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## "Till He Come"

*"For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."*  
-- 1 Corinthians 11:26 by: J. T. Read

This simple memorial of the Savior's sacrifice on our behalf is the one request he made of *us as far as* ceremonial observances. We are forced, therefore, to give it an importance above its typical significance. Jesus' death on the cross was the climax of an experience that began when he volunteered for the heavenly Father's service. This service was revealed to him as necessary for man's redemption.

Imagine the consternation of the heavenly hosts as they witnessed the edenic tragedy. Lucifer, violated his trust, seduced the earthly pair who had been created in God's image and caused them to disobey the divine will. Through that disobedience the heavenly host watched man lose all hope of a continuing life and its blessings. So wonderful had been this earthly creation that even God had pronounced it "very good", and in his talk with Job (Job 38:7) he indicated that heaven's host was delighted when the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Dare we think that they could be indifferent to earth's great drama?

Did they discuss among themselves what they witnessed? We do not know. They would surely sorrow as they beheld God's purpose apparently frustrated. Seemingly nothing was done about this "failure" -- except to let mankind perish, and Lucifer, who was now called Satan, continue deceit and destruction.

Our thoughts turn to the *Logos*, the Father's creative agent, What must he have felt? Lucifer, that marvelous and powerful being, yielded to covetousness for dominion and worked desire, rebellion, sin, and death *in* God's. perfect world?

The *Logos* enjoyed an intimate relationship with God. He had been the Father's agent in creation. This closeness gave the *Logos* reason to trust the Father's power and ability to solve this problem.

Those of limited experience with God are excusable for failing to understand. There is no reason to think that the *Logos* knew of the coming fall of man or of his part in man's rescue.

No Scriptures hint that any of God's creatures can foresee the future. The wisdom to know the end from the beginning inheres solely in the Creator. He foresaw Lucifer's rebellion and the fall of man with its six thousand year permission of evil. Redemption would be accomplished through God's son, and so his peace of mind could not be disturbed. However, the angels were unaware of these details. Likewise, the *Logos* knew nothing of what was yet to transpire. Their peace of mind would be proportionate to their trust in the Father's ability to work out his will -- regardless of sin and rebellion.

History gives evidence that the angels were not immediately enlightened about the Father's plan of salvation. Had they known his purposes, the angels would not have intervened in the antediluvian world, causing its destruction. They must have thought that they could save mankind if God allowed them to try. So God permitted their exercise of wisdom and power until the bodies and minds of men were so corrupted that it was necessary to destroy all of that race except for the family of Noah. Then the defiled angels were confined in chains of darkness (1 Peter 3:19-20; 2 Peter 2:4-5; Jude 6).

God demonstrated his wisdom in another way. He showed men and angels alike that even a government of men, under his direction and his laws, would fail to bring about a prevailing condition of righteousness and life. He allowed a nation with whom he suffered long to attempt to live in obedience to his laws. When he removed his supervision from Israel and permitted the gentile nations to do what they could for the people of earth, the results were apparent. Thus it has been demonstrated that no men, no angels, and no groups of men working in concert, even when attempting to live under divine laws, were able to restore mankind to a position of atonement with God. It is evident that men and angels will not have anything to say about the government of the age to come (Dan. 2:44; Dan. 7:13,14; Heb. 2:5).

We do not know just when the *Logos* learned that the salvation of mankind was dependent upon his willingness to sacrifice his own life. Nor do we know how soon he learned that such a sacrifice would involve *his* leaving the riches and glory of his heavenly abode in order to become a man -- taking man's place under the condemnation required by Justice. It may have followed the failure of the angels, and if it did it required a wait on the part of the *Logos* of some two thousand years for God's own time to arrive. "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." Or, it may have been just prior to the time when he "left the glory he had with the Father." In any case, it was important that he remained willing and obedient in the accomplishment of God's will --

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will O God" (Heb. 10:5-7).

What a sacrifice that was! How it demonstrated his loyal obedience to the Father. He does not appeal to his disciples. Nor does he reproach the Jews with the fact that in coming to earth to serve mankind (and Israel in particular) he sacrificed far more than mankind had ever known or possessed. We would think that he would desire some recognition for this "so great a sacrifice" on their behalf. He does not even mention it in his request for a memorial.

When he was born into this world it was to an humble position. To be sure, his birth was proclaimed by the heavenly hosts. Yet, only a few knew of this. His birth was not unduly filled

with awe or witnessed by the great ones of earth -- yea, not even those of that nation. A lowly maid in humble circumstance bore him. He grew to manhood in a community so common that later it was inquired, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" This was a man who thought nothing of associating with publicans and sinners. He attracted his followers only through his preaching of the truth and by doing good wherever he had an opportunity. Does he ask for acknowledgment in his request for a memorial? No. It is not considered, and even in his daily life he refuses to call attention to what he endured for them. Jesus points them to God's goodness and mercy, which existed on their behalf throughout their national existence. He appeals to their sense of duty, their obligation in justice, and their debt of love and gratitude for God's care over them. He gives God all the credit and glory for his own sacrifice on their behalf: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."

If only we might be as humble as Jesus! His attitude was simple: he lived to carry out God's will, in thought, in word, in deed.

If any man will do his [God's] will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him (John 7:17,18).

When he was called "Good Master" by a certain one, Jesus said to him "Why callest thou me good" (Matt. 19:16,17)? The glory which this man wanted to give to Jesus did not originate with him. Jesus was quick to show that God's goodness manifested itself in and through him.

When the worldly renowned leave memorials to themselves, they usually draw attention to some self glorifying achievement. Jesus had no such thought. He knew that he was near to the hour of his great suffering and shame. As he neared the hour of his ignominious death, for no wrong he had done, he stood unjustly accused. This was so he might provide a ransom for mankind according to the Father's will.

"The just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18)..It was this act of total self abnegation that Jesus asked us to remember. He assumed the penalty that was ours. In this he should be remembered, because by this it became possible that God could be both just and the justifier of those who would believe in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).

How does God view our Lord's suffering of the penalty that man brought upon himself? It glorifies Jesus' worthiness of the position God has given him. All who eventually obtain life through him should see him the same way. The fifth chapter of Revelation calls this to mind when we see the Lamb who is given a sealed book from the right hand of God for the purpose of opening it and reading it. All creatures around the throne begin in that scene to sing a new song:

"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us by thy blood. And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, "worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

Men see in Jesus' memorial request the depths of the suffering and shame he endured. God views it as an act of sublime love for us and a singular display of his obedience to the heavenly Father.

