; the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." - Phil. 2:8; Matt. 23:12.

### **EVEN "JEHOVAH HUMBLETH HIMSELF"**

Jesus is the answer to the question of Psalm 113:5, 6: "Who is like unto Jehovah our God, that hath his seat on high, that *humbleth himself* to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth?" So we cannot go to a better one for advice as to how to attain this most difficult virtue. He

advises, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am 'meek and lowly in heart." - Matt. 11:29.

Love means service. If our heads are to wear crowns in heaven, our necks must become - used to the yoke here. Only the humble will accept the yoke, for that means servitude.- "By love serve one another" is the Apostle's advice. (Gal. 5:13.) The cross was Jesus' and the Father's ;greatest service to mankind; so it is into service with them that we are invited when Jesus' voice reaches us: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24.) The brethren to whom he first said that, thought they were already following him; but the lesson of the *full* denying of self, uncomplainingly, yea, rejoicingly bearing their crosses, they had not yet learned.

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, *with him also* that is of a contrite and humble spirit." (Isa. 57:15.) Since there is "none that is righteous, no not one," what else can we be but "contrite and humble"? And blessed is that attitude, for it will get for us the attention and assistance of the One who can perfect in us holiness. Peter's advice would never have been, "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy," if he had not known of God's promise of "*grace sufficient*," forgiving and assisting grace. (1 Peter 1: 15.) "Though Jehovah is high, yet bath he respect unto the lowly." And so this very quality of humility will draw from him his assistance.

Humility is a quality usually found in the truly great, whether they be of, earth or of heaven. Pride, the opposite quality, demonstrates an appalling smallness in the soul that harbors it, colossal ignorance of self.

### **A HUMBLE TEMPLE FOR THE ALMIGHTY**

The sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah describes the glories of the new earth. But the next chapter opens with the assurance that even that will not be glorious enough to be a dwelling place for Jehovah. "Thus saith Jehovah, heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what manner of house will ye build for me, and what place shall be my rest?" Assuredly the most ingenious, the most skilful of men, could not build a temple here suitable for his dwelling. The truth regarding the temple actually planned for him is 'so astounding that Jehovah himself must be quoted as the authority for its description: "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God bath said, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people!' The glory of God fills these living temples when they have humbled themselves to walk with their God.

The temples built for the Jewish nation made them think they were essential to God's purpose. Like the Jewish nation, organizations and teachers have a habit of thinking they are necessary in God's plan. As soon as that thought is harbored, they become unnecessary. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word." (Isa. 66:2.) "He forgetteth not the cry of the meek." (Margin, Psa. 9:12.) "God heareth not sinners," but he "has heard the *desire* of the meek." (Psa. 10:17.) The desire of a humble heart is in line with God's will.

Some very helpful and beautiful examples of meekness have come to us from the past. Abraham: "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes"-a good description of any human being. Jacob: "I am not worthy of all thy loving kindnesses, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant." Gideon: "Behold my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Our list cannot be made complete, but Moses and Joshua must not be passed by without mention. And the herald of the new age, John the

Baptist, ushered it in with proper humility: "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear." (Matt. 3:11.) This way of expressing humility has lost much of its force for us who live in a different day. In his time the vilest of the slaves, the historians tell us, were given charge of the sandals. Jesus' testimony regarding the Baptist was different: "Verily I say unto you: Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." The Baptist had 'the humility that *God* rewards. Paul, classing himself as "the chiefest of sinners," "less than the least of all saints," with all his talents and faithful service, set us an example we will need much educating to be able to follow. "*Put on* therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, *lowliness, meekness*, long-suffering, forbearing one another, even as the Lord forgave you, so do ye." - Col. 3:12, 13.

#### HUMILITY, THEN FORBEARANCE, THEN SERVICE

Ephesians 4:2 enjoins, "With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another *in love*." We will have to be "clothed with humility" in order to have this love that serves. (1 Peter 5:5.) Jesus, girding himself with a towel, finished his ministry with a visible lesson in humility, a reiteration of the lesson of cross bearing.

#### **SCORN FOR OTHERS NOT AN EVIDENCE OF HUMILITY**

Proverbs 3:4: "Surely he scorneth the scorners and giveth grace unto the *lowly*," should give confusion of face to us who have taken pleasure in scorning others who proclaim themselves followers of the meek and lowly Nazarene, but who struggle in a lesser light than we enjoy. Instead of scorning, we should have had extended pity and a helping hand. One cannot but recognize how stumblingly they walk, but scorning them for it only brings upon us the scorn of the One who is our Judge. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and keep silence, because *He* hath laid it upon him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope [because then there will be no boastful, scornful words to disgrace us with our God]. Let him give his cheek to him that smiteth him; let him be filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not cast off forever. For though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses." - Lam. 3:27-32.

