

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. LXVII    *September / October, 1984*    No. 5

## God's Fulfilling Purpose (CONTINUED)

*"Thy Kingdom Come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. " - Matt. 6:10.*

### 8. Times of Restitution

Times of Restitution of all things!

This "Millennial Age" is to be an age of restoration and reconstruction. The earth will be restored to its pristine beauty and fertility, and man to that original perfection and harmony with God which was enjoyed by the first human beings at the time of Eden. The object of this Kingdom of God upon earth is the conversion of all men to Christ and the establishment of everlasting righteousness. That purpose includes the resurrection of all the dead, their re-creation in new human bodies and restoration to conscious existence upon earth, in order that they as well as the living nations may share in this wonderful opportunity which God purposes to give the human race. The missionary and educational work of that Age will therefore be on a colossal scale, exceeding by far anything that has ever before been known. It would not be possible of accomplishment were it not for the fact that it will be carried on by the power of God and that all opposing and hindering influences will have been removed.

That latter fact is perhaps difficult to understand. Most people realize today that there are many powerful institutions, firmly entrenched, whose interests lie in the direction either of suppressing or actively opposing the moral uplift of the human race. By what power are these forces going to be restrained?

The same breakdown of human government that marks the ending of this present Age and indicates the imminence of the Millennial Age will be responsible also for the failure of all evil and quasi-evil institutions. Jesus declared that this present Age will end in a great Time of Trouble such as "was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:21). It is in this great time of trouble that all unrighteous human power and authority, whether political,

ecclesiastical, financial or social, will be swept away and the evil content of present human society be dissolved. It is upon the remains of that ruined world system that Christ will commence to build the edifice of His Kingdom. The outward evidence of that re-building, apparent to men who have eyes to see even before Christ Himself is manifested as having taken His power, will be the constitution in the one-time "Holy Land" of an earthly missionary nation supremely confident in the imminent revelation of the purposes of God, and ready to play its part in the evangelization of the world. Three thousand years ago the Hebrew prophets spoke of this time, when the people of Israel, purified and truly converted to God by reason of the fiery experiences through which they as a nation have passed, would stand forth to be the servants of all the world in the things of God. It was out of Israel and Jerusalem that the saving power of God first came to the world in the person and message of Jesus Christ; it will be out of Israel and Jerusalem that the saving message will come again, and this time the world, sick at last of its own failure, will give heed.

To claim that the vigorous young nation at present building the political fabric of the State of Israel is in any sense this new missionary nation which the Lord is going to use would be a travesty of the truth. The power that set up a new political entity in Palestine under President Weizmann and Prime Minister Ben-Gurion is one of the "kingdoms of this world" like its Gentile neighbors. But, unknowingly to themselves and to their neighbors, those busy workers are preparing the way for the converted and devoted people that will at a later date be manifest in that land and proclaim the law of the Lord. What is transpiring there at this present moment is a living witness to the surety of that which is coming. Vernon Bartlett, the celebrated commentator on world affairs, wrote this in 1950: *"It has been my good fortune during the past thirty years to move a good deal around the world. Israel stands out from all the other countries I have ever visited as the one with the happiest people. A miracle has happened to the Jew."* These things are being noted by farseeing men of this world, and they cannot be explained in any other way than that "this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes". - Psa. 118:23.

These signs, then; the obviously imminent breakdown and collapse of world civilization; the patent fact that without outside intervention the human race will shortly destroy itself from the face of the earth; the visible preparation now going on in God's "Holy Land" for its ultimate use as the seat of Divine government in the earth; all this, to those who will soberly consider its implication, constitutes sure and definite evidence that the long promised Kingdom of God upon earth is about to be inaugurated. Jesus promised that those living and watching-when the time became due would be cognizant of the fact. We, viewing these events in the light of Jesus' words, the foresight of the Hebrew prophets, and above all things, on the basis of God's immutable purpose, must accept the fact that now in our own generation we stand upon the threshold of stupendous world-changing events. Whether the actual transfer of power from the "kingdoms of this world" to the "kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15) comes during this present generation or the next, or is delayed even to the one after that, it is plain that the disintegrating process which marks the end of this world is well advanced and that the Divine summons to give heed to the laws of the new Kingdom may be anticipated at any time.

It is hardly to be expected that the old order will give way without a struggle. Satan will go down fighting. There are apocalyptic passages in the Bible telling in picturesque symbolism of the kings of the earth and the wild beasts of the earth gathered together to make war against a warrior named "Faithful and True" who appears from heaven riding on a white horse. The issue of the conflict is never in doubt. The evil powers of earth are defeated and destroyed and the heavenly Rider stands victorious. Whatever of opposition may be whipped up to the incoming Kingdom of Christ when the signs of its approach are much more outwardly manifest than at present, the

onward progress of the Divine program will not be delayed. God's fulfilling purpose, rolling irresistibly on to completion, will sweep all opposition from its path.

The world, then, disheartened and despairing, its whole system of life lying in ruins about it, will behold the amazing spectacle of a virile and vigorous nation appearing as it were from nowhere, in possession of the Holy Land and acknowledging leaders who will quickly become known as men of superlative qualities and truly marvellous governmental powers. Whether the world in general does or does not accept the claim made for these, that they are noteworthy men of God of past ages, raised from the dead to initiate the work of the new Kingdom, there will be no disputing the fact that they will have to obey. The moral power exerted by these men will be of such an order that humanity in general will have no choice but to give heed. And the fact that earth's new rulers will be incorruptible, just, and merciful, possessing keen insight and shrewd wisdom, and that their administration will immediately begin to restore much needed order to an anarchistic world, should without doubt quickly range many of earth's peace-loving citizens on their side.

It is difficult for men and women who have only known an order of society where right-doing is largely a matter of refraining from evil for fear of punishment at the instance of the law, to understand the nature of this new rule that will hold sway over the earth. In this our day the number of citizens who conform to laws made for the general good because they understand and sympathize with those laws is relatively small. The majority either make no attempt to understand the law or they deliberately seek to evade its penalties. The law, on its own part, is not altogether effective, for it is not always able to detect and apprehend the law-breakers; hence some are able to break the law with impunity. In the next Age, on the contrary, the psychological effect of the new principles of rulership will be to create a new respect for the law -- which will be Divine Law; the laws of Nature, the laws binding upon man.