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:7,8).

### **As Oft As Ye Eat This Bread**

The memorial aspect of this yearly observance constitutes the primary significance behind the symbols of bread and wine. Another aspect of the observance is important to all who have entered a covenant relationship of sacrifice to suffer and be dead with Christ. In partaking of the bread and wine we also partake of something else (1 Cor. 11). We are indicating our desire to participate in his sacrifice. We cannot add or detract from the merit of Jesus. His sacrifice alone constitutes the ransom for all mankind. Yet, God has been pleased to require in the bride for his son that they participate in his sufferings if they would share in his glory.

The Atonement Day illustrates that God only accepts perfect sacrifices. In order for any child of Adam sacrifice acceptably, God has decreed that faith and obedience, demonstrated in a consecrated doing of his will, are grounds for declaring them righteous. Since it is God who justifies (Rom. 8:33), and no one dares question God, such not only have peace with God (Rom. 5:1) but they are also freed from condemnation (Rom. 8:33). Paul points out that the bodies of these believers now constitute an acceptable sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1) because of the merit of Christ's sacrifice now applied to them (Heb. 9:24). This is a living sacrifice which is holy and acceptable to God. In partaking of our Lord's memorial, we commemorate both his death and our dedication to be dead in him.

"For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." This text suffers most at the hands of its friends -- true saints who desire to faithfully proclaim his death. In the hearts of these dear ones, there was the long expectancy of his coming. Some have interpreted the "as oft" to indicate any time, or any recurring period that they choose. Others, combining the "as oft" with the statement "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." (Acts 20:7) think that the memorial should be kept weekly. We take our cue from the rule of the Passover established by God. It is the same rule which applies to the Day of Atonement and other types, that is, an annual observance near the time indicated at its institution.

### **Till He Come**

What is meant by this scriptural phrase? The words undoubtedly refer to the time of our Lord's Second Advent. Most Bible students of today who believe in the unseen presence continue to observe the memorial of his death in spite of their conviction of his presence. The answer to this question could become quite involved, and so we quote the brief words of Howard R. Bickersteth:

"Till he come"; O let the words  
Linger on the trembling chords;  
Let the little while between,  
In their golden light be seen;  
Let us think how heaven and home  
Lie beyond that -- "Till he come."

See the feast of love is spread,  
Drink the wine and eat the bread;

Sweet memorials, till the Lord  
Call us round *his* heavenly board;  
Some from earth, from glory some,  
Severed only -- "Till he come."

The second verse displays the erroneous conception of the condition of those who have died during the age. The author is evidently thinking of how the Apostle explains the time when the last members of the Body will be caught up to meet the Lord and the resurrected saints in the air (1 Thess. 4:16,17). We would agree that as long as any of the saints remain on this side of the veil of death that it would be proper to observe the memorial of his death.

"Till he come" seems to include the thought of the complete gathering unto the Lord of those who are alive and remain. It includes those members of the body who are undergoing the ripening process prior to being gathered into the heavenly garner. This agrees with Jesus' words "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29).

This event, we believe, occurs some years following the first sign of his presence as presented in Luke (Luke 12:37) and Revelation (Rev. 3:20). Both Scriptures describe a time during which our Lord will personally supervise the faithful saints in their feasting upon the Word of truth in the end of this age. The ones he serves will receive a depth of understanding that has been lacking since the days of the Apostles. Would anyone deny that there has been an extraordinary outpouring of truth recent years? God promised ancient Israel an early and a latter rain that would insure an abundant harvest -- if they would faithfully serve him (Deut. 11:13-14). James employs this figure regarding the harvest of the saints into the heavenly garner:

Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain (James 5:7).

The saints who fell asleep in death during the Gospel Age were laid away in a condition of unconsciousness. Their experience was much like that of those who died prior to the Gospel Age. Speaking of the "sons of God," the saints of this age, God says through the prophet, "I have said, ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" (Psa. 82:6,7). "Prince" Adam died for his own sin. "Prince" Jesus died as a sacrifice for the sins of others. Those saints who have been cleansed but who return to "wallowing in the mire" will die like Adam -- for their own sins. Those who faithfully carry out their consecration will die like Jesus -- not for their own sins but as a sacrifice.

There comes a time at the end of the age when death will not bring a period of sleep as in the past. Those who die will be changed instantly.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

The order in the resurrection of the saints will be first those that sleep, and then, "*We who are alive and remain*" (1 Thess. 4:14 -- 18).

What a wonderful change when our Lord shall appear,  
Oh, how precious the thought that the time is so near,

When the saints shall awake in his likeness sublime,  
And the living be changed in a moment of time.

Who can fathom the glory of that awakening, till "he come?" The Scriptures link it with the appearing of the Master and not with the secret phase of his presence. Peter says, "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 5:4). "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

This phase of the Second Advent of Christ, viewed in the light of these Scriptures, constitutes the most momentous event in the experience of the church. How will they feel, those who suddenly find themselves in, the glorified presence of the Lord, possessing immortal life? It must be beyond the ability of *mortal* man to comprehend. How can we picture that wondrous joy? We dare not think of such heights of glory, honor, and excellence save through the hope of attaining them, which is set forth so clearly as the reward for faithfulness in overcoming.

The preparation for this event is continuously stressed in the Word. It is not a preparation for an exact date, but a preparation in heart and life to live to the glory of God to the extent of one's ability. "Everyone that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." May the thought of participating in this memorial "till he come" increase our watchful diligence, and may we give heed to those things which pertain to our transformation into the image of our Lord.

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## Psalm 11

I've already run for dear life  
straight to the arms of Yahweh.  
So why would I run away when you say,

"Run to the mountains,  
the evil bows are bent -- the wicked arrows  
Aimed to shoot under cover of darkness  
at every heart open to God.  
The bottom's dropped out of the country;  
good people don't have a chance."

But Yahweh hasn't moved to the mountains,  
his holy address hasn't changed.  
He's in charge as always, his eyes  
take everything in, his eyelids  
Unblinking, examining Adam's unruly brood  
inside and out, not missing a thing.  
The good and the bad get the same test;  
if any one cheats, Yahweh's outraged.  
Fail the test and you're out,  
out in a storm of firestones  
Drinking from a canteen  
filled with hot desert wind.

Yahweh's business is putting things straight,  
he loves getting the lines straight,  
Setting us straight. Once we're standing tall,  
we can look him straight in the eye.

