

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. LXXV March / April, 1992 No. 2

## The Editors' Journal

Have you ever arrived at a Bible conference hoping for a blessing, but left feeling discouraged, disheartened, and spiritually unfulfilled? This is a criticism which once was unheard of, but which today is voiced far more frequently than most conference planners would ever imagine. What can *you* do about it? Is it *your* fault? Are other influences at work that are beyond *your* power to affect?

Believers who attend Bible conferences because they want to see their friends or to get away from home for a short vacation, needn't expect the Lord's blessing to approve their personal willfulness. If you fit into this category, ask yourself, "Why do I go to Bible Conferences? Is my local study group fulfilling my spiritual needs? Am I attending good conferences for the wrong reasons?"

Believers who attend conferences and spend their time talking about retirement plans or the camping trip enroute to the conference, also need not expect the Lord's blessing. If you sometimes fall into this category ask yourself, "Didn't the previous speaker have anything stimulating to say? After listening for an hour, is this all that I have to talk about?" If you look hard within you and find yourself spirituality disappointed at the message(s), maybe you would be better off going off into a quiet corner for a private season of prayer. Ask God to open your heart further to receive his bounty. Ask him to nourish you according to your longings. Ask him to stir the next speaker's lips to speak more directly to your heart. Then go back in among the crowd of believers and find someone to talk to whom you know will help you focus your attention on spiritual things. If your heart is dull, seek out someone who can help you heighten your spiritual appetite.

Believers who skip out on the sessions of a conference, preferring instead the cafeteria or the lobby where they can catch up on events in the lives of their friends, ought also to evaluate just why they expected God to bless them when they elude his presence. If you find yourself doing this ask, "Do I really expect God to be there? Or am I so out of tune with his presence so that he can be present and I not recognize it?" Maybe it's time to pray, if friends mean more to you than the presence of your Creator.

How does Jehovah bless his children? Isn't it through his spirit and his abiding presence and that of Jesus Christ! As we enter the Lord's Memorial season we all do well to reevaluate what example we set for others. A conference, a Bible study, or a witness opportunity are all occasions at which we can either reflect the glory of God and the character of Jesus or we can reveal our own darkness, impenitence, and religiosity.

Making your way through this issue we hope that you will find the encouragement to take "*The Cup Which My Father Hath Given Me.*" It was the cup which Jesus bore, and the cup he gave to us. He did not hesitate to rebuke by word or by action those who missed the glory of God.

Some people find it easy to accept that they need Jesus, but cannot find themselves satisfied with him. If you *are* satisfied it is in part because you know that Jesus cleanses you from all sin. But there's a problem there, isn't there. Sometimes we forget the pit from which Jesus raised us. We start acting like we *are* righteous, instead of as though Jesus were our righteousness. Maybe it's time to *Act Like a Sinner!* -- to behave with contrition and the willingness to be corrected that befits forgiven sinners.

You may be well known or you may be a little speck of anonymity in a vast world. God loves you anyway. Paul, Peter, James, and John are famous, but the apostle Paul tells us about some little known brethren who may encourage many of us. Take a good look at the article, *Among Those Mentioned*

The Christian walk can be a pretty daunting thing. What should we do? How should we do it? Two articles in this issue offer some practical answers. *Made Partakers of His Holiness* and *Steps in Christian Knowledge* point us first to God's role in our Christian example and then to our own role. We hope the balance between them will serve as a reminder to us all.

Two short features in this issue we find worthy of special attention. "*It is Written Again*" reminds us that it is easy, but dangerous, to try to build teachings upon minimal scriptural foundations. *The Pathway of Suffering* may not strike you as an encouraging title, but in this world of comfort and the avoidance of responsibility it is a stark reminder that some changes cannot take place in us if we only walk paths of idyllic ease.

The issue closes with a challenge. *Spiritual Presence, Spiritual Life* takes a present tense view of what is often considered to be a future tense promise. Let us know your reaction.

## **"The Cup Which My Father Hath Given Me"**

*"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"*

John 18:11 by: George A. Ford

The disciples were leaving Gethsemane with Jesus. Peter carried a sword. Seeing the soldiers approaching, he drew it. Peter struck the High Priest's servant, Malchus, cutting off his right ear. What did Jesus do? Jesus said, *"Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my father hath given me, shall / not drink it?"* He simply taught them that this was an experience he must endure. The "cup" was figurative. Numerous Scriptures use the word this way and believers see their "cup" as their willingness to accept certain experiences as Christians.