- P. E. Thomson

## Surrender

*"He that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it." - Matthew 10:39.*

I lay it down, the life Thou gavest me,  
This life called "mine," but henceforth Thine to be:  
I lay it, blessed Master, at Thy feet,  
Apart from Thee so weak and incomplete,  
Yet dear to Thee, else I dare never bring  
So poor an offering to Thy feet, my King.

This heart of mine, with all its living powers  
To live, to will, to be, through Life's swift hours,  
With all its faults, its tendency to sin,  
Just as it is, to Thy dear love I bring,  
Take Thou control, and 'neath Thy spirit's sway,  
Cleanse and renew, use for Thyself today.  
I lay it down, all that I have to give,

Marred and imperfect, yet for Thee I'd live  
Still nearer to Thine Own great loving heart,  
Have in Thy life a deeper, closer part:  
With deeper faith, devotion, me inspire,  
Be Thou, O God, my strength, my joy, my Life's desire.

*- Ethel Bentall*

## "Finally, Be All of One Mind"

*"Finally, be all of one mind (harmonious-in accord), having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." - 1 Pet. 3:8, 9.*

HARMONY does not mean alikeness. Rather it signifies unity with diversity: and this is the meaning of the Greek word translated "of one mind" in our text. The Lord's will respecting his people does not contemplate exact sameness, wholly ignoring individual characteristics and peculiarities; on the contrary, a diversity with harmony is more desirable than a sameness; as, for instance, it is the harmonious union of the seven colors that constitutes the beauty of the rainbow. So also in music: one strikes a chord on the piano or the organ and the result is harmony, oneness, union-the variety of the notes gives a melody which could not be obtained from any one of them, or from a sameness of equal volume. This is the thought the Apostle's words give us in respect to God's people; they are of various natural temperaments and dispositions and peculiarities, and the divine alchemy by which the human is transmuted into the spiritual, the old mind into the new mind, does not wholly destroy, and is not intended to destroy, the elements of character and disposition; but is intended to take from each one its dross and imperfection and discordancy, and thus to permit all eventually to unite in and develop into a harmonious whole.

The Lord does not expect, however, that this condition of complete harmony, will be attained by his people the instant of their consecration. On the contrary, as the Apostle indicates in our text, this attainment of harmony is the result, the glorious consummation, rather than the beginning of the work of grace in the Lord's people: he says, "*finally*," not primarily, we are to be all of one mind -harmonious. It requires long years, generally, in the school of Christ, for his disciples to so grow in grace and in knowledge and in love, *ere they* reach the glorious condition expressed in our text, even "*finally*."

The Apostle Paul intimates that we are to continue so to grow in grace and in knowledge, and in love, as to attain in heart, in will, the stature of a perfect man in Christ. The "babe" in Christ has not the stature of a "man," and requires first the milk of the Word, and subsequently the "strong meat," that it may grow thereby, and finally attain to the ideal condition represented in our text, a condition of harmony with the Lord and with each other, which indicates that the work of grace has well progressed, that the mark of perfect love has been well attained in the heart, even though it be not possible still to fully express it in every word and act of life.

The Apostle Paul describes this transformation of life, this growth, saying, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"; but while it requires only a short time to give this instruction, and does not require long to agree to follow the instruction, it does require patient perseverance in well-doing to comply with the instructions-to fully attain to the transformed conditions even in our hearts-so that we *will* aright, however *difficult* it may be for us to always *do* right. And here arises a difficulty: many do not clearly see just what are the requirements, and hence go through life in a maze, in perplexity, in doubt, in fear, lacking the rest and peace and blessing which should come from a proper understanding and a consistent endeavor.... Where the spirit of Christ is, there should be love and harmony. So says the Apostle: "*Finally*, be ye all of one mind." And this should be borne in mind as being the final result of discipline and instruction in the school of Christ; by our attainment of this disposition to harmony (while at the same time loyal and courageous for the truth), we may safely gage our growth in grace, knowledge, and love....