- Psalm 11 (from a new translation of the psalms by E. H. Peterson)

## **A Jewish Approach To the New Testament**

by: S. Sandmel from ("*A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament*")

[We hear a great deal about the merits of the Zionist movement and how it signaled the return of God's favor to the natural seed of Abraham. What all our fellow believers are waiting for, however, is their return to God -- not just individually but nationally. We quote a contemporary Jewish writer's viewpoint of the New Testament in pursuit of some insight to where the natural children stand in this process of turning to Jehovah.]

People can approach the New Testament in different ways. A Christian sees in it the source of his faith. A person of Christian background, but with no religious affiliations, may enjoy the literary flavor, especially of the Gospels. The professional historian may use the documents for the light which they throw on the details of a complex period of human history.

It is difficult, to the point of impossibility, for anyone to approach the New Testament without a mindset. The Bible, undergoing interpretation in every age, means different things in different ages. It often takes on, in the minds of readers, some associations that move it perhaps irretrievably from the original significance and purpose. Generation after generation of Christians have found the New Testament the fountainhead of its own religious convictions. In each generation, too, sincerely religious persons, following a particular bent of their own, have found in the New Testament passages that aptly support their point of view. An interpretation, here and there, has gained acceptance for its day and for succeeding years -- even when the interpretation may seem, on new examination, to have little to do with the passage in question. For the modern age possesses not only the New Testament but also a considerable heritage of various meanings about it.

Predisposition then governs every approach to the New Testament. The Christian fundamentalist believes every word to be true. The agnostic brings his doubts. The deist attempts to distinguish between the miraculous narratives which he cannot accept and ethical standards which he can.

The [New Testament] writers take for granted that the reader knows the political, social, and economic situations in the Graeco-Roman world of two thousand years ago. The New Testament often alluded to matters *of* its time as though they were crystal clear.

For our day, many passages suffer from a changed climate of religious expression, with the result that the full sympathetic response of the reader cannot be made. The outward forms of religious expression change, and the writer of a book in the New Testament relates a narrative such as that of an unclean spirit entering some swine,, fully expecting to elicit a nodding head. Such a passage raised problems neither for the ancient writer nor for the ancient reader. However, the modern man can have difficulty attuning himself to such modes of expression. Indeed, a variety of responses to such passages is bound to result, especially where belief rather than comprehension is the issue.

The New Testament is a religious book, and it was the product of a religious community which believed that it had received a heritage of God's revelation. In this sense, it is not history, though history is in it; nor a story book, though stories are in it. Rather, it is a testimony to the assumption that all things are possible to God. Therefore it is also a record of those things which it believed happened. One who shares or participates literally in the New Testament faith finds the record of certain supernatural occurrences no problem at all; but difficulties loom for him in whom even the beginning of a doubt is born.

The modern reader, of whatever background, will benefit by orienting himself to these initial problems. He will arrive more readily at an understanding of the New Testament if he keeps in mind that, whatever it may say for later days in matters of faith or reason, it is a series of voices which arise out of specific times or specific religious activities and direct their message to the people of their own time.

## The First Resurrection

*"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." - Revelation 20:6  
by: J.T. Read*

Many words, in addition to their lexicon definitions, convey a wealth of meaning so that they require pages of a dictionary to express. This is true of the word "resurrection."

"Resurrection" as defined by Webster means little more than a return to present conditions from the grave, the ultimate stage of death. The raising from the dead of the widow's son, Lazarus, and Jairus' daughter are considered to be examples of resurrection. However, the Bible points to these only as "awakenings." If it be true, as the book of Acts says (Acts 26:23), that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead ("first from the resurrection" *Diaglott*), then Lazarus did not experience "resurrection" (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20,23).

When Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb, it is said that "...he that was dead came forth." This is an example of what will occur to all men, for Jesus also says: "The hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28,29). In proof that this is not a "resurrection," note his following words: "They that have done good [come forth] unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto a resurrection of judgment."

The Greek word anastasis, rendered "resurrection," means "a restanding," and scriptural usage indicates a restoration to perfection of life and being. Anything short of this comes short of being "resurrection."

In order to offer an acceptable sacrifice for Adam and his race, Jesus had to possess life and perfection as a human being. He needed to be holy, harmless, undefiled. Adam, likewise, possessed life and perfection but coming under condemnation because of his disobedience he lost them: for himself and for his children. Since the Fall, therefore, men enter this world under the sentence of death. Death operates in them from the moment of begetting until they return to the dust from which man was made -- "Dying shalt thou die." In the light of this evidence, it must be apparent that merely coming forth from the grave does not constitute "resurrection," except in the case of those who having "done good" are immediately restored to perfection of life and being.

### Jesus' Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus must have brought great joy to the heavenly host. It is written that "...the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy..." when the foundations of the earth were laid (Job 38:7). When Jesus was born the heavenly host gave praise and glory to God (Luke 2:13,14). Beyond this, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents (Luke 15:7,10).

How much must the heavenly hosts have rejoiced when they watched the thirty three year drama of the redemptive work of the Son of God! His struggle against Satan and the forces of evil must continue until his victory over both, without deviation or slackening. How tension must have built in the heavenlies as the scene built to its climax. His opponent, Satan, resorted to every subterfuge of which he was capable, assuring that the heavenly watchers were glued to the unfolding of that marvelous story.

Those of us old enough to remember the emotional release that occurred when armistice was signed in 1918 [or any of the world treaties since then] can still feel the thrill that possessed us on that occasion. What are any of these compared to the thrill which must have rung through the heavens at the triumph of Christ! What assurance it gave that, comparatively soon, all sin, death, and opposition to God's righteousness would cease. Every creature in heaven and earth would praise and glorify God.

### **What Did Resurrection Mean to Our Lord?**

If we can scarcely appreciate the joy which will belong to those who are restored to perfect human life, how can we conceive of the joy which our Lord realized in his resurrection and heavenly exaltation? At the moment of his resurrection, he must have realized that all he had struggled for, all he had longed for was now assured. He knew that his fellowship with the Father need never again be interrupted. He had justified the Father's confidence in him and now he would be allowed to execute his Father's every wish. Excepting the Father, as we must in , every comparison, only Jesus could know the extent of his joy, for as yet there were none to share his glory.

To climax all these joys, there was the joy of the Father. Through his own resurrecting power he received into his bosom his only begotten son, the dearest treasure of his heart. How great were his joys? One can only ask whether the Creator has placed in man any possibility of feelings or appreciation which he himself does not possess? Could an earthly parent know a joy at the birth of their child that would compare with that which God felt when his only begotten son was born to his own nature and station? We cannot say, but we doubt if any but the father will ever know the depth of that joy.