### **Diverse Uses of "Cup"**

The cup figuratively applies to nations and to the wicked. *"In the hand of the Lord there is a cup,... the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them"* (Psa. 75:8). The Psalmist spoke prophetically of the Lord, saying that he would *"...take the cup of salvation"* or redemption (Psa. 116:13, 17), offering the sacrifice of praise.

Jesus asks the sons of Zebedee, *"Are ye able to drink of it?"* They reply, *"We are able."* Jesus says, *"Ye shall indeed drink of my cup,"* -- that is, they would taste inward affliction and deserts, and have their share of outward afflictions.

During the Passover Supper, Jesus said: This cup is the New Covenant in my blood.

### **Significance of the Cup**

At Christmas, we commemorate the Lord's birth. In this pre -- Memorial season, it is fitting for us to consider those experiences Jesus encountered which constituted the "cup" that he drank which culminated in his crucifixion. Jesus brought the shadow of the cross into the upper room with him, he owned it as God's will for him, and he warned his disciples of the blood which would be shed for their salvation.

If you want to appreciate what Jesus endured for you, read the preludes to those events. For instance, he had steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), and his brethren suggested that he go up publicly with them. The public was excited at his entry into the city. He rode in upon an ass and the multitudes shouted Hosanna. Later, Peter denied him. The washing of the disciples' feet was a lesson. He clarified as much as possible about his coming sufferings so that his followers would be prepared for the worst. One can feel some of his anguish and share in his *exceeding sorrow*. *'Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay and keep watch with me'* (Matt. 26:38).

In the upper room, he brought together all the details of the coming sufferings into one picture for his disciples. He pictured what he was doing for them as a "cup." Taking a cup in his hand he thanked God for it, and gave it to them. The wine represented what he was giving to them. They were invited to participate in his experiences -- his cup. *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ"* (1 Cor. 10:16)?

## Life of the Vine in the Cup

Think about the wine contained in that cup for a moment. Into the cup Jesus held in his hand had gone all his past experiences. His life was the vine. The kind of soil upon which the vine grew, the pruning and storms it endured, as well as the crushing of the grapes: all these conditions determined the quality of the grapes. The fruit of Jesus' life, too, was determined by what he endured. Jesus gave the disciples a history, an example, as he handed them that chalice. Change that past, and the wine is different. All his experience was poured into that cup.

Jesus put to their lips the figurative cup of suffering and prayer. They had accepted his invitation to follow him; now he was inviting them to a new privilege. Would they accept it and once again own him as their Lord? How solemnly impressive must have been his words as they walked together through the vineyards to Gethsemane:

*"I am the true vine, my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:1,2,4,5, 8).*

## All Life Experiences Mingle in the Cup

Let us trace some of the experiences that made up his cup. In the silent years at Nazareth, the young lad Jesus lived in obscurity at a carpenter's bench. His hands were rough with toil. He may have known the hardship of poverty, which was typical of the dull, narrow life of a country village and, too, the responsibility of helping to support a family after its father had died. All the while, an unspoken vision carried him beyond the commonplace. He conquered the routine of life, and so all these things, both the battle and the victory, go into the cup.

Many of us live similar lives in the same dull obscurity. We too battle with the business of making a living; we too deal with the sordid and the scarring. All the while, there is a vision of something better and nobler held in the heart. Jesus put the chalice to our lips, and we drink his victory over the commonplace and pass it along, realizing that this is only the beginning of our "all" placed upon the altar with him.

Jesus laid aside the carpenter's tools and went out to proclaim his message. *"Then cometh Jesus, we read, from Galilee to Jordan unto John" (Matt. 3:13).* He had been baptized into the world's toil (Heb. 4:15). Now -- he would be baptized into the world's sin (Isa. 53:4, 5, 6).

John the Baptist was calling a nation to repentance. His throbbing words smote the heart of the Jewish people, and they came to his stream for the baptism of repentance. Jesus, too, entered the stream. He, with conscience unstained and with character untarnished; he who needed no repentance, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; he, the sinless, enters that line for baptism. It may be a harlot standing ahead of him in that line and a publican behind. He became one of them and was baptized into a baptism of repentance. The identification is complete -- he took the sinner's place. *"He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).* All this was part of the cup.

Then came a reaction against this identification. Jesus left men and continued his struggle in the isolation of the wilderness. Was this the way to complete -- absolute -- identification? Yes. This

was the poured cup that the Father handed. *"He was led of the spirit."* Being full of the holy spirit, he went from Jordan (Luke 4:1) and faced the issues of his coming work for forty days, and then he hungered. He must go back to men and eat.