But while taking all the encouragement we can from the thought that the Lord is wishing and is seeking and calling out a fighting class of "conquerors," who could not be conquerors unless there were something to conquer, and who could not conquer unless they possessed something of the conquering or combative disposition, let us nevertheless, promptly take ourselves in hand, realizing that the good quality of combativeness has in every instance been misdirected, and that from the moment we enlist as soldiers of the Cross of Christ our combativeness is to be turned into new channels. We are to learn, first of all, that our combativeness is not to be exercised toward the Lord, that we should resist his will; but that, on the contrary, we are to make a full surrender to him of our thoughts and words and conduct. We are to remember that combativeness is not to be used toward the brethren; for to fight against the brethren is to fight against God, against the truth, against the fellow-members of our own brigade. Instead of fighting against the brethren, we are to love them, and to fight for them, even as we are to fight for the Lord and for the truth. We are to remember, too, that our combativeness is not to be exercised against our friends, our neighbors, or the world in general. No all of these have plenty to contend against without having our opposition. On the contrary, they need our sympathy, they need our help, they need our encouragement, they need whatever we can render them in the way of uplift.

How, then, and against what shall we exercise our combativeness, that it may be well directed to the Lord's pleasured and in the service of his cause? We answer, that our combativeness is to be turned against sin, and that its first exercise must begin with ourselves: the battle with self is the greatest battle, and we have the Lord's Word for it that he that "ruleth his spirit [his own mind, will] is better than he that taketh a city," because he has to that extent learned to exercise the combativeness of a true character in the right direction, in self control. It is after we have had considerable experience in battling with sin and selfishness in ourselves, in casting the beam out of our own eye, in subduing anger, malice, hatred, and strife in our own hearts and flesh-it is then, and by means of this severe battle and experience, that we will be prepared to assist the brethren, and to assist our neighbors in their difficulties -- to help them to overcome their besetments and weaknesses. . . .

It was the natural combativeness consecrated to God, and rightly directed through the spirit, that led Peter and one of the others, when threatened, and charged straitly by the Sanhedrin that they should preach no more in the name of Jesus, to courageously withstand this *illegal* restraint upon their liberties and rights as Jews, under the Law, and to be obedient to the voice of the heavenly call, and to declare, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19, 20.) The Lord knew whom he was choosing for his Apostles, and we see clearly that weak, vacillating, nerveless men would not have served the cause as did these whom Jesus chose. And it is but reasonable that we conclude that the Lord similarly throughout this Age, is seeking for and choosing strong characters, those who dare to do right; who dare to incur the frown of the world and its slights and sneers, its scoffs and its jeers, its persecution because of fidelity to the Lord and to the brethren. This is overcoming; and to whatever extent any realize that they are deficient in these qualities let them cultivate this combativeness in this proper direction-to combat weakness, combat sin, combat subserviency to those things which are contrary to the Lord and his Word.

But combativeness alone would not be sufficient. It needs proportionate faith, in order to use the combativeness aright. Hence we hear our Lord's word: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." Faith in the Lord must be the power that will move his people and energize them. Not faith in creeds, nor faith in men, nor faith in ourselves, but faith in the Lord and in his exceeding great and precious promises. .



The exceeding great and precious promises of the Divine Word were given to us as the basis of faith, as the fuel to produce the power in us to *will* and to *do* God's good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13.) And hence these gracious promises must not be neglected; they must be continually used and must continue in us to energize us. And the energy must be applied, and we must progress proportionately against the course of this world, if we would attain to the glorious conditions to which we have been called.

While we should ever remember (lest otherwise we should be discouraged) that the attainment of a control of our own spirits, our own minds, and the bringing of these into full accord, full harmony, with the Lord and, so far as possible, into accord with all of the Lord's people who are in accord with him, is to be "finally," nevertheless we are not to delay our endeavor to reach that final and grand development to which the Apostle exhorts us in our text. We are to have it continually before us as the standard, the ideal, the aim, and although we may fail time and again, if we are rightly exercised in the matter we will be stronger as the result of every failure; for each failure will show us more clearly than we discerned previously the weak points of our character, naturally resulting from the fall . . . .

As we *finally*, in larger and larger measure, attain to harmony-to the subduing of our natural dispositions toward contention, gradually getting these combative tendencies into accord with the Lord and his Word and his Spirit, and into accord with those who are his, our fellow-soldiers in this battle for the right, our condition will be what the Apostle here describes; viz., we will have compassion one of another. We will expect to see and will see "the brethren" striving for the mastery over self and we will be sympathetic, compassionate; so that if they err through weakness of the flesh, we will be glad to restore such in the spirit of meekness, remembering ourselves also lest we should be tempted. (Gal. 6:1.) We will love them as brethren ought to love-heartily, thoroughly-such a love and such a sympathy, such a compassion, as would lead us to do everything within our power for their assistance; especially along the lines of spiritual assistance, in the conquering of sin, and in growth in grace and knowledge and love; but, also in temporal matters as we have opportunity, as may be possible to us.