### **His Resurrection -- Our Hope**

No event in creation or history can equal the importance of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is true with respect to man, with respect to the hosts of heaven, and with respect to God. We cannot express how important it was.

Blessed be that God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy, bath begotten us again unto a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3).

As we probe the divine Word, we realize that all hopes for man were dependent upon the resurrection of Jesus. Had he failed, that is, had he been proven unworthy of resurrection, all would have been lost. As we look beyond our selfish interests, we see how important Jesus' resurrection was to the overall plan of God. Had he failed to maintain his perfection the Word and purpose of God would have failed, Satan would have triumphed, and not one of the host of heaven would any longer have assurance of their continuing in life.

You may say that such a failure was not possible; God's Word never fails and his purposes will be performed. Thank God that is true! His wisdom allows him to plan according to his foreknowledge.

Jesus' triumph over sin and death was not due to the infallibility of God. Jesus' triumph lay in his complete dependence and trust in God. Had he relied upon his own strength he could have failed. Relying upon God he triumphed gloriously. We find in this no less reason to praise and honor his

name. God's power not Jesus' own that enabled him to overcome. Because of God's character and the display of his character in his Son, we have assurance of faith. With assurance comes the peace of heart and mind which such assurance gives.

### **Renewed Hope**

Jesus' disciples were stunned when he died. They believed him to be the Messiah and expected a quick fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. They witnessed many wonderful works and these indicated that he possessed greater power and grace than any leader or prophet in the history of Israel. They saw evidence of his approval by God, and their hopes ran high for the immediate establishment of the kingdom of Israel and its preeminence among all the other earthly kingdoms.

It is said that preconceived ideas blind the mind to truth. We see the truth of this saying in the lives of the disciples. Jesus told them that his kingdom was not of this earth, and that his present mission was to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Matt 18:11). He told them that he did not come to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). He prophesied his betrayal and condemnation to death, his crucifixion, and his resurrection on the third day. Their minds were so fixed on the Kingdom promises that they could not grasp what he said of sacrificing. When he was crucified, their hopes shattered. Their feelings were well expressed by the two on the road to Emmaus: "We hoped that it was he who was about to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21).

As they were convinced of the miracle of his resurrection, their hope revived. He was different! At times they hardly recognized him. Yet, they retained their hopes of an earthly kingdom. When an opportunity presented itself they asked him, Will you restore the kingdom of Israel at this time (Acts 1:6)? Jesus avoided their question, saying,

"It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:7-8).

They were to remain at Jerusalem until they were empowered from on high. When the spirit of truth would come it would guide them into all truth and show them things to come (John 16:13).

Peter wrote in his epistle of the renewed hope of life which came through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. By this time, he had long since changed his mind about the earthly kingdom. He had learned instead of the grander hope of the heavenly inheritance and the goal of immortal life in joint -- heirship with Christ. This is the goal upon which the saints have set their eyes. Until Christ came, no one had dreamed of such hope. Even today, after two thousand years have been devoted to the selecting and perfecting of those who would achieve that goal in their lives, only those who have entered that race for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus are aware of what is really taking place.

### **First: In Order and Degree**

Our text says,

"Blessed and holy is he that bath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

More than one resurrection is indicated, and the first of these is the more desirable. Why? Also, who is to be so favored?

Since Jesus was the first to be resurrected and in his resurrection he was exalted above every name in heaven and earth (excepting the Father), it follows that this resurrection would be first -- both in point of time and in degree of honor and excellence. Does anyone else take part in this resurrection? Yes. Our text is phrased in the plural form -- "these" and "they" (Rev. 20:7) -- so it must be a class that partake of this honor.

The preceding verses indicate those to which it is referring. John says,

"I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years... This is the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4,5).

The followers of Jesus who have forsaken worldly hopes in their pursuit of the heavenly inheritance compose the only class that can possibly fill this description. Paul says: "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall be also in that of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:5, Diaglott). We have been "called in the one hope of our calling..." (Eph. 4:4) and in showing how greatly this hope is to be valued he says,

"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in him ...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil 3:7-11).

Paul possessed much of what most men envy and desire. He had position, birth, and education. Having had a glimpse of the first resurrection hope, all these possessions were put aside as of comparatively little value. Not only this, he willingly endured disgrace, persecution, and suffering, considering them only "light afflictions" of short duration. In fact, he considered this hope to be of "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

From these scriptures, it should be clear that it is the faithful "called and chosen" ones that share in the first resurrection. They are called "firstfruits" to God of all his creatures (James. 1:18). Those who fail to make their calling and election sure will not share in that resurrection. They were not overcomers and hence do not inherit the right to joint heirship or rulership with him.

We believe that the majority of those who fail will be of the class often called the "great company." We think that Paul shows that the reason these fail is related to their failure to develop their character. The pattern set before us is godlikeness -- the transformation into the image of Christ. These have not overcome the world as they should -- have not excluded from their characters the proverbial elements of "wood, hay, and stubble" that are the product of this world. When they pass through that divine tribulation which acts as a purifying fire, their building [or character] suffers the loss of all that is not gold, silver, and precious stones (cf. Acts 14:22; 1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12; 1 Cor. 3:11 -- 15). This leaves them with precious little of eternal value.

Paul begs us to carry out a covenant of consecration which is to end in our death (Rom. 12:1). We are to present ourselves, now counted holy through the imputed merit of Jesus, as a living sacrifice to God. This, he says, is our reasonable service. Many who have so begun remain in bondage all their lives because of their fear of (sacrificial) death -- and this even though they have been begotten by the holy Spirit.

Like a legal contract our consecration to God must be performed. The sacrifice unto death must occur, either through faithful obedience upon the altar or through enforcement at the hands of the Lord, so that the "spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord" (1 Cor. 5:5). If we present ourselves, our great High Priest will see that our offering is consumed upon the altar of sacrifice. If we hold back, circumstances (like the "fit man" in the Jewish Atonement day sacrifices) will bring or force us into conditions which will destroy our earthly hopes. As long as we do not repudiate the foundation upon which we first began to build (Heb. 6:4 -- 8), we shall be resurrected to a less exalted position. The First Resurrection class are the members of the Temple of God. This less worthy class become the servants before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple (cf. Rev. 7; Eph. 2:21).

### **Risen With Christ**

"If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).