The laws of God will be one and harmonious, working all together -- and the inherent good in man will rise more easily to the top and find a much more congenial atmosphere in which to flourish than is the case today. The tendency will be towards doing good instead of doing evil; in fact, in almost every respect in the field of human conduct the next Age will be the reverse of this. So far as the deliberate evil-doers are concerned -- for it is not suggested that all men become converts to the new way of life at once -- the administration of the new rulers, backed by spiritual forces of which the world's present princes know nothing, will apprehend the evildoer; not only before he has been able to profit by his evil-doing, but before he has been able to harm his intended victim. A ruling power that can detect crime while as yet it is nothing more than a determination in the criminal's mind, will not only fulfill the prophet's declaration that in that Age "*nothing shall hurt nor destroy,*" but will also be able to convince even the most hardened of wrong-doers that "crime does not pay."

This, then, is the general background of the Millennial Kingdom, a state of society in which righteousness will flourish, evil will be shown the hateful thing that it is, and there is complete freedom from fear because the rulers of earth will be able adequately to protect citizens who are law-abiding against those who are not. This is not the final state of the Kingdom; it would be a poor consummation of God's purpose if the world attained to a level no higher than that of a kind of benevolent concentration camp where the inmates do right because they can neither escape nor are allowed to do anything that is not right. God intends that ultimately all men shall do that which is right and take their place in His final creation voluntarily and of free and assenting will; but that high ideal can be attained only by a series of steps.

## **9. Resurrection**

It will probably be a long time before any further outwardly startling circumstance becomes obvious. A partially wrecked world containing four thousand millions of partially or almost wholly wrecked human beings will take a good deal of hard work to get on its feet again, and before there can be adding to earth's millions from the ranks of the dead, there is the matter of food and housing, and presumably clothing, to consider. There will therefore be a great setting of people to work, in the restoration The earth, the reclamation of waste land, the irrigation of deserts, the preparation of homes not only for those then living who need homes but those who are to come. All this will be an important part of the education that every man must have, but concurrently with this will be his spiritual instruction, his being made aware of the deeper principles that underlie his existence, the purpose for which God created him and the means by which that purpose is to be achieved. It is for the imparting of this instruction that God will have made ready the "Church."

With the ending of the old Age -- this present Age in which we live -- the company of Christian disciples which began in the upper room at Pentecost and concluded its earthly career in the troubles that end the Age, is gathered as a united company into the spiritual world, made like the Lord Jesus Christ inasmuch as spiritual nature is concerned, as the Apostle John said: "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:3). Being thus raised from the dead to participation in that spiritual realm, the powers and attributes appertaining to these are infinitely greater than anything known to man. But what is of first importance in the immediate connection is that these who have thus attained personal association with Christ in this work amongst mankind during the Millennial Age, are to become the servants of mankind for their instruction in the higher things of life. It comes strange at first to think of those of whom John said: "They lived and reigned with Christ" (Rev. 20:4) and Paul: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2), as being servants to men, but it was Jesus who explained the seeming paradox when He said: "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:27). Hence the outcome of a Christian life lived in patience and integrity, in doing good and speaking the thing that is right, in emulating Jesus in all things despite the sneers or pity of the unsympathetic, in suffering grief or wrong in consequence of a firm stand for right principles, is the honor of serving mankind in spiritual instruction and turning the hearts of men to Christ that they may at last see the error of their ways and, come fully into line with God's purpose.

It will not be an easy task. The mending of men's bodies and the improvement of their outward environment will be child's play compared with that inward regeneration which is vitally necessary if they are to be delivered from death and confirmed in life, reclaimed from Satan and reconciled to God. It will only be because the members of the Church have passed through that same experience themselves in their past lives that they will be able to speak and teach and urge with authority and with conviction. The work of Christ in the hearts of men in the Millennial Age will be effected by these, working on the minds of men, counseling, teaching, urging, converting men to Christ and leading them to reconciliation with God.

There will thus be a two-fold work in progress, the rehabilitation of men's bodies proceeding in step with the renewing of their minds. There is not much doubt that the latter will exercise a powerful effect upon the former; that in proportion as a man seeks intelligently and willingly to come into alignment with righteousness and yield himself more to the service of Christ, his physical organism will progress toward that perfection which empowers him to live everlastingly.

The world will therefore already be a much fairer place, and mankind already happier and living measurably at peace, when the general resurrection of the dead commences. "All that are in their graves," said Jesus, "shall hear My voice and shall come forth" (John 5:28). Some of those dead

breathed their last thousands of years ago and not one atom of their earthly bodies survives in its original form. But God who formed the bodies of the first human beings and arranged the processes of Nature to build the bodies of all who have lived since, is able to provide new bodies for these resurrected ones, even in a moment of time, if need be. There can be no doubt about this; *the dead shall return*. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust," cries Isaiah the prophet in ecstasy, "for the earth shall cast out the dead." - Isa. 26:19.

The usual objection to the literal acceptance of these plain statements of Scripture is that the earth could not support the multitudes of men and women that have lived. It is not generally realized that only in the last few centuries has this planet housed any considerable number of human beings. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of the globe was less than half of what it is now, and a century earlier it was only one quarter. Professor Julian Huxley has estimated that in the days of the Roman Empire two thousand years ago, there were less than one hundred millions inhabiting the earth. From what is known of the subject it can be confidently stated that even if man has been upon earth for as long as eight or even ten thousand years-which is the longest period allowed by responsible anthropologists aside from the "missing link" enthusiasts who still talk in terms of millions of years -all the men and women who have ever been born would, if they were raised from the dead at once, find the existing land surface of nearly sixty million square miles afford adequate space for life and sustenance, especially when it is remembered that the earth is to be made far more fruitful and productive than it is at present. It does follow, of course, that the further propagation of the human species will cease.

The purpose of God in endowing human beings with procreative powers is revealed in the Book of Genesis to be entirely and solely for the adequate peopling of the earth, and when that object has been achieved it is but reasonable to expect that those powers will atrophy and disappear. The force of God's original declaration: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help [companion] meet [fitting] for him" (Gen. 2:18), and His subsequent ordaining the normal condition of perfect ideal human life, is not invalidated by the fact that children will no longer be born. The story of Eden enshrines the principles of Divinely ordained human society, and the ultimate completion of God's purpose will surely witness the ideal companionship instituted in Eden and so quickly marred and destroyed, restored in its fulness never again to be disturbed.

By the time that the earth is ready to receive its dead back to life, and to feed and shelter the myriads who have been sleeping in the grave waiting for this day, men in general will have got much more accustomed to the idea. In all probability it will not be necessary to ask, as did the Apostle Paul on a certain historic occasion (Acts 26:8): "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?". There will have been so many signal manifestations of Divine power at work in the world that there will no longer be any real denial of the possibility of such things. There will be a great many who will have given themselves wholeheartedly over to the furthering of the interests of this new Kingdom upon earth, who will enthusiastically prepare for and receive the newcomers from the grave as they return, furnishing them with food and clothing, explaining to them the meaning of their re-awakening, how that the long nightmare of sin and death is past, and that God now calls all men to righteousness and life.