This compassion and brotherly love amongst the spiritual brethren, even as respects temporal matters, cannot surely be less than it would be amongst natural brethren. Indeed, inasmuch as the spiritual relationship is the higher, the nobler, the grander of the two, without detracting anything from the love and affection and obligations toward the fleshly brotherhood, it would imply that the spiritual would appeal to us still more strongly, so that we would do all for a brother in Christ in a temporal way that we would do for any earthly brother and more abundantly. The Apostle sets this standard, saying, that we are to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith."

This of course does not mean that we are to be negligent of those of our own immediate households and our special responsibilities to these; but it does mean that aside from these, the spiritual brethren should have the first place in our hearts and in our sympathies and in our love, and in all that this would imply in the way of sharing with them both the spiritual and the temporal good things which we enjoy, according to their necessities. Those who have reached this condition of heart-harmony with the Lord and with his gracious plan will have had such an experience in attaining to this position themselves that it will make them pitiful of others, sympathetic in the difficulties and trials of others; and it will make them "courteous," polite, "gentle toward all."

In a word, according to the Scriptural standard, the elect Church of Christ

*should be the most polished, the most refined, the most polite, the most generous, the most kind, of all the people in the world;* and should be all these in the most absolute sense; not in the mere sense of an outward form and appearance of kindness, gentleness, etc., so common in the world; but a gentleness, a kindness, proceeding from the heart, proceeding from an appreciation of the Lord's spirit and the spirit of the truth, the spirit of love, and the spirit of justice, also. It is a great matter that we learn to be thoroughly just, and in all of our affairs to do unto others as we would wish them to do unto us-that we accord them the same liberties that we ourselves would wish to enjoy. Truly, the law of God is a wonderful law, and truly the people who are taught of the Lord and trained in harmony with the divine will, must be a peculiar people, zealous of good works....

We are called to be the Royal Priesthood, under Jesus, the Royal High Priest of our profession. We are instructed in the Scriptures that this royal priesthood is to be God's agency during the Millennial Age for bringing blessing to the world of mankind, and "hereunto we were called" that we might be fitted for this priesthood. The Apostle tells us that in the preparation of our Lord Jesus and his testing as to fitness for the position of high priest, it was necessary that he should be tempted, tried, and caused to suffer, in order that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest when the time should come to exercise the authority and power of his office. Similarly it is necessary that all who would be of this Royal Priesthood should have such experiences now as would develop in them also these principles of truth, righteousness -- such experiences as would lead them to love righteousness and to hate iniquity -- such experiences in battling with self and in gaining control (at least so far as the mind,, the will is concerned), as would constitute them victors and develop in, them these graces of the spirit mentioned by the Apostle, brotherly kindness, pitifulness, compassion. All these qualities will be requisite in dealing with the world during the Millennial Age. They will be merciful and faithful priests, *because* they will know how to sympathize with the poor world in its fallen condition, and how to make allowances for them in their various efforts toward regaining the standard of perfection then to be established through restitution processes.

We will be kings as well as priests then. As kings, we will be endued with power to control the world. This will be a further proper use of combativeness; but we are not fitted and prepared to so control the, world in the present time; and therefore the- Lord directs his people to wait, and, long for, and pray for his Kingdom to come, and his will to be done-to be enforced with heavenly power and authority. These "very elect" kings and priests will be fully qualified to exercise their power in moderation, for then they will have the new bodies in perfect accord with the new minds -- the new minds which are now being developed, disciplined, and brought to that standard of perfect love, which is full of pity, compassion, brotherly kindness and harmony. How necessary, dear brethren, that we learn these lessons, if we would be prepared to be used in the glorious service of the Kingdom so shortly to be established. - Reprints, pp. R2877-R2880.

## "Why Speakest Thou unto Them in Parables?"

"I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old." - Matt. 13:10; Psa. 78:2.

ONE of our readers writes us as follows:

"Dear Brethren:

"Here is a question that comes up at our meetings now and then on which we are not all agreed, and we would appreciate your answer to this question, which may also be, helpful to others who would like the matter clarified: Did our Lord speak in parables to *teach* the multitudes, or did he speak in parables *so that they might not understand*? - Matt. 13:1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 34-36; Mark 4:1, 2, 11, 12, 30, 33, 34; Luke 8:4."