It is easy to think of the resurrection of the church as an instantaneous act performed by the power of God. As far as awakening out of the death -- sleep is concerned, this is true. The Apostle describes the change into a spirit body this way: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52). In another sense, our resurrection begins at the time we are begotten by the Spirit and come into Christ.

This was true of Jesus. We think of him as dying on the cross, as well he did. His crucifixion was the consummation of a sacrificial way of death which began at Jordan. During the three and a half years of his ministry, he expended his energy so that others might be restored to a measure of health. This was so literally true that at the end he was too drained of strength to carry his cross alone (Luke 8:46; 23:26).

As Jesus began dying as a human, he began to live *as* a new creature. This explains how it could be written of him,

*For* it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10).

Jesus was a perfect man. No other sacrifice would have been acceptable to God on our behalf. As a new creature being prepared for the high; priesthood of the world, he needed to be developed or "perfected" along other lines. To this, the Hebrews writer refers:

Though he were *a* son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:8,9).

We are factually correct, then, when we say that his resurrection began at Jordan when he was begotten and it was consummated when he was raised *from* the tomb.

The same idea applies to the church. "If then, you were raised, with the Anointed One, seek the things above, where the Anointed One is sitting at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1, Diaglott). Again,

But God, *who is rich* in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when *we* were dead in sins, bath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved) and bath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:4,5).

It is the grace of God that saved us -- delivered us -- from the curse which divine justice held against all sinners until Jesus satisfied the claims of that justice. The Apostle warns us against continuing in sin (continuing to 'please the flesh) *so* that we may continue receiving the grace of God (Rom. 6:1). It must be recognized that at our initial approach to God we professed an abhorrence for sin and a desire to be rid of it. It would be inconsistent, then, if we permitted sin to rule our minds and bodies. We must prove our sincerity by a spiritual walk and not by pleasing the body.

In begetting us as new creatures, God did not remove our freedom of will. Rather, he responded to our professed yearnings. He anointed us with the oil of his spirit and expects that we, of our own volition, will desire that anointing of the spirit to remain within us.

Be not fashioned according to this world: but become transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2).

At the time God accepts anyone into Christ, it is possible for him to give them perfect bodies in which to operate. That he chooses not to do so is evidence that he has some better plan in mind. The working out of his will in us involves our learning to deal with the sinful tendencies we have developed and the imperfections of body and mind with which we were born. By renewing our minds and transforming our character -- a gradual "resurrection" work -- we will be prepared for the instantaneous change at our death into the glory of a spiritual body.

There remains the final paradox. This work proceeds in proportion to an individual's faith. The effort that accomplishes it is that which the individual puts forth. Nevertheless, the work is God's work: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

## Jesus in the Midst of Israel

*"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you." - Acts 2:26 by: Alex Kirkwood*

Our Lord Jesus Christ's life was as public after his baptism as it had previously been private. He appeared among men, as Isaiah said, like a bright light shining in the midst of blackness (Isa. 9:2). "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matt. 4:16).

Our text comes from the Apostle Peter's Pentecostal address. There he declared that Jesus stood in the midst of Israel as a man approved [accredited], by God. That is, Jesus had not just been born as were other humans. The Lord "came," [that is, he was sent] to earth on a mission from the Father. Because he had a mission, he bore with him the credentials of his authority. To whom did he come? He came to a people who were in a position to evaluate those credentials. After all, Messiah's arrival had been predicted for four thousand years. Further, the Jews were custodians of the oracles of God. In Scripture, God provided specific details about Messiah's coming, and that detail covered three particular lines of testimony:

- 1.) Messiah was to be a prophet similar to Moses.
- 2.) He was to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
- 3.) He was to be a king from the seed of David.

Let us see how the Lord used his credentials to establish his approval by God as prophet, priest, and king.

### Jesus as Prophet

Messiah was to be "like unto Moses" (Deut. 18:15). What was special about Moses that was not true of other men of God or other prophets? Moses brought the people anew revelation of God. That revelation was the Law, written in tables of stone. Jesus too brought a new revelation of God. His embodied God. He was God manifest in the flesh

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16).

### Those who saw Jesus had seen God.

It is true that all that Jesus said was true. There is, however, a greater truth to be acknowledged. Jesus himself was the Truth. Israel generally acknowledged his credentials as a prophet. He spoke to them with authority. "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (Matt. 7:29). If, merely reading the Master's words today fills our heart with joy and assurance and peace, what must it have been to listen to them as they fell fresh from the lips of the Master himself? If sinful men can hold audiences spellbound by their eloquence, what must have been Jesus's influence over the people? They were indeed blessed to listen, firsthand, to teaching like that which we now call the Sermon on the Mount, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the interview with Nicodemus, or his farewell address *on* the night of the betrayal. Even his

enemies were impressed, in spite of themselves. In the synagogue at Nazareth, everyone watched him, and they marveled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son" (Luke 4:22)? The scribes and Pharisees sent messengers to arrest him, but on the outskirts of the crowd, they stopped, rooted to the spot. Returning empty -- handed to their masters, they explained with awe, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).

### **Jesus as Priest**

Messiah also stood in the midst of Israel as a priest. This aspect of Jesus' mission Israel entirely overlooked. Why? Because they believed in the permanence of the levitical priesthood. What role did the priest play in Israel? He brought man and God together on the basis of sacrifice. Thus it was that atonement was accomplished by means of sacrifice. Jesus sacrificially offered himself to God at the Jordan River. For the next three and a half years he lived a life of continual self sacrifice on behalf of men.

As a priest, his compassion for the ignorant and for those who had wandered out of the way was the most outstanding feature of his ministry. One charge leveled against him by Jewish authorities was that he was a friend of publicans and sinners. Simon the Pharisee says to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39). However, Jesus was a prophet, and more than a prophet; he was a priest.

The Lord traveled throughout Israel and wherever he went he was the center of interest and hope. What a wonder it must have been to witness crowds streaming out of the cities to meet him, bringing with them their sick and troubled.

At even 'ere the sun was set,  
The sick O Lord around thee lay;  
O with what diverse pains they met!  
O with what joy they went away!

What joy must have thrilled the disciples who traveled with the Lord! They witnessed the joy of the lepers rescued from a living death and the blind restored to the priceless blessing of sight. Before their eyes, the deaf and the dumb were translated to a new world of sound and speech. The multitudes, cured of an endless array of diseases, must have filled overjoyed the disciples.