You need not go back, the voice came to him. You are the Son of God. That is enough, stay, out here, feed yourself by miracle, and live as the miraculous Son of God. The Tempter's voice clearly urged him into a path God had not given. The temptation to live apart and to live on spiritual miracles is one of the strongest temptations of spiritual living. Jesus brushed it aside. He would not be content with being the Son of God. He would be the Son of man. He would live by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of the Father. To him, that meant he must identify with men and redeem them. The deep cost to him was the cup he must drink.

Then the Tempter suggested other means of proving his authority. If you must go back, why stand with the people? Rise to a pinnacle! Your way is too costly. Worship me, and take possession of this, world now. Jesus replied: *"It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."* Jesus again brushed these suggestions aside; though he knew that his choice of identifying with men would finally mean crucifixion. Days before he had been baptized between two sinners; now this choice meant that he would one day be crucified between two thieves. He would be the Son of man and bear all that man bore -- and more.

Jesus' popularity increased. Multitudes hung on his words as though they were dew falling on thirsty souls. The healed went everywhere telling of the compassionate prophet. People found in him new authority, the authority of reality, and when they found him breaking bread to the multitudes in the wilderness they forcibly tried to make him king (John 6:15). Jesus perceived their intention and withdrew, alone, to the hills. Here he would pray, reaffirming God's high purpose for him, even though it meant crucifixion.

Jesus went to the synagogue at Nazareth and announced his program (Luke 4:16-21). This was the Son of man speaking, and the program he explained surprised and delighted his townsmen, until he told them how extensive his program was. It was as wide as the human race, and they must know that God cares as much for the Jew as for the Gentile (Luke 4:26-27). There were many lepers and widows in Israel, but prophets were also sent beyond Israel's borders to the Gentiles.

When they heard this, their attitude changed. People will gladly listen to truth provided it does not cross the lines of their prejudices. They had no room for this dreamer. They arose angrily and led him to the crest of the hill, intending to throw him down headlong. He, passing through the midst of them, went his way (Luke 24:29-30).

That beautiful act of healing an enemy who had come to put him to death also goes into the cup. *"Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,"* he said (Matt. 5:44). Even when his hands were impaled to the cross he would still say, *"Father, forgive them, they do not know what they are doing"* (Luke 23:34, Moffatt).

All this too went into the cup. When prejudice closes in on you, attempting to quench your spirit, drink deeply of his calm and his courage. Pass through the midst, and go on your way towards the heavenly vision that has captured your heart. Like Paul, press forward towards the mark (Phil. 3:14).

The easy, dazzling way to power was put away. He would take the long way to his Calvary. The same decisiveness and consecration that characterized his refusal of the throne now went into the

cup. These moments come to us too, brethren. When we see the shining, easy, dazzling way, let us drink of the chalice into which this trial has gone. Choose instead the struggling, demanding way of the cross. By his grace, we will find ourselves ready for any further trials with him.

Think of Jesus on another occasion. Beholding the city before him, he paused on the side of the Mount of Olives and wept over the city (Luke 19:41). Think again of his courage in that hour when he commanded men to "...take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise..." and drove them from the temple grounds (John 2:16). After the cleansing had taken place, after his anger had subsided, he was back in the Temple. There he was, teaching and healing the blind and the lame, welcoming the children that came to him (Matt. 19:14). All this went into the cup.

There have been those who object to the stormy sides of Jesus' nature. The woes he pronounced upon the Pharisees, the doom he predicted upon the city of Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple: all these do not seem to fit with the spiritual calm and poise which marked the perfect man. However, no one can question that what he said about the Pharisees was true. What alternatives were there?

Suppose that Jesus ignored the blindness and ignorance, without offering reproof or cleansing -- cleansing storms though they were. Spiritual indignation for wrong is sometimes necessary to cleanse physical and spiritual atmospheres. Brethren, we must assure that Christlikeness is always maintained.

Jesus used the force of authoritative personality to cleanse the Temple. His was, after all, his Father's house.

*"Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."* The same characteristic proceeds from the pen of Paul. He reproved the Corinthians. The Galatians astonished him at how quickly they fell from faith. He denounced the Creteans (Titus 1:12).

True Christians need stout hearts and gentility for we are told to be bold as lions and meek as lambs. We may yet be called upon to reprove evil and misrepresentations of God and of Christ. Drink deeply of these qualities and be strong in the Lord.