This question is a most interesting one and has been the subject of reverent study on the part of many able Bible scholars. Their conclusions, however, have not been identical, some believing that the purpose of our Lord in employing the parabolic method in his teaching was to *reveal* the truth, while others have been convinced that his purpose was to *conceal* it. In view of these differences of opinion we can scarcely hope to "settle" the question. However, we trust the following discussion may contribute in part to its solution and prove to be not without some profit to our readers.

In the first place, whatever truth there may be in the view that some parables were meant to *conceal* the truth rather than to *reveal* it, it seems clear that this position is untenable if maintained as applicable to all the parables. How, for example, can any one suppose that in the parable of the Good Samaritan, by which our Lord so strikingly illustrated the true meaning of the command to love one's neighbor (Lev. 19: 18, 34), his purpose was to conceal that meaning? Certainly his meaning was not concealed from that "certain lawyer" who had sought to put Jesus to the test, for when, at the conclusion, our Lord put to him the question, "Which, now, of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell amongst the thieves?" he correctly replied, "He that showed mercy on him." - Luke 10:25, 36, 37.\*

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\* Many expositors have noted another, a second, meaning to this parable. Taking it not merely as typical or by way of an example, they regard it also as prophetic or historical of Christ himself, as the Good Samaritan, rescuing humanity from the misery of sin and death.

Against this view it is sufficient to remark that neither the wording of the narrative nor the context in which it stands gives the slightest justification for the notion of such a double meaning.

On the other hand it must, of course, be acknowledged to be quite within the limits of a legitimate application of the narrative to point out how, in the person of the Samaritan, Jesus not merely pictured a striking example of true fulfillment of the command to love one's neighbor, but also, in his own person, gave us a corresponding example in act, when he, the Son of God, became neighbor to us men, by the pitying, self-sacrificing love with which he came to relieve our wretchedness. But it is obvious that such a thought has its powerful influence only when it is received as an independent application of the parable, instead of being made part and parcel of the parable itself as a supposed deeper, hidden meaning.

All the parables may be broadly classified either as (1) typical (those in which the truth pictured is by means of exhibiting a concrete example), or (2) symbolic (in which the pictorial representation of the truth taught is by means of symbols).

The parable of the Good Samaritan is the first of the typical parables. Its purpose, we have seen, is to reveal, not to conceal, the truth. The same intention will be found in all the other typical parables of our Lord.

### **SYMBOLIC PARABLES SPOKEN TO THE DISCIPLES**

Turning now to the symbolic parables which actually clothe the truths taught in a figurative dress, so that, along with the purpose of *illustration* (present in all parables) an intention of concealment is also *possible*, there are a number in which, as a matter of fact, no intention of concealment is present, but only the purpose of illustration. Such is the case with all the symbolic parables which Jesus uttered, not before a mixed group of hearers, but before the narrower circle of his disciples, as for example, that of the Treasure hidden in the Field, the Pearl of great Price, and the Fishing Net. - Matt. 13:44; 45, 46; 47-50.

In these parables symbols are employed which *might* (on occasion) serve to conceal; but this intention cannot be present, as none of the "multitude" are in the audience. The hearers are all his disciples to whom the purpose of concealment could not apply. Moreover when, on concluding these parables Jesus asked them, "Have ye understood all these things? they said unto him, Yea, Lord." Evidently his purpose had been to reveal, not to conceal; a purpose, moreover, which had been achieved.

### **SYMBOLIC PARABLES SPOKEN TO HIS OPPONENTS**

We have shown that our Lord's purpose in typical parables can be only that of revealing. We have also noted that when spoken to his disciples only, apart from the multitude, even the symbolic parables were not spoken with the intent to conceal. Let us next examine a sample of his symbolic parables addressed not to his disciples, but to his opponents. To them it was that he spake the parable of the wicked husbandmen who ill-treated every servant the householder sent them and finally killed his son. Was this parable intended to obscure his message to them? Was it not rather to strike at their conscience and awaken them, if possible, to their sinful condition? According to the record "When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, *they perceived that he spake of them.*" (Matt. 21:45.) Evidently his meaning was not obscure to them.

### **SYMBOLIC PARABLES OFTEN EXPLAINED**

Again, in many symbolic parables the figurative veil is so transparent, or it is 'so directly drawn aside by an added explanatory statement, that for this reason there can be no question of an intent to conceal anything by them. An example of the latter may be found in the parable of the Importunate Friend, where the meaning of the parable is expressly given, and where, for that reason, an intent to conceal cannot be supposed. (Luke 11:5-10.) As a sample of the former we may take the case of the Prodigal Son. Surely this parable does not hide from us the love of our Father who is in heaven! Rather it discloses that love with a pathos and a power so Divine that, beyond all other forms of speech, it is calculated to touch and melt our hearts. - Luke 15: 11-32.