### **Jesus as King**

Israel did not expect Messiah's arrival as a priest. Yet, this was their greatest need. They did, however, expect Messiah the king. In this expectation Jesus failed to establish his credentials to the popular view. Not only to the popular view, even his disciples had their doubts, "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done" (Luke 24:21). Nevertheless, Jesus was accredited as king by God just as truly as he was a priest and a prophet.

What was expected of Messiah the king? Two thoughts which seem inseparable from kingship are power and authority. Among the people, Jesus alone was free, his own master. All others *were* servants of sin, born under condemnation. Jesus alone, of all' of Adam's posterity, could say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin" (John 8:46)? He alone had power over himself. Thus he demonstrated that he alone was fit to have authority over others.

Jesus manifested his authority over sin. He went further, though, showing his authority over Satan and over his evil hosts. No demon can resist his royal command. The devils hear and obey. The elements too are under his control. Amazed, the disciples asked themselves "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him" (Matt. 8:27)! In fearful wonder, they watched his approach through the storm as he walked upon the raging sea. This was no sight for the fainthearted. Even today, virile men might have trouble accepting such a sight if it were to be reenacted. Yes, his authority extends over the laws of nature. Water is turned into wine. A handful of loaves and fishes multiply so as to feed thousands. He is so royal that in his kingly demeanor he walks through his enemies and they are powerless to harm him. In the end, the king of terrors, death itself, yields up its prey at his royal command!

At the end, it was, quite a scene. Sinners crowned him in derision. He stood before them despised and rejected. They spat in his face. Yet, he was so kingly that the Roman governor uttered that involuntary tribute, "Behold the man" (John 19:5)! Even though Pilate is bound by his own guilty past so that he cannot release Jesus as he truly desired, he expresses his conviction. In the superscription carried aloft on the cross written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin was, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (Matt. 26:71).

### **A Man Approved of God**

We see that Jesus was a man approved of God in the midst of Israel by miracles, signs, and wonders. His testimony extends beyond the borders of Israel because it has been broadcast by the Gospel. He has been in the midst of all men ever since. He has satisfied the yearnings of those who hear and appreciate.

Now that the Gospel Age has nearly run its course, we have a special blessing. The turmoil, confusion, and powerlessness of man to solve his most urgent problems tell us where we are in relation to the completion of God's holy plan. Earth, and man upon it, is about to enter its darkest hour. What a reassurance it is to know that God's great prophet, priest, and king is about to take control of earth's affairs. Of him, it was promised that he would accomplish the "desire of *all* nations" (Hag. 2:7).

- Alex Kirkwood

## The Question Box

What is the significance of 2 Corinthians 11:2? How should this be interpreted?  
"...for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ?"

The ancient Jewish wedding ceremony provides us with the background for Paul's words. Since he preached unto them the message of eternal life, entrusted to him by Christ Jesus, he is "symbolically" a father to each of them, because through his preaching came their life through Christ (1 Cor. 4:15). Then, just as a Jewish father enters into a marriage contract with the bridegroom, Paul bound each of the new disciples to Christ Jesus by marriage contract (2 Cor. 11:2). Not only does he do this like a Jewish father, but he also ensures the Bridegroom a suitable Bride by taking responsibility for building a character in the Bride that would be pleasing to the Husband (2 Cor. 3:2-3).

Deuteronomy 22:13, 21 is the basis for Paul's thought in 2 Cor. 11:1-4. The unfaithfulness of the daughter in Deuteronomy is what Paul as a father wishes to prevent. He speaks of another "Jesus," one to whom they were not betrothed to be married. Paul wishes fidelity from his "spiritual daughters" so that they might obtain eternal life with Christ their Bridegroom in the place he prepared for them (John 14:1-4).

-- Brian Kuehmicel

"I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that" (2 Cor. 11:1, MV). Thus, mockingly, does Paul introduce the verse upon which our question is based. With the Corinthians he several times resorts to tactics unnecessary with more mature ecclesias. "You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?" (1 Cor. 3:3,NIV).

Paul was not a fool. He knew that he was not *literally* or *symbolically* their father. He who had been converted on the Damascus road by the glorious power of Christ knew better than to think that he could accomplish in anyone what God alone could do (John 6:44). Paul is the one who tells us that we are God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10). So, to imagine that he would assume the role of God, after the pattern of Satan (Isa. 14:13,14), is to demean the maturity of this wonderful Christian character. Herein lies a great danger for us, also; too often the servants of God and of Christ presume too much, they "...think of [themselves] more highly than [they] ought to think..." (cp. Rom. 12:3). Paul is speaking in figures, and figures are not reality. He is no more their spiritual father than they are written in his heart and all could read his heart (2 Cor. 3:2). Look to the spirit in understanding these allusions, not to the letter.

Yet, the words were written, and how shall we understand them?

Paul's mocking tone sets the mood. Having told them, "But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor. 10:17-18, ASV). He seems to behave in the very manner he did not approve.

The Corinthians were in danger of believing false teachers. He speaks of "another" Jesus, as though such teachers were trying to entice the brethren away from the source of their love and

joy. Later (2 Cor. 10:13, ff.), he describes these teachers as "...false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ..." Paul tells the church in clear terms his purpose in writing using this illustration: "But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire an occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we" (2 Cor. 10:12). He would not be silent while others lured the brethren aside, enticing them with fancy speech and flattering words, away from the Gospel of Christ.

Here is Paul's allusion: the chastity of the church. Here is the basis for envisioning them as "his". to betroth to Christ. They were his in so far as they shared the same consuming love for Christ, and in that way alone. How single minded he had been with them before. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2, ASV). "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1, ASV). He hoped to encourage in them that singleness of purpose. He could not beget it in them; they could only accept, or reject, nourish or neglect, the preeminence of Christ in their own heart.

Yet, because he is speaking to "natural" men, he uses an illustration that they can understand. The picture is that of a pure, unsoiled, virgin, and the allusion is not *so* much to his relation to the church as it is their relation to Christ. How does a betrothed young woman behave? She focuses everything in her life upon her marriage and her future husband -- and in those days even more than we might find today. This is the behavior that Paul wanted to encourage in Corinth. A betrothed woman speaks to others about her intended, to learn more about him who was selected for her by her father. She performs her rituals and goes through the long premarriage traditions, preoccupied with him who will soon be her sun and her moon, her lord and her master.