### **Majesty of Soul / Lowly Service**

Sitting with his disciples in the upper room, Jesus knew that the Father had given him all things. He knew he had come from God, and also that he was returning to God. There, rising from supper, he laid aside his garments and took a towel and wrapped it around himself. The master began washing the feet of the disciples (John 13:4-15). He was so great that he dared to be humble! He poured the majesty of his soul into the cup. Was he afraid to die? Hardly. He came to die. He laid down his life for you and for me. He came to save men from sin. Yet, on the next day he would inspire men to even greater sin, for they would put to death the Son of God.

Shortly he was to ask that, if possible, that cup might pass, nevertheless he did not want his will done but God's. There was no other way. This was the cup God had poured. The tragedy and the triumph of Jesus life do not lie in his agony. Instead, they reside in the result which the agony made possible. Calm and collected through his fellowship with God, Jesus said, *"Arise, let us be going [to meet tomorrow and its Calvary]; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand"* (Mark 14:42, ASB). It all went into the cup.

Whoever has drunk of that chalice into which the richness of that hour had gone can say, "Arise my soul, let us be going to meet our cross." Having drunk, let us meet it with the rest of faith and confidence in our heavenly Father's grace.

Then they came to take him. Peter, the aroused disciple, rushes forward with sword in hand and strikes off the ear of the High Priest's servant. Jesus rebukes him. *"Put your sword back into its place ... and reaching forth his hand, touches the ear of Malchus, and says, 'No more of that!' and cured him"* (c.f., Matt. 26:51 & Luke 22:51, Moffatt).

When we see spite and hatred we should drink of his cup and put aside the resentment which otherwise would flow over us. His love persists, and nothing can turn it aside. He will not allow our mercy to be quenched for he would have us say, as did he, "Father forgive...", and as did Stephen, "...Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

There stood Jesus before Pilate, clothed in mock royal garb. The Romans had heard that this was the king of the Jews. Always contemptuous of the Jews, the soldiers used this as their opportunity to show their contempt for these Jews. So they braided a thorny crown and put it on his head. They put a stick in his hand as a mock scepter and clothed him in purple, the color of royalty. Then they taunted him, crying aloud, "Hail, king of the Jews." They spat in his face. The racial contempt directed at Israel fell upon Jesus. He bore it for the men who cried for his blood. All that also went into the cup.

As he stood before Pilate, the accusations against him were many. He listened to his words being twisted and to their meaning being tortured. He said, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands and in three days I will build another without hands," they cried. His life hung in the balance, and misquotations were being laid in the pan, yet he showed no eagerness to explain. He put up with their inaccuracies and their bias. He could wait. Every lie would one day be broken by truth, so he did not offer a word in protest.

The governor marveled. Here was a greatness that could wait for the final verdict; All this went into the cup.

Have your words been misquoted? Have your actions been misunderstood? Your best motives, have they been misinterpreted? If you have suffered, then drink deeply of his cup, the cup into which Jesus' patience was poured. He was tested and triumphed. Share with him his poise and resignation to the Father's will. Say with him, "Am I not to drink of the cup my Father has handed me?"

Lies and hate, prevail. He is nailed to a tree, his good name stolen. He is a criminal. His disciples flee. Alone in his agony, he has been beaten back into the dark until it seems that God too has left him. From his lips the agonized cry is heard, "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?"

All is gone -- or is it? Two words remain, "My God." Man could not snatch from his lips these words of quiet confirmation. As life slipped from him he confidently let it go. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

No more bitter potion could be poured into the cup. Forsaken by God and man! The sum of his life has been poured into the cup. When we feel ourselves forsaken or the sum of our life ruined, we can drink of his chalice.

Drinking deeply we realize that all we thought lost remains, because God remains. Assured of his faithfulness, we can surrender as did our Lord. 'Though he were a son, yet learned [acquired] he obedience by the things which he suffered'(Hebrews 5:8).

Jesus tasted death for every man and the tomb held him tight in its grip, but not for long. The most glorious fact of human history was about to be poured into the cup. Out of the tomb he arose. He laid aside his grave clothes and came forth triumphant! He is risen!

Into his cup had gone everything that life could possibly bring. He committed to God life's commonness, its labor, its obscurity, and its temptations. Along with this, he added the prejudice, the lonely determination, its bids for compromise, life's Gethsemanes, the hours spent before unjust judgment seats, and its mockery and racial wrongs. Having surrendered all these things, he rose to triumph unparalleled.

### **He Arose!**

Nothing else matters if God's last word is resurrection. Let life bring its worst or best, yet this saving fact remains for all who share the cup of Jesus. The life of our Savior raises every question about life to its most poignant form. The "Why?" upon the dying Jesus' lips epitomizes all questions that ever tremble upon the lips of humankind, and the resurrection answers them all.