## A DIFFICULT TEXT

Thus far in our discussion we have found nothing to support the view that a purpose to conceal was present in the parables considered, but in every case have noted only an intention to reveal. However, we have yet to examine what has long been recognized as one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament. It is our Lord's reply to the question, "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" According to Mark he replied: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables; that seeing they *may* see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." - Mark 4:11, 12.

Luke reports our Lord's answer in briefer, yet almost identical terms: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." - Luke 8:10.

Now, if we take these words as they stand, and read them in a plain, honest, way, they teach us that in speaking to the multitude as distinguished from his disciples, the Lord selected the parabolic form of instruction, not only to conceal the truth from them, but for the further purpose of preventing them from turning from their sins and receiving forgiveness.

We have already noted that, in the case of some, though not all of the symbolic parables, there *might* be an intention to conceal, as well as to reveal. However, we could not accept the additional thought which seems to be contained in both Mark's and Luke's report of our Lord's answer. On the contrary we know that he came to call *sinners* to repentance, not to frustrate that repentance.

Had we only Mark's and Luke's condensed reports we would be puzzled to understand the meaning of our Lord. Fortunately, however, Matthew's account is more complete. He tells us *at length* what Jesus said when his disciples asked him why he spake to the multitude in parables. He says it was "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables, because [not "in order that" but "because"] they seeing, see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." - Matt. 13:10-15.

Here, in Matthew's fuller account, the difficulty suggested by the more condensed report of Mark and Luke is removed. For here it appears that it is *the people* who have closed their eyes, not Christ who has closed them; it is *they* who *will not perceive* and understand, because they do not want to be converted and healed.

Nor need any suppose that Matthew's account can be accepted only by rejecting those of Mark and Luke. If we carefully compare the three reports, we find that the reports by Mark and Luke do not misrepresent but merely condense the answer of our Lord which Matthew reports in full. Matthew's six verses are compressed into two verses by Mark and into only one by Luke. In Matthew's fuller account it may be seen that there is authority for every word in the briefer reports, and that there is no real conflict between them.

## ISAIAH'S VISION

To fully understand our Lord's words we must go back to the prophecy of Isaiah to which he refers. That prophecy is found in Isaiah's sixth chapter, which we considered in some detail in this Journal in the issue of September, 1940. There we said in part:

"Many have supposed that Isaiah was himself so to preach that the people's hearts would become hardened as a result; that he should deliberately seek to close their eyes and stop their ears so that they would be unable to see God's gracious character and purposes and could listen no longer to his voice of compassion and tenderness. Some have gone even further than this. By an extension of this selfsame doctrine beyond the confines of the one nation of Israel to the whole world of mankind, they have even charged God himself with inflicting what they term a "judicial blindness" upon the great mass of our race which left them no chance of repentance -- no hope of salvation. Such a gospel (?) we could not but reject, no matter whence it came, so utterly is it opposed to all we have learned of the character and Word of God."

"But what do these remarkable words signify? What is the meaning of the message Isaiah is commissioned to proclaim? We answer: God saw that their own stubborn and rebellious attitude had at last brought them into a condition in which they would no longer be able to return to God. Once they had had the capacity to listen and repent, and as God, in mercy and kindness, had dealt with them, rewarding them for right-doing and chastising them for wrong, they had been able to profit by his instructions. But now they had lost that capacity. They had been so persistent in their backslidings; they had been so rebellious in heart; they had so resisted the pleadings, the warnings, the invitations of his grace; they had so hardened themselves against him, that they had brought themselves into a state in which they would be insensible to any further influence by which God might seek to cleanse and reclaim them.... Through long and continued neglect of their God-given powers of right-thinking and right-doing, these powers have become atrophied, they cannot now *function*". - *Herald*, September 1940, pages 134, 135.

Exactly the same conditions obtained at the time of our Lord's first advent, and accordingly, he (at times) addressed the people in special symbolic parables. To whom did he really speak when he addressed a mixed audience? To whom has the Gospel ever been spoken by his faithful messengers since? And with what intent? Surely it was and even now is preached, not to hinder any, God forbid, but certainly with no thought of converting every hearer - merely to reach those who have hearing ears. "Who hath ears to hear, let *him* hear," saith our Lord. (Matt. 13:9.) "Whosoever hath [already improved what light, grace, opportunities, have come his way] shall have them increased." Yet, while speaking (in the presence of others) to those with hearing ears, our Lord is careful to so speak that those whose ears are dull of hearing shall not be aroused to still greater prejudice, as they would be if the truth were spoken plainly. Hence he veils the Kingdom message that they shall not have their bitter enmity made more bitter. He puts his teaching in a form in which it can be apprehended by such as are willing to do the will of his Father (and by these only as they themselves prove more and more worthy of it and continue therein) but which would hide it from those whose persistent disobedience to known truth has deprived them of spiritual insight, and who are therefore in a condition in which they could derive no profit from a plainly stated message, and who might (strange perversity of fallen human nature) be still more hardened by it, if it were permitted to reach them.