Well has Paul chosen his figure to teach the Corinthians what he wanted them to learn. The bride is now "spoken for," just as the Corinthians [and ourselves also] had each made their individual commitments to Christ. The marriage will take place, just as we and they are assured that God is faithful who has begun a good work *in us*, and who will continue it unto the last day. The betrothed, however, must wait for that marriage day; just as believers are required to keep themselves "to him alone" until the time of their death or his return (dependent upon the times during which they live). For the betrothed to look upon another man with desire would be to dishonor herself. Whether for believers in Corinth or believers today, to be lured away from our Lord, the only Lord given among heaven whereby salvation is to be found, would be just as dishonorable. Paul behaved faithfully in encouraging the brethren to chastity towards Christ. Christ is our head, yea, Christ is our life. To whom else should we go?

Paul had reason to fear. "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be lead astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3, NIV). Eve had been created just as pure and right as Adam. Yet, when temptation came she was lured away ["deceived" as Paul elsewhere says], from her head and listened to the words of the serpent more than she listened to the warning of her husband. In the same way, believers since the days of our Lord have faced the challenge of false apostles. Brethren, how well are we sustaining our confidence in him, our devotion, our love, yea, our chastity before him and to him alone?

-- Peter J. Pazucha

## Church Work

*by: Forest Gate Monthly*

We often confuse our standing as Christians with our efforts for the church. It is clear from the New Testament that we have been called to serve one another, and that each of us has been individually entrusted with talents for the faithful use of which we shall be held responsible. Further, we are told to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith. In spite of this, it is obvious that the main purpose of our call is our individual and personal salvation. To excel in zealous service while failing to develop personally would be as valueless as gaining the whole world but losing one's life.

It is wise, therefore, to analyze the self interest in our aims and the motives in our Christian activity. The acceptability of any service to God depends upon pure motives. Too easily, through carelessness and indifference, the tone of our spiritual life can decline into a rut of empty formality -- before we note any change. Acting automatically, we cease to be inspired by the Spirit's influence in what we do, and instead we are compelled by less than noble motives. Thus we do not offer God our best, but rather blemished, imperfect, and unacceptable offerings. We need to scrutinize our hearts so that the reality of our profession does not come into doubt. All are susceptible to this insidious and common danger.

Every human organization is absorbed with unimportant human problems. Side issues do not point to great spiritual ideals and do not belong to the things of eternity. Deeply concerned with such matters, we may persuade ourselves that we are accomplishing a good work for the Lord and his people. We may in fact be hindering both ourselves and them. To the extent that we are engrossed with such things, we are neglecting vital aspects of our calling and restricting our capacity to be helpful to others.

We should review the direction of our habits, aspirations, and thoughts lest our hearts become unacceptable to God ("Let the word of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight O LORD, my rock and my redeemer." Psa. 19:14). As the man of the world resorts to drink, drugs, pleasure, or business to forget his troubles, so we may seek to suppress the voice of an accusing conscience by a sudden spurt of outward activity in "church work." This can occur as an attempt to satisfy ourselves, perhaps unconsciously, for our lack of living realities in our own spiritual life. We blind ourselves to things that really matter by burying ourselves in human effort and activity.

Individuals or organizations whose chief interest is the number converted to their creed, the books they have sold, the quantity of literature they have distributed, or the amount of money they have collected, have completely missed the purpose of the Christianity.

Any object of enthusiasm, however commendable, which deprives us of time and effort necessary to our personal devotion and self examination is an enemy to our highest welfare. How much more this is true of activities and ideas which are of a questionable nature! The Master will only commend that servant who has obeyed him. Our other efforts, however good, are useless if we have not carried out the will of our Lord. He will say, "I know you not."

The supreme test of our sincerity is our obedience to our Lord in every detail. It is not expressed in our desire for approval by the Lord's people, or by attracting attention to things appealing to natural men. Real progress and lasting success can only be achieved through a broken will. An emptied heart and a surrendered life are our only signs of progress in Christlikeness. Many

Christians pathetically try to save others. Yet, they themselves are not yet prepared to surrender their lives completely to God. They are zealous in proclaiming the truth of God, but their own hearts are impervious to its message.

Unless we become as little children God, cannot use us. In choosing the better part, we shall be misunderstood like Mary of Bethany. Those who wait upon the Lord will be charged with a lack of zeal and enthusiasm and with being selfish or neglectful of the true work of the church. Such criticisms are leveled because the wise of this world have misdirected their efforts and engaged in fruitless activities.

The interests of the deeply sincere will never run in the same direction as the interests of the worldly minded. They are always seeking their own interests. The worldly minded parade their passionate devotion to causes of righteousness before others.

To walk in the spirit and live in the presence of God is an aspiration that is too quiet and inconspicuous to appeal to the tastes of the many who profess the name of Jesus.

Such a life attracts little attention. Engaging in some great struggle for the supremacy of a doctrine or a sect is more appealing to some. Causes bring a man into the limelight of the church. To live in God's presence is the most important issue with which we can be concerned. It is the foundation upon which our eternal destiny is hinged.

Pause to hear the still small inner voice. That voice may be stifled by our incessant activities. We may not hear it over our own boasting about words we have said and things we have done. How quickly we glory in our works and trust in our own righteousness, all the while despising the work and character of others. Remove from your mind any such imaginations that lead to vain glory. Salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:9).

"O Lord you have searched me and known me. Examine me O Lord and prove me, try my reins and my heart. Behold, you desire truth in the inward parts and in the hidden things shall you make me to know wisdom. I thought about my ways and turned my feet unto your testimonies."

Search your ways. Return to the Lord. Seek the unfailing supply of spiritual oil in your vessels that will equip you shine as lights before men and to enable you to burn brightly until the arrival of the Bridegroom and your entrance with him into the marriage supper.

## Trials

It is to test man that the Lord permits us to be subject to the experiences of life, and that those who belong to the kingdom of heaven suffer violence at the hands of an unfriendly world. There are lessons of immense value to be learned in his hard school of experience -- lessons of faith, of fortitude, of heroism, of courage, of endurance, of meekness, of patience, of sympathy, and of loving helpfulness to others.