Every family, every individual, will have loved ones, over whose death they had mourned in the past. It may well be that the resurrection will be in the reverse order to that of death, and that the coming back of individuals will be largely in response to the prayers of those living. The newcomers to the "Millennial" earth will find familiar faces to welcome them on their awaking to conscious existence, and well-remembered voices to explain to them the meaning of the new conditions in which they will find themselves.

In harmony with this presentation the Bible, rightly understood, is quite clear upon the present state of the dead; that they are asleep awaiting the resurrection, not spending the interim period between death and resurrection in a state either of conscious joy or conscious wretchedness. Mediaeval theology has been seriously at fault here in failing to disentangle the plain teaching of Jesus and His Apostles, based on the equally plain teaching of the Old Testament, from that mass of Greek philosophy which from the second century before Christ and onward began to encumber men's beliefs regarding the state of the dead.

Modern theologians have done little to clarify this issue, largely, in all probability, from fear of disturbing established ecclesiastical tradition. That the doctrine of the immortality of the soul need no longer be considered an essential doctrine of the Christian faith is certainly a step in the right direction. From the Bible standpoint the whole of the interval between death and resurrection is a sleep for all humanity. Resurrection for humanity is to renewed and everlasting life upon the earth. Men and women have died under a variety of circumstances, some of extreme tragedy and injustice, but the awakening of the resurrection will nullify all that has gone before. In radiant expectation of future happiness and achievement in life unshadowed by fear, all who will may then throw off the yoke of the past and move forward toward their glorious destiny.

## **10. Ages of Glory**

Even this sunlit Age has its shadows. Sin will have been dethroned but not yet overthrown. God will have showered His abundant blessings upon men, removed the immoral systems that have oppressed them for so long, banished the specter of fear, caused men to dwell in peace and security, taught them to control and utilize the earth so that it brings forth abundance for all, given them intellectual and spiritual instruction so that they can, -if they will, make the utmost possible use of the life that is theirs. But with all this they will not necessarily have renounced sin, not necessarily have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, acknowledged that all they have and are is due to Him, and become reconciled to God through faith in Him. None of the blessings they enjoy can continue if they remain thus unreconciled; nay, they will not even attain to the fulness of Millennial blessings unless their hearts have been made right with God.

The law pronounced so long time ago: "the wages of sin is death," stands as an immutable principle which can never be abrogated. The very basis upon which God's universe is built demands that righteousness, and only righteousness, shall endure eternally. That which is evil, sinful, basically opposed to the Divine principles that govern continuing life, must, even though it endure uneasily for a time, eventually pass out of existence. No power in all creation can preserve it. It follows therefore that the man whose heart is sinful, who deliberately sets himself against the forces that are making for righteousness in God's new world, must himself suffer the fate that was expressed by the prophet Ezekiel half a millennium before the Christian era: "the soul that sinneth, it shall die!" - Ezek. 18:4.

A little thought will suffice to convince that the man who deliberately refuses to take his place as a citizen of the world, to discharge his due obligations and assume his share of the world's work, fulfilling the Divine injunction to love his neighbor as himself, acknowledging his Creator and God as the One in whom he lives and moves and has his being (Acts 19:28), can be a source of happiness neither to himself nor others. Such a man, exercising to the last the inalienable right of free will with which his Maker has endowed him, can resist God to the end, and turn resolutely away from every endeavor God makes for his conversion. We may be quite sure that not one such individual will be left to incur the logical sequel to his elected course until God has exhausted every persuasive influence within His power to win the obdurate one from the error of his way.

But if God at last turns aside, it can only be because the case is hopeless. He will not coerce the will and condemn the unhappy man to an eternal life from which he cannot escape, and the conditions of which he resents and cannot endure. God, who holds in His hand the breath of every living thing (Job. 12:10) will-sadly, we may be sure-allow sin to bear its final fruitage in that man's life and the shades of eternal sleep to close round him.

It is hard to think that, with all the incentive to righteousness characterizing the Millennial Age there will be many such. Time will prove, but that the Scriptures state the principles upon which alone everlasting life may be attained there can be no question; and that eternal death must inevitably be the portion of all who, after full and fair opportunity, refuse to accept the Lord Jesus and conform to the Divine laws, the Scriptures are equally emphatic.

So, with the passing of the last of sinners, there comes the end of sin. Men will have been so fully tested and confirmed in their allegiance to God by their long experience, of sin in the first life and righteousness in the second, that there need be no fear that sin will raise its ugly head again. Satan, the arch-enemy of God and man, will trouble humanity no more. The last book of the Bible in one of its parabolic utterances, speaks of a final attempt to deceive the nations at the end of the Millennial Age. It is an obscure little passage but it is clear upon one thing; that the sequel to the attempt is the destruction of that last trace of evil in the earth. From that time and forward all things, on earth as in Heaven, are "holy unto the Lord." The prospect before men will be one of progressive and never-ending increase in knowledge and experience and intense joy in the continuance of everyday life under conditions of idyllic happiness.

So will the centuries pass, whilst the earth grows ever fairer and more beautiful and mankind attains to a better and more complete understanding of the message of Jesus Christ and the goodness of God. The days of evil will slip away into the background -- never forgotten, an imperishable recollection of the terrible consequences of sin, but no longer having power to hurt and destroy. The song of the angels at Christ's birth -- "peace on earth, goodwill among men"-will be realized in fact at last. Human beings will look upon each other, fair of form, virile of body, magnificent examples of the creative power of God. Conscious of the eternity of supremely happy life that is before them, they will rise at every dawn to prosecute with unflurried minds the occupations and pursuits to which they have set themselves. The world's work will continue-men will till the soil and reap the fruits of their labors; they will foregather for the study and practice of arts and sciences which will always have something new to reveal; they will travel the world and rejoice in the varied glories of Nature and live their lives in absolute peace and harmony with one another and with God.

Will then the earth abide for ever? The Bible says it will, that God formed not the earth in vain, but intended it to be inhabited. (Isa. 45:18.) One who appraises at its true worth the marvellous coordination of natural processes that gives us the earth as we have it today, with all its vegetable and animal wonders, so fitting and admirable a home for man, cannot but feel the apparent futility of it all if God intends eventually to destroy so much loveliness. The popular idea of the ultimate destruction of the earth is based firstly, upon mediaeval theology, which not only placed undue emphasis upon the lurid symbols of certain Biblical books describing the "end of the world," but also regarded all material matter as inherently evil and fit only for ultimate destruction-and secondly, by physical science which explained the constitution of the universe by a set of theories which demanded the eventual destruction of the earth -- either by freezing or by fire! -- and indeed, of the entire universe as far as it was then known.