## CONCLUSION

"We conclude, then, that in all of the typical and in most of the symbolic parables there is clearly no intent to conceal but only to reveal. However, we have seen also that in special circumstances, speaking before a mixed audience, Jesus did choose the parabolic form of teaching, not to hinder from repentance, any so disposed, but for the double purpose of concealing from unreceptive and impenitent hearts those disclosures concerning the Kingdom of heaven which were suited only to receptive and earnest hearers. In this he did but act in accordance with his own wise saying: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matt. 7:6.) These special cases, however, are the exception, rather than the rule-the rule being prophetically stated by Asaph, of the Messiah who was to come, in the text stated at the head of this article, a free translation of which reads: "I will open my mouth in parables, that I may utter [not that I may conceal] things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." - Psa. 78:2.

- *Herald*, July 1943

## The Question Box

### Matthew 25:1-13

#### *Question:*

Why is the Bride not mentioned in the Parable of the Ten Virgins? - Matthew 25:1-13.

#### *Answer:*

There are some who believe that the Bride is mentioned. According to one noted expositor the scene of the parable does not refer to the coming of the Bridegroom to receive his Bride, but to his return to his home with his Bride. Others similarly hold. Indeed some of the later translations supplement the text "to meet the Bridegroom and the Bride." In Cranmer's Bible the translation is "to mete the brydgrome (and the bryde)." The supplement, however, is wanting in the oldest manuscripts, and is rejected by the great body of authorities. It was doubtless an early note in explanation (based on what we think was a misconception) of the scene. Had the Bride been mentioned, considerable interest would have been shown in her; the parable would have required modification in a number of important respects. The virgins would have gone to meet her and the lesson of the parable would have been a different one. Looking beyond the parable to the great reality represented, we have little difficulty in understanding it to picture Christ's return to the earth for his Bride, and the condition of the five wise virgins to teach the proper heart attitude of the prospective members of the Bride class, as they make haste to welcome him.

In the conviction then that the Bride is not mentioned, we return to the question: "Why is she not mentioned in this parable?" Two reasons suggest themselves:

(1) At the time our Lord spake his parables the truth that the GospelAge Church was to be related to him as a bride to a husband had not been revealed.

(2) Even if the relationship of the Church to Christ as Bride to Husband had been taught and had become well understood, it would have detracted from the Master's main lesson in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, to have mentioned her there.

Without doubt the Bridegroom of this parable represents our Lord. He is also the King's Son for whom, in the parable of the Marriage Feast (Matt. 22:2), the King (Jehovah himself) has prepared a nuptial feast at his house. But neither in that parable nor in this one is the Bride mentioned—apparently for identical reasons.

As a matter of fact, nowhere in the Synoptic Gospels, that is to say, in the Gospels by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is the Bride of Christ mentioned. And even in the Gospel by John, the Bride mentioned by the Baptist in John 3:28, 29 was the Jewish Church or nation, not the Gospel-Age Church. The figure of the Bridegroom had been used in the Old Testament of Jehovah and his relationship to Israel. When Christ came, he came as the Father's representative, to claim this Jewish Church for his own. "And his own," we read, "received him not." - John 1:11.

This, indeed, was the first significance of our Lord's parable of the bridechamber, although doubtless there was a deeper meaning in it (a reference to the Gospel-Age Church) which neither the disciples of the Pharisees nor the disciples of the Baptist could grasp. (Matt. 9:14, 15.)\* But in the days of our Lord's flesh there was no spirit-begotten Church to whom he could be betrothed. Not until after he had given his life for her sake; not until he had been raised from the dead by the Father's power; not until he had ascended on high, there, at the Father's right hand, to appear' in his presence on her behalf; not until the waiting followers of Jesus received the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost, was there even the nucleus of a Church to whom, as a spirit-being, he could be betrothed. Then indeed, it was, on the day of Pentecost when the holy spirit was given, that our heavenly Bridegroom betrothed the Gospel Church to himself in love.