There are works of grace to be wrought out in us which only the hard experiences of life can accomplish. We might be inclined to lean too much to our own understanding, if we were not at times brought face to face with problems that baffle our skill. It is when we were "afraid to touch things that involve so much," that in our perplexity we come to him who has said, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee," and ask him to undertake for us. Or we might *be* inclined to trust too much in the arm of flesh, if the arm of flesh had never failed us, and the disappointment driven us to the Lord to seek the shelter of his wing. Or we might learn to trust in uncertain riches, if moth and rust had never corrupted nor thieves stolen the little or much of our earthly possessions. Or we might have been satisfied with earthly friendships and earthly loves, had not their loss sometimes left us alone with God to prove the sweetness of his consolation. Or we might be weak and feeble, had not the storms of life swept over us and the very emergencies of our case nerved us to courage, endurance and Christian fortitude. In view of all these necessities to the development of character, the Christian can truly feel that whatever the Lord permits to come upon him will be made to work together for his good; and in this confidence he can peacefully sing:

"If on a quite sea toward home I calmly sail,  
With grateful heart, O God, to thee, I'll own the favoring gale.  
But should the surges rise, and rest delay to come,  
Blest be the tempest, kind the storm, which drives me nearer home."

## The Place Where Two Seas Meet

The golden gates are lifted up,  
The doors are opened wide;  
The King of glory is gone up  
Unto his Father's side.

Thou art gone up before us, Lord,  
To make for us a place,  
That we may be where now thou art,  
And look upon thy face.

Lift up our hearts, lift up our minds,  
Let thy dear grace be giv'n,  
That while we wander here below,  
Our treasures be in heav'n.

That where thou art at God's right hand,  
Our hope, our love may be:  
Dwell thou in us, that we may dwell  
Forevermore in thee.

- Mrs. Cecil F. Alexander

## The Place Where Two Seas Met

Have you come to the place "where two seas met,"  
And your boat is fast in the ground --  
A place where you hear no sound but the waves  
As they foam and lash and pound?  
Then listen and hear what the angel said  
As he spoke to Paul on the sea:  
"Fear not, for lo, thy God shall save  
All those who are sailing with thee."

Have you fasted for many a day and night  
As the storm broke over the deep?  
Are you faint and fearful, dismayed and sad,  
Unable the vigil to keep?  
Then rise in the hour of your deepest gloom  
And partake of the life -- giving Bread;  
Your strength shall return, though the seas mount high  
And the clouds hang low overhead.

"A night and a day in the deep," you say,  
And there'll be a "loss of the boat?"  
No doubt but the tempest is rough and wild,  
But the pieces of board still float;  
And you'll not sink if you trust in God  
For he'll be parting the wave;  
His Arm will reach out to buoy you up --  
His Arm that is "mighty to save."

With the coming of day the land shall appear --  
Perhaps but an island at best --  
But after the tempest and "violence of waves"  
It's a haven of comfort and rest.  
Around you shall gather the kindest friends  
Who will kindle a heart warming flame;  
And the thought of the "place where two seas met"  
Shall be praise to Jehovah's name.

-- NA Jolly

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Theological preaching is deservedly unpopular if all it does is settle a lot of problems people never heard of, and ask a lot of questions nobody ever asks.

-- Robert J. McCracken: The Making of a Sermon

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There have been three historic scourges: famine, pestilence and war. The first two have been slain by science. The last one science cannot kill. War can only be abolished by love.

-- Charles E. Jefferson

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The three great apostles of practical atheism, that make converts without persecuting, and retain them without preaching, are wealth, health and power.

-- Charles Caleb Colton: Lacon

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Almost any fool can prove the Bible isn't so -- it takes a wise man to believe it.

-- Josh Billings

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The dying Jesus is evidence of God's anger toward sin; but the living Jesus is the proof of God's love and forgiveness.

-- Lorenz Eifert

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## How Readest Thou?

'Tis one thing now to read the Bible through,  
Another thing to read, and learn and do;  
'Tis one thing now to read it with delight,  
And quite another to read it right.

Some read it with design to learn to read,  
But to the subject pay but little heed;  
Some read it as their duty once a week,  
But no instruction from the Bible seek;

Whilst others read it without common care,  
With no regard to how they read or where.  
Some read it as a history to know  
How the people lived three thousand years ago.

Some read to bring unto themselves repute,  
By showing others how they can dispute;  
Whilst others read because their neighbors do,  
To see how long 'twill take to read it through.

Some read it for the wonders that are there,  
How David killed a lion and a bear;  
Whilst others read -- or rather in it look --  
Because, perhaps, they have no other book.

Some read the blessed book -- they don't know why,  
It somehow happens in the way to lie;  
Whilst others read it with uncommon care,  
But all to find some contradictions there.

One reads with father's specs upon his head,  
And sees the thing just as his father did;  
Another reads through Campbell or through Scott,  
And thinks it means exactly what they thought.

Some read to prove a pre -- adopted creed,  
Thus understand but little what they read;  
And every passage in the Book they bend  
To make it suit that all -- important end.  
Some people read, as I have often thought,  
To teach the Book, instead of to be taught.

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*There is, in fact, a Greatness of Littleness. Costly gems are often small. The dewdrop is beautiful but very minute. A grain of sand is insignificant, but our great beaches are made up of them. A drop of water is infinitesimal, but the mighty ocean is composed of such drops.*

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Perfection consists not in doing extraordinary things, but in doing ordinary things extraordinarily well. Neglect nothing; the most trivial action may be performed to God.

-- Angelique Amauld .....

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*Obedience to God is the most infallible evidence of sincere and supreme love to him.*

-- Nathanael Emmons

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**The World Comes to You**

The time has passed when we need to go out into the world in order to make contact with it. Today the world comes in and searches us out. There is a force abroad now which is captivating men. Have you ever felt the power of the world as much as today? Have you ever heard so much talk about money? Have you ever thought so much about food and clothing? Wherever you go, even among Christians, the things of the world are the topics of conversation. The world has advanced to the very door of the church and is seeking to draw even the saints of God into its grasp. Never in this sphere of things have *we* needed *to* know the power of the Cross of Christ to deliver us *as* we do at the present time.

-- Watchman Nee

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The true measure of loving God is to love him without measure.

-- St. Bernard of Clairvaux

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A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone.

-- Martin Luther

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*The World has many religions; it has but one Gospel.*

- George Owens

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Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend It better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all embracing love.

-- Feodor Dostoevski

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Man's providence in the Universe is not to create, but by thought and labor to combine and direct the forces that already exist and convert them into different forms for new purposes.

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Dare to trust God, dare to follow him! Discover that the very forces which barred your progress and threatened your life, at his bidding become the materials of which an avenue is made to liberty.

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He who prays without ceasing is likely to rejoice evermore.

-- Adam Clarke

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## **"Bible Students in Britain**

Our British brethren have put together a volume documenting the history of the Bible Student movement in the British Isles. Copies are available free upon written request from: Bible Fellowship Union, 11 Lyncroft Gardens, Hounslow, Middlesex, England.

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