Physical science, as well as the science of the Word of God, has taken great strides since, and the present conclusions of scientific investigators go much farther than did those of their predecessors

to corroborate the purposes of God revealed in the Bible. It is considered by many scientists nowadays that the universe so far from hastening towards an "end," is in fact capable of continuing indefinitely by its own processes of converting matter into radiation and radiation back into matter. This is not the place in which to embark upon a prolonged dissertation upon such a subject; the purport of this treatise is to give an outline of the revealed purpose of God. But the fact that scientists, basing their pronouncements solely on what they discover from their researches, can see the possibility of the earth continuing into infinity, is enough to render any query as to the possibility of everlasting human life upon earth quite unnecessary.

Thus, at last, God's purpose is fulfilled. The earth will continue, the eternal home of supremely happy human beings, satisfied with their lot and living their lives in complete harmony with the laws that God has ordained for their well being, always finding new heights to scale and new fields to explore in the continually opening vistas of human experience. The heavens will be the eternal home of those from amongst mankind who in this present Age have been Christian disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, their mission of reconciling men to God during the Millennial Age successfully completed. The angelic hosts, spectators through many long centuries of this drama that has been worked out on earth, will continue to occupy their ordained position before God. This earth, a speck only in the immensity of God's material creation, will have become what He always intended it to be, and its citizens, perhaps -- who knows? -- forerunners of other intelligent material beings on other planets likewise devoted to the worship and reverence of God.

It is idle to speculate on the possibilities that lie in the eternal ages of the great Beyond; the Bible takes us to the completion of the Divine purpose with mankind on earth and leaves us there. It may be that because God is essentially a Creator there will never be any end to His creating. Of one thing we may be sure; evil, once overthrown and banished, its lessons experienced and placed on record for the instruction of all reasoning creatures for all time, will not raise its head again. From the time that the Divine purpose with man has been completed at the end of the Millennium, it will be true that "everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord," and there will be no discordant voice in all His wide domain.

It is just wishful thinking? Is all this but a kind of mental sop, a beautiful dream, wherewith to dull the senses to the harsh realities of today, a means of refusal to face the grim inevitable destiny against which heart and mind cries out in impotent despair? BY NO MEANS! *These things shall be!* God has been silent, screened from the vision and the sense of men, approachable only by those who have sincerely desired to know Him and have been prepared to devote their lives to His service and to die for the sake of His ways if need be. But He has nevertheless been working ceaselessly and tirelessly for the ultimate good of all men. The record of His work as well of His plans is found in the Bible, but here again, only the sincere and earnest of heart are able to read its pages aright and understand them.

God is calling all such now, today, to give themselves to Him through the channel of faith in, and acceptance of, Jesus Christ our Savior and Leader, and He will then assign them some position and work in the execution of His fulfilling purpose. It was in the realization of that call that the Apostle Paul entreated: "I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice ... and be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:1, 2). That is the call still. If you who read these lines, decide that they are a reasonable solution to the apparently insoluble enigma of God's seeming failure to deal with evil, that here is the explanation of the mystery of His dealings with mankind, then consider carefully within yourself whether you too will not come closer to God, yielding yourself in glad submission to the Lord



Jesus Christ. In so doing you might yourself play some part in bringing about the realization of God's Eternal Purpose.

*(Conclusion)*

*- A. O. Hudson*

## The Holy Spirit

*"Now we have received ... the spirit which is of God." - 1 Cor. 2:12.*

Three simple words. By their meaning we gain most of what we know and understand about the Creator, our God and Father. Three short words. They describe so much, but while brevity does not make their meaning clear, were the words more extensive their meaning would still be clouded.

The Holy Spirit is Jesus' promise to his faithful. "If I depart, I will send it unto you" (John 16:7). A personal gift is a thing to be treasured. It is also a thing to be used, in the manner and for the purpose intended by the giver. Will our God see us investing his spirit to his glory and honor, or will it be spent in intellectual analysis?

The Holy Spirit is a token of sonship. Paul explains this in the eighth chapter of Romans (Rom. 8:14.): "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God." Humans covet such a special relationship with God. At the cost of self deception, human imitations of the Holy Spirit's manifestations may appear to stamp God's approval upon the lives of some. "The heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer. 17:9). God's spirit cannot be counterfeit.

The Holy Spirit is a token of God's covenant; his acceptance of your sonship. The psalmist's words: "Gather my saints together unto me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psa. 50:5), describe a relationship between sacrifice and God's covenants. There is no covenant without sacrifice. God's promises to Abraham required Abraham's completed acts of faith. So also do God's promises to us.

A state of devotion to God is described in Romans 12:1. It is not a singular act of which Paul describes, saying: "I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." This is a living act. It is the state of mind which ultimately develops into the "measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Yet it is human to think that in our actions we are doing what we should do, that we are serving God. Such self-justification may prove a deceptive choice of human wisdom over God's. We may presume that our unilateral vow places an obligation upon God; if thus we vow, he must give us his Spirit; a reward for our devotion to the Savior who gave his life for us.

Purity of motive may be clouded. It is easier to view a vow in its making than in its keeping. The making of a vow is a matter of solemnity. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay" (Eccl. 5:4-7). Human wisdom may emphasize it's false profession with visible manifestations, even those of water baptism and the memorial supper of our Lord. Such would be professions of a condition which does not exist.

How does then God's Holy Spirit work in our lives? The Spirit has been described as the power of God, his influence, his inspiration. What does it mean to be influenced by God? "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-11). In order to understand someone's thoughts, they must be explained to us by the person thinking them. So too with God's thoughts, they are not understood unless one listens to God's explanations. Paul clearly shows he is not speaking of visionary or mystical experiences, but of

the things we have already received. He speaks of the words of Scripture and the mind of God revealed therein.

"If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12). This is the basis of the Holy Spirit's work in Jesus' follower's lives. If we have the confidence to trust God's discernment of our motives, we are judged according to our ability to perform, not according to the success of our actions. In measuring our possession of the Spirit of God, our "readiness of mind" takes precedence over the seeming possession of visible gifts.

Can one be "ready of mind" without distrusting one's own ideas? To come to the study of God's Word with a mind made up as to its meaning is to close our ears when he speaks. Distrust of our own ideas is one of the most difficult of human tasks. We do not speak of common human timidity, because timidity draws back from new attempts. This "readiness of mind" is the willingness to step forward, if only the hearer can be convinced. Jeremiah possessed this attitude. He begged to be excused from God's service, but he did not shut off God's words. He allowed God to convince him of his commission, even though it meant certain suffering.