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\* For a fuller discussion of this parable and the two related to it, see *Herald*, January 1954, pages 4-8.

To the question as to why 'the Bride is not mentioned in the Parable of the Ten Virgins our first answer, then, must be that it would have anticipated a truth not expounded until after our Lord's ascension. That it *was* taught afterwards, of course, there is abundant testimony. - Eph. 5:25, 27; Rev. 19:7; 21:2; 22:17.

We come now to our second reason as to why no mention is made of the Bride. The outstanding lesson of the parable would have been obscured. What is that outstanding lesson? Surely it is the lesson of readiness; of being always in a condition of training; of thoroughness in the preparation of our hearts and lives. If we are not ready now, we should lose no time in getting ready; if we are now ready, we must so order our lives as to remain in a constant state of readiness. This is the condition which did characterize the five wise virgins and which is to characterize the prospective members of Christ's Bride.

One other point is worthy of notice: While the lesson of readiness was of value to the disciples who heard this parable fall from the Master's lips, and while it has doubtless served to strengthen others of the household of faith during the centuries which have since unrolled, it comes with special force and has its full significance to those of the consecrated who are looking for the Bridegroom when, in the Father's Plan the time for that glorious event becomes due. For it is "then" (Matt. 25:1) -- in the time of our Lord's Parousia, in the great decisive day when the Lord reckons with his servants (Matt. 24:45-51), that this parable has its *prophetic* application. "Then"



the "Kingdom of heaven" *is not merely to be compared with* the conduct of the ten virgins, but *it shall become like* those virgins. - See also Matt. 6:8; 7:26; 13:24; 18:23 and 22:2.

In *Scripture Studies, Vol. III*, pages C91, C94, Brother Russell suggests a possible relationship which, in its prophetic application, this parable may have to the Miller movement, a suggestion which, apparently, he took from Brother Paton. (See *Reprints, pp.* R3841.) So far as we are aware he held these views to the end of his life. However, he did not do so dogmatically. With him they were only his and others' "conclusions," which might or might not prove true. Speaking of those who shared these views with him he wrote: "Whether all of their conclusions may be accepted or not, they are at least worthy of consideration, inasmuch as they furnish a new interpretation of some Scriptures not previously understood. *Whether they have the times and seasons properly divided is another matter, upon which each individual Christian should use his own judgment.*" - *Reprints, p.* R5523.

Elsewhere he wrote: "The oil, or the spirit of consecration, and its attendant light cannot be communicated from one virgin to another. Each for himself must be filled with the spirit; each must get his own supply of this oil (the Truth, and its spirit of consecration and holiness); and the cost is considerable in the way of self-denial and misrepresentation and fiery trial." (S. S. Vol. III, page C94.) And again: "The fruits and graces of the holy spirit cannot be had for the asking; they must be bought in the market of experience-they are of gradual growth, and cost painstaking care of words and thoughts and doings. It is because these fruits of the spirit are so difficult of attainment and cost such a price of self-sacrifice and sacrifice of worldly interests that they are valuable in the Lord's sight." (*Reprints, p.* R3868.) And again: "Experience in the great time of trouble will be the market in which the foolish virgins will purchase their oil." - S. S. Vol. III, page C94.

- P. L. Read.

## "Judge Not"

"Judge not; the workings of the brain  
And of the heart thou canst not see;  
What looks to thy dim eye a stain,  
In God's pure light may only be  
A scar, brought from some well-won field,  
Where thou wouldst only faint and yield.

"The look, the air, that frets thy sight,  
May be a token that below  
The soul hath closed in deadly fight  
With some internal, fiery foe,  
Whose glance would scorch thy smiling grace,  
And cast thee, shuddering, on thy face.

"And judge none lost-, but wait and see,  
With hopeful pity, not disdain;  
The depth of the abyss may be  
The measure of the height of pain  
And love and glory that may raise  
This soul to God in after days."

## Recently Deceased

Bro. Joseph Heinen, Long Beach, Cal. - (Jan.)  
Bro. A. W. Hurd, Deep River, Conn. - (Jan.)  
Sr. Minnie M. Lennox, Pasadena, Md. - (Dec.)  
Sr. Sadie Meek, Springfield, Ohio - (Jan.)  
Bro. Oscar Olson, Mobile, Ala. - (Dec.)  
Sr. F. Pierzchalski, Milwaukee, Wis. - (Jan.)  
Bro. H. Silkwood, W. Frankfort, Ill. - (Jan.)  
Bro. M. Visvader, Milwaukee, Wis. - (Dec.)