A holy commitment in our minds, when exposed to the words and teachings of God, develops distrust of self. There is a slow and permanent transformation of our character. We do not grow in the Holy Spirit, unless we are affected by what we hear. Unbelievers recognized that Peter and John had learned by their submission to Jesus. "Now when they saw ... that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). The world should likewise take knowledge of us. We too have been with Jesus. Through work, word, and even through waiting, the spirit of holiness and separateness from the world should be manifest in the life of each Christian.

Listening to God suggests ultimate action. The examples of men commissioned to God's work are legion. Though multitudes illustrate the work of His Holy Spirit, yet it's influence is tested individually in each Christian life. Man is a sentient being. Our nature seems to compel us to activity. In our youth, inactivity seems wasteful. Yet, is our busy-ness a response to God's instruction, or are we acting on our own?

Those advanced in years face a different test of action. Lingering memories of active service are mixed with a longing for the strength to participate in His "work." The energy of youth will not return, so the older servant of God must find service suited to the means they now have at hand. We must remember that we are judged upon our desire to serve, even though our results are mottled, and not what we intended.

The forty years Moses spent leading the people of Israel are familiar. But not so the forty years he spent in the wilderness being prepared for God's use. Moses was as human as we. Did he wonder about the "waste" to which he put his life while he tended the flocks of Jethro? His fall from the pinnacle of Egyptian authority left him physically unoccupied. In Egypt, though he exercised authority like a king, yet he needed further preparation. This forty year overruling by God allowed him to become "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." - Num. 12:3.

God's influence is felt only by those who listen to his Word. These become more like their Father with each scripture they obey. With each lesson they learn, their likeness to God increases. God is able to alter their thoughts and their ideas. He changes their personality too, in proportion to their willingness to listen and obey. Insight and understanding come from Him. "Now are we the sons

of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be [when we reach full Christian maturity and likeness to our Father and to our Master]: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." - 1 John 3:2.

To be influenced by God's Spirit, let us willingly submit our every thought, word, act, and motive to careful scrutiny. Such self-examination comes not by human wisdom. It is the attitude of holiness, learned through experience. As God has revealed his spirit to us, let us pray for his wisdom in understanding the things we already possess. (1 Cor. 2:12.) Let us rejoice in the Spirit's witness that we are God's children, and his gracious judgment of us according to what we have, and not according to what we have not.

- P. J. Pazucha

## The Mustard Seed

*"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God." - Luke 8:10.*

The parable of the Mustard Seed is recorded in Matt. 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; and Luke 13:18-19.

Dr. William Smith, in his Dictionary of the Bible, says: "The mustard-seed was used proverbially to denote anything very minute. Travelers mention the large size the mustard-plant attains in Palestine. Dr. Thomson says he has seen the wild mustard-plant on the rich plain of Akkar as tall as the horse and its rider, and it might attain to the same or greater height in a cultivated garden. The words of the parable do not denote that the birds built their nests in the tree; the Greek word signifies 'to settle or rest upon' for a longer or shorter time."

The aptness of the Lord's comparison of the Kingdom, or Church, in its outward appearance or manifestation during the Gospel age, to the mustard-plant, is apparent as we look back upon its history. In Scriptural symbolism a tree represents the outward growth, appearance, beauty or prosperity of an individual or system, the character being represented by the fruitage. A tree bearing good fruit represents a good or righteous institution or individual; conversely, a tree with an injurious or disagreeable fruit represents an evil person or system. For example, the palm and cedar symbolize the righteous (Psa. 92:12); the bay-tree, the Adversary and his adherents (Psa. 37:35); the Vine, the Christ (John 15:5); the fig tree, the Jewish people or fleshly house of Israel (Matt. 24:32; 21:19-21; Zech. 3:10).

The outward and visible fabric of the Christian religion or church -- the nominal 'Kingdom of Heaven' -- had a very small and seemingly insignificant beginning. Christ, his Apostles and early followers organized his Church along simple and unostentatious lines. Her rites were few and unpretentious -- water immersion or baptism of believers and the yearly supper-memorial of her Lord's death -- these were all. Her servants, with the exception of her divinely appointed Lord and his twelve Apostles, were "ordained by stretching forth the hand" (in voting -- Acts 14:23) as Elders (elder-brothers), bishops (overseers), pastors (feeders, shepherds) and deacons (servants). They assumed no state, exacted no homage, and bore no worldly rank. Her members met in public halls, private homes, underground chambers or forest glades. She neither hoped for nor desired worldly honors, emoluments or praise.

## **"THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE"**

But how soon all this was changed! It is interesting and often astonishing to trace the transformation through the pages of recognized Church histories, such, for example as that of Mosheim, who is considered by the Protestants as, perhaps, the greatest and most authoritative.

He traces the rise(?) of the Church by centuries, and from his voluminous survey of conditions and developments in the early Church we quote very briefly as follows:

"First Century: The rule and standard of both faith and practice were the divine books called The Old and New Testament, which contain the revelation that God made of his will to persons chosen for that purpose, whether before or after the birth of Christ."

"The Apostles and their disciples took all possible care, in the earliest times of the Church, that these sacred books might be in the hands of all Christians, to excite and nourish in their minds a fervent zeal for the truth and firm attachment to the ways of piety and virtue."

"The method of teaching the sacred doctrines was at this time most simple, far removed from all the subtle rules of philosophy, and all the precepts of human art. The beautiful and candid simplicity of these early ages rendered such philosophical niceties unnecessary; and the great study of those who embraced the Gospel was to express its divine influence in their dispositions and actions."

"The rites instituted by Christ himself were but two in number -- baptism and the holy supper; and we cannot help observing that since the divine Savior thought fit to appoint no more than two plain institutions in his Church, this shows us that a great number of ceremonies are not essential to his religion."

"Second Century: There is no institution so pure and excellent which the corruption and folly of man will not in time alter for the worse, and load with additions foreign to its nature and original design. Such, in a particular manner, was the fate of Christianity. In this century many unnecessary rites and ceremonies were added to the Christian worship. These changes were naturally pleasing to the gross multitude who are more delighted with the pomp and splendor of external institutions than with the native charms of rational and solid piety. Both Jews and heathens were accustomed to pompous and magnificent ceremonies in their service. They naturally regarded with contempt the Christian worship because it had no temples, altars, victims, priests, and was devoid of those idle ceremonies that rendered their service so striking. To remove then, in some measure, this prejudice against Christianity, the bishops thought it necessary to increase the number of ceremonies, and thus to render the public worship more striking to the outward senses."

"Another cause of the multiplication of ceremonies was the adoption by the Christian doctors, of the Jewish titles of their sacerdotal orders. The aspiring clergy thought proper to claim the same rank and station, rights and privileges, as were conferred by those titles under the Mosaic dispensation. Hence the rise of tithes, first-fruits, splendid garments and other circumstances of external grandeur."

"The profound respect that was paid to the Greek and Roman mysteries and the extraordinary sanctity that was attributed to them were additional circumstances that induced the Christians to give their religion a mystic air, in order to put it upon an equal footing, in point of dignity, with that of the Pagans. The custom of teaching their religious doctrines by images, actions, signs and

other representations, which prevailed among the Egyptians and other Eastern nations was another cause of the increase of external rites in the Church."

"Third Century: The face of things now began to change in the Christian Church. By imperceptible steps the ancient method of ecclesiastical government degenerated toward the form of a religious monarchy, for the bishops aspired to higher degrees of power and authority. This was soon followed by a train of vices which dishonored the character and authority of those to whom the government of the Church was committed. Many were sunk in luxury and voluptuousness, puffed up with vanity, arrogance and ambition, possessed with a spirit of contention and discord and addicted to many other vices. They appropriated to their evangelical function the splendid ensigns of temporal majesty; a throne, surrounded with ministers, exalted above his equals the servant of the meek and humble Jesus, and sumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and minds of the multitude into an ignorant veneration for this usurped authority. The effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the sacred order."

### **THE DEPTHS OF SATAN"**

"Fourth century: An enormous train of different superstitions were gradually substituted for true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution proceeded from a variety of causes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity which the generality of mankind have toward a gaudy and ostentatious religion, all contributed to establish the reign of superstition upon the ruins of Christianity."

So, step by step, does history record the growth of that system or fabric, of many branches and vast and intricate structure, known collectively as Christianity; but all of which traces its origin to the simple ordinances of Jesus and his Apostles, instituted only as an outward reminder and symbol of unseen higher things. And all of this do we see foretold in the parable of the mustard-seed and its growth; the tiny seed has become a great tree, and the birds of the air have lodged therein and defiled it. Our Lord himself gives us the key to this symbolism (Mark 4:4, 15); the birds of the air represent Satan, the "prince of the power of the air" and his fellow-demons. Other prophets than our Lord foretold the same conditions, using the same symbols: "As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great and waxen rich.... A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof? Flee for safety out of the midst of Jerusalem ... evil looketh forth from the north, and a great destruction." Existing systems are defiled by false doctrines and evil spirits-of pride, selfishness, hypocrisy-and their adherents do not want a change-a reformation -they "love to have it so." "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird." etc. - Jer. 5:25-6:1, Rev. 18:2-8.

The fruit of the mustard-tree has no food-value; it is acrid and disagreeable, and in quantity, a violent irritant. Thus does the Lord illustrate the fruitage of an apostate Church. The great mustard-tree system yet lives and harbors her defiling crew, and produces her evil fruit. Today, as throughout the Age, she persecutes and maligns those who denounce her errors and decline to support her system. Today, as yesterday, her prophets and priests attempt to suppress all who dare oppose their rule, demanding, "What authority have you to preach? Who ordained you? To what orthodox (i.e., recognized by us) denomination do you belong?"

"What will ye do in the end thereof?" Let the inspired Word answer: "Evil looketh forth from the north, and a great destruction." The north is the symbolic direction from which emanates divine power. (Psa. 75:6, 7; Isa. 14:12-14.) "And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees; every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" (Luke 3:9-11). The axe still lies at the root of the trees awaiting the coming of him who has the ability and authority to wield it. That one is the Christ -- one body, having many members. The 'Axe' is elsewhere referred to as a sword -- "in readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience shall be made full." When the last member of the Church Invisible -- "whose names are written in Heaven" -- shall have finished his painful course with joy and been exalted to union with his Head and fellow-members in the glory of the spirit-world -- then, ah! then the Axe will be raised and the great mustard-tree system of error, selfishness and deceit be cut down and burned u in the fire of the great "time or trouble;" and then the New Jerusalem be seen to come down from God out of Heaven, to rule over, bless and uplift all of mankind who are willing and obedient to the original likeness of their Maker. "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven." Amen!

- H. E. Hollister

## An Interesting Question

Exodus 24:9-11-these verses read as follows:

"Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

### *Question:*

In these verses the statement is made that "they saw God ... the God of Israel." How is this to be understood in harmony with John's statement in John 1:18, where it is written: "No man hath seen God at any time."

### *Answer:*

The Exodus passage must be understood as a vision in which a representation of God and his glory was seen. John's statement, on the contrary, is a literal statement of fact.

The impossibility of human beings seeing God with their natural eyes is plainly stated by other New Testament writers and is attested also in the Old Testament. Our Lord Jesus himself, in his conversation with the woman at the well, recorded in John 4:24, referred to God as a Spirit; that is to say, as a Spirit-being.

The statement of John (John 1:18), that "no man hath seen God at any time," is repeated by John in his First Epistle, chapter 4, verse 12 (1 John 4:12), in identical words. In Colossians 1:15, Paul speaks of the "invisible" God. In 1 Tim. 1:17 Paul writes: "Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, *invisible*, the only wise God." In that same Epistle, chapter 6, verse 16, he tells us that our Lord Jesus also, as well as the Father, "dwelleth in the light which no man hath seen, nor can see." The writer to the Hebrews states in chapter 11, verse 6 (Heb. 11:6) that "he that cometh to God must *believe* that he is." These words imply that God's existence is not possible to establish

by an appeal to any or all of our five senses. We cannot see, hear, taste, touch, or smell Him. If we would draw near to God, we must do so by faith; we must *believe* that he is. This same writer, in the same chapter, verse 27, (Heb. 11:27) tells us concerning Moses, that "he endured as seeing Him who is *invisible*. "This fully agrees with the word of God to Moses himself, recorded in Exodus 33:20: "Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me and live."

How, then, is the Exodus passage (Ex. 24:9-11) to be understood? We reply: It was a vision. That which was seen was a representation of God and his glory. In examining the vision we find that except for the mention of his "feet", no description is given of the God of Israel whom they saw. The entire description is concerning the pavement under his feet, which is said to be of a sapphire stone. This description is identical with the description of the throne of God given by the Prophet Ezekiel. In chapter 1, verse 26 of his prophecy (Eze. 1:26), Ezekiel writes: "There was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." Because of this similarity between the throne described in Ezekiel's vision and the description of the "pavement under His feet" in the Exodus passage, it is probable that there, too, as in the vision given Ezekiel, God appeared as a man. In neither case, however, would it be the person of God that was seen, but merely a representation of God.

The conception of God as possessing human attributes and affections underlies every reference to him throughout the Scriptures. In view of the fact that man was originally created in the image of God, it is not to be wondered at that our conception of him is as though he were like us, except, of course, very much grander and higher. Our Lord Jesus taught us to look up to God as our heavenly *Father*. The only way we could do this is to conceive of Him as in some way like our earthly fathers. Our earthly fathers are able to see -- so also is God. Hence we think of Him as possessing eyes. Our earthly fathers are able to hear --so can He. Hence He possesses ears. And so, throughout the Scriptures He is represented as like a human being in that He possesses a hand, an arm, nostrils, feet, voice, etc. (Josh. 22:31; Jer. 32:17, 21; Exod. 15:8; Nahum 1:3; Gen. 3:10.) Like a military leader. He "musters His host" to battle. (Isa. 13:4) He "makes bare His holy arm" (Isa. 52:10). In Genesis 3:8 He is represented as walking in the garden. The High-Priest was instructed to bless the nation in these words: "The Lord make his face shine upon thee." (Num 6:25). He is said to have spoken unto Moses "face to face." (Exod. 33:11.) After wrestling until the breaking of the day with a man, Jacob said: "I have seen God face to face" (Gen. 32:30). These' expressions are all figurative. They describe the vivid impression experienced by the persons concerned. They were all associated with outstanding events in their lives or in the life of the nation.

In the case of those who "saw God" in Exodus 24:9-11, the vision given them came in connection with an extremely important event. The previous verses show that it was in connection with the giving of the Law Covenant. How appropriate that the leaders of the nation should be given a vision of God at such a time, while they were engaged in eating and drinking the covenant-meal!

- P. L. Read



## Love

*"So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is Love. "* - 1 Cor. 13:13. R.S.V.

How can we recognize Divine Love in ourselves? Love is an element that can never be forced. If the thunderstorm could speak with the voice of mortals and were to say to us, "Love me, or I will crush you with my power," that would not make us love the thunderstorm. If the North Wind could speak and were to say, "Love me or I'll blow you into the ocean," that would not make us love the North Wind. If some tyrannical potentate were to try to force our love under pain of incarceration or death, he could not possibly succeed, because love is incapable of being coerced. When springtime comes to the world, with all its glory of leaves and flowers and springing grass and clear blue skies, with singing birds, with murmuring of streams, breezes filled with fragrance, and that sweet, invigorating atmosphere that causes us to revel in the luxury of sensation; ah, then no one needs say to us, "You must love the spring time."

When the roses bloom again and the lilies lift their bright chalices to catch the golden caress of the sunbeams, no one needs to tell us to love these beautiful flowers. When some little child smiles up into our face from its crib, no one needs to exhort us to love the little child. Such things as these we love freely, naturally, spontaneously, joyfully, and because we can't help doing so. And the same is true of us in our relationship to God, only in a higher, nobler and holier sense. When we come to know what God is, how that all we have hoped or dreamed or imagined or conceived of goodness exists in Him in its very quintessence, in the very highest degree of its excellence; then we must love God. We love Him because we can't help doing so. As the hart pants for the water brooks, and upon finding the crystalline, pellucid stream, bends down and drinks and drinks to the absolute satiety of its being; even so, wrote the bard of Israel, "pants my soul for Thee, O God." So we drink a full draught at the great eternal well-spring of love divine.

And love has certain properties that are inseparable from it. One of these is bountifulness. God Himself is remarkable for this. He might have made just one kind of tree but He made many hundreds of different kinds. He might have made just one color, but He made all the colors of the rainbow. Supposing He had made everything blue -sky, houses, earth, water etc., etc. -surely man would also have become blue. When building the human body, He set up a magnificent framework of 206 bones, and endowed man with wonderful muscularity, endurance and powers of nobility. He constituted the human eye the most wonderful camera on earth. Here the retina picks up the rays of light and the optic nerves transmit them to the brain and we have the sensation of sight.

When we consider the ear of man, we find another marvelous apparatus. Here the tympanic membrane gathers the sound waves and the auditory nerves pass them along to the brain, and we can hear. In the throat we have the vocal chords, and we can transmit, by means of the voice, the most metaphysical thing in the world, thoughts manufactured in the gray matter of the brain.

God might have made us one armed, but He gave us two arms. We also have two feet. The sense of smell is wonderful, so is that of feeling. Then we enjoy our bodily operations. It is a pleasure to see, hear, to smell, breathe, to eat, to lie down when tired, and when we are in a state of good health, even work is enjoyable.

Jesus Christ may be regarded as the most altruistic being that ever walked this earth. He, too, was bountiful in the highest degree. The simple record of His life says, "He went about doing good." His miracles were not whimsical, but were performed at the call of humanity's needs. Therefore

he was a great humanitarian. One evening He was followed to a desert place by a vast throng of people. His disciples wanted Him to send the people away that they might go into the villages to buy food, but He said, "Give ye them to eat. And then He performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes. We know not how this was done, but it was an exhibition of divine power. Could the disciples have looked behind the scenes, they might have seen angels working on the job.

When someone had neglected the ministry of washing the disciples feet -- a custom of the times-- Jesus performed this service. When the lame, the sick, the halt and the blind came to Him for aid, they came not in vain. His benefactions were not confined to a chosen coterie of friends. We are told that, "He had compassion on the multitude, for they were as sheep not having a shepherd." The highest benevolence was manifested by Him throughout the course of His earthly career.

Those who have espoused the tenets of Christianity should likewise be altruistic. They should daily endeavor to make application of this Golden Rule and do to others as they would have others do to them. Jesus defined the law of Israel as love for God, and love for one's neighbor." He told the story of the good Samaritan. A Jew fell among thieves who robbed and left him for dead. A Priest and a Levite passed him by and then a Samaritan ministered to him and saved his life. "Now," said the Master, "Who was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?" "He that had compassion on him." And our Lord said, "Go and do thou likewise."

From the epistle of James we take the following: -- "If there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, 'Sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'Stand there, or sit under my footstool,' are ye not partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? What doth it profit my brethren, though a man say he bath faith, and have not works, can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked or destitute of daily food, and one of you say, 'depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled,' notwithstanding, ye gave them not those things that are needful to the body: what doth it profit? Even so, faith, if it have not works is dead, being alone, Yea, a man may say, 'Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works and I will shew thee my faith by my works.'- Ye see then that by works a man is justified and not by faith only. -- For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead." - James 2:2-5, 14-18, 24, 26.

### **"WHAT WOULD YE HAVE DONE?"**

We read the story of the life of Jesus. The simple narrative makes a tremendous appeal to the heart. We marvel that such a person was eventually turned down and put to death. We feel sure that we ourselves would not have treated Him so. Oh, so many things we think we would have done for Him. We would have shown Him friendship and love all along the way. Suppose that Jesus were to visit me today, to visit us, and put to us this personal question, "What would you have done for me had you lived on earth when I was here?" Perchance we would say, "Well, Lord, I would have made a home for you." No doubt, then, He would reply, "Ah, that would have been fine, for I had no home of my own. What else would you have done?"

"I would have helped you bear the cross to Calvary."

"You would? Well, only one man did help Me, and he was compelled to do so. But it is a grand thought you have, that you would have assisted in such a way. What else would you have done?"

"Why, Lord, I would have breathed words of love and of sympathy to you when you were on the cross, to the very last moment of your life."

"Ah, that would have been wonderful. You see, no one actually did such a thing as that. But you really think you would have done those things?"

"Yes, Lord, I think so."

"But you are not sure. That is, not confidently sure."

"No, -- not quite sure."

"Well, then, I'll tell you how you can be sure. If you would have done these things for me when I was on earth, you are doing these things today for those about you. To be sure you can't do them for me personally because I don't need them. I am now invested with a glory that you know nothing about. But down on this earth where you dwell there are persons whom I love, and whatever you do for them, I'll reckon as having been done for me. If you would have made a home for me, you are making a home for them. If you would have assisted me, you are assisting them. Therefore, you need no longer guess, but can know beyond the possibility of a doubt exactly what you would have done for me."

While on earth, Jesus employed some wonderful parables in the teaching of the truth. Among these He gives the following: --

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all his holy Angels with him, then shall he sit on the Throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungered and ye gave Me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink, I was a stranger and ye took Me in, naked and ye clothed Me, I was sick and ye visited Me, I was in prison and ye came unto Me.' Then shall the righteous answer Him and say, 'When saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee, or thirsty and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in, or naked and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick or in prison and came unto Thee?' And the King shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'" - Matt. 25:31-46.

The principle of this parable applies in any age. There are persons who feel that they would like to do a lot for God, and yet they neglect the opportunities of serving others, and these golden opportunities may knock at the door only once, and may then depart, and not return. Oh that we might see them, and recognize them and grasp them while the precious moments are flying and ere it is too late.

Sooner or later men will have to learn the lesson of LOVE. One time an artist yearned to confer some benefit on the human family. He thought he might best express himself in the painting of mountain scenery. But he felt that this work was not a success. Then:

He would try rural fanes  
Where sol's soft splendor steals,  
Have these to send his mind abroad  
Assist the world in its search for God,  
And inspire to high ideals.

But again he was disappointed.  
"What lack I now?" he cried,  
"I need the Master-key!  
Ah, here it is, the key is LOVE.  
I'll paint as an angel would paint above  
This wondrous mystery."

Not failure again? Yes, again. Then a dream came with the night. The Master Artist appeared and asked him what he desired to do.

"I would paint LOVE," he cried.  
"Paint LOVE? You grasp a whole,  
'Tis LOVE alone paints LOVE, my son,  
And LOVE'S work must in you be done  
Ere you can reach your goal."

He woke and pondered LOVE,  
On what the Master spoke.  
"'Tis LOVE alone paints LOVE." He knew  
The word was timely and most true.  
He bowed beneath the stroke.

And then came fell disease,  
Strength left his wasted frame.  
Lone weeks he spent, in doubt and dread.  
Friends of his former days had fled.  
And then a new friend came.

This friend sat by his couch,  
And life's great lesson taught  
Brought all the things of highest worth  
Things that would make a heaven of earth  
Within the spell he wrought.

Then from his couch arose  
The artist, labored fast,  
And day by day the picture grew,  
And day by day the artist knew,  
Success was his at last.

And his friend beheld at length  
The product all complete,  
And his voice was stilled as he gazed upon  
That gem, in the light of the morning sun  
That bathed the artist's feet.  
Then, 'Tis for the world," he cried,

"Though it comes from source above."  
And that word was true, to the world it went,  
And millions came, with purpose bent  
To see the thing called "LOVE."

And strong men shook with shame,  
And torrents of tears there remained  
For sin and weakness; and vows were made,  
And hope springs up in new robes arrayed  
Because of the secret gained.

This tale is old, not new,  
It bears this fact in store,  
He who the hearts of men would reach,  
Must possess the truth he fain would teach,  
And that stands forever more.

Some one has said that kindness is a LOVE gauge that the whole world can understand. That is to say, LOVE is the universal language. Professor Drummond said, "LOVE is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is rich, strong, manly; vigorous expression of the whole Christian Character,-the Christian's nature in its fullest development; and the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practice."

"LOVE itself cannot be defined. Light is something more than the sum of its ingredients-a glowing, dazzling, tremulous ether. And LOVE is something more than all its elements-a palpitating quivering, sensitive, living thing. By synthesis of all the colors, men can make whiteness, they cannot make light. By synthesis of all the virtues men can make virtue; they cannot make LOVE. We brace our wills to secure it. We try to copy those who have it. We lay down rules about it. We watch, we pray, but these things alone will not bring LOVE into our nature. LOVE is an effect, and only as we fulfil the right conditions will we have the effect produced.

"Contemplate the LOVE of Christ, and you will have LOVE. Stand before that mirror, reflect Christ's character, and you will be changed into the same image. There is no other way. You cannot love to order. You can only look at the lovely object and fall in LOVE with it, and grow into likeness to it. LOVE begets LOVE. It is a process of induction. Put a piece of iron in the presence of an electrified body, and that piece of iron, for a time will become electrified. It is changed into a temporary magnet in the presence of a permanent magnet, and as long as you leave the two side by side they are both magnets alike. Remain side by side with Him who LOVED us and gave Himself for us, and you too will become a permanent magnet, a permanently attractive force. That is the inevitable effect of LOVE."

When we get LOVE into our lives, we become effluent like the sun. When LOVE is strong enough, opposition goes down before it. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." We cannot come in

contact with those who possess LOVE without feeling its power. And in the very nature of things, every kind word bestowed upon the suffering souls around us reacts upon us so as to increase our LOVE. The same is true of every kind deed we do. The Master of LOVE did not withhold His benefactions even from publicans and sinners. The needs of others afforded Him numberless opportunities for service, and He grasped these opportunities through the swiftly passing days.

When we get to the end of life's journey, may we feel that we have not lived in vain. It will not be the dollars we have earned, or the fine houses we have reared, that will help us then. But if we have preserved our faith in God, and our love for him, and for our fellow men, and if we have helped to lighten their load, then we shall indeed be blessed, "soothed and sustained, by an unfaltering trust, approach our grave as one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

- *Walter Sargeant*

## **Entered Into Rest**

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