God's last word is resurrection, and it too is in the cup. When Jesus had drunk of the cup, he thanked God for it. He took it all as from the Father's hand, and thanked him for it. In thanksgiving, his seeming failure revealed itself as the sublimest success.

We all bear our own cross. Let us do so thankfully. Only those who have learned to triumph by thanking God for everything can turn life from suffering into sacrament.



## **Act like a sinner!**

*Do you really behave as if you stand convicted of sin before God?*

by: PJ. Pazucha

You don't murder, you're not an adulterer, you don't lie, cheat, or steal, but God says you are a sinner. Who's right?

We need to accept our status as sinners even if we don't see the sin in us. Actually, we are in good company if we feel this way about ourselves. Paul said the same thing. *"I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord"* (1 Cor. 4:4, NASB).

Faith is as crucial to accepting our sins as it is to accepting the indwelling of God. We believe that we are sinners because only too often we don't think of ourselves as sinners. Often we are not even conscious of our sins. Faith tells us that when God calls us sinners he must be correct, because God cannot lie. Faith is the evidence of the things that are unseen (Heb. 11:1) and our faith rests content with God's words that we are sinners. Faith spoke out in the psalmists words: *"Acquit me from hidden faults" (Psa. 19:12); "Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions" (Psa. 25:7).*

### **Me a Sinner?**

This is not a trivial matter, even for serious believers in Jesus. It is insufficient to say that you are sinful, unrighteous, untruthful or foolish. If your confession is any good you must feel that way in your heart and behave that way. No wonder so few of us accept ourselves as sinners.

Can you be a repentant sinner if you cannot tolerate criticism? If someone catches you in a sin, why should your anger flare? Why should you refuse to admit that you said the words of which you are accused, or did what you did? Why make excuses? Why insist that all you ever did was truthful and well intentioned? Why think others are mean, or out to get you? No one accuses us falsely if we really are sinners... No, refusal to see oneself as a sinner is infuriating and all we accomplish is wearying everyone with our stories of life's injustices.

Such behavior is hypocrisy. You cannot sincerely say you are a sinner if you refuse to bear a sinner's reputation. If you select for yourself the lot of the righteous and holy man you say that you think yourself such. If you admit yourself to be a sinner you must suffer the punishment, the injury, and the insult as if you had it coming. That was what Jesus did.

The next time you are insulted or blamed, or if you develop some disease, don't say "I don't deserve this -- why has God done this to me? This isn't fair." If you do that you are denying that you are a sinner. If you do, you are resisting God and your own words condemn you. Why protest against God, contending with him as if he had done something foolish or evil?

## True Confession

Think about what you suffer. The penalty upon men is that by dying we die (Gen. 3:17-19). God has not mistaken you or me for some other sinner. No. We experience the results of sin. Say to God, You are true! You are righteous! You are justified in all your actions! You show me to be what I am, a sinner!

*"Against thee, thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified when thou dost speak, and blameless when thou dost judge" (Psa. 51:4).*

*"...the Lord our God is righteous with respect to all his deeds which he has done, but we have not obeyed his voice..."(Dan. 9:14).*

Test yourself next time you argue with someone? Will you tell him, "I am ready to give in so that you can be right and true. I want to have been wrong so that you may be right in what you say and feel"? If you can accept your sins won't the other person be more likely to say, "I too have been wrong. You are the one who is right.." If you both are exercised by the spirit of God you will reconcile with each other. *"Do not be wise in your own estimation"* (Rom. 12:16).

That is why it is unusual and difficult to become a sinner. Sinners act like sinners. If we think we are righteous we are offended if someone contradicts us. If we saw ourselves for what we are, we would be willing to be shown how to improve.

How much happier we would be if we were willing to say, "tell me what I must do and I will do it." The Apostle Paul did (Acts 9:1-19). How much happier we would be if we didn't take sides, but were willing to be persuaded by godly words.

Pride of life (1 John 2:16) is deep seated and is not easily displaced. No one is free from this trait -- especially when things go against us. But if we believe God, truly believe, he can help us to live according to our profession.

## Among Those Mentioned

*"Love vaunteth not itself" - 1 Corinthians 13:4*

Many people go through life without ever "making the first page," a fact that is often to their credit. Unhappily, headlines are usually not reserved *for* incidents of great merit. Too frequently, they are accorded for those whose deeds are shameful. There is some consolation, then, to never making the headlines.

What wins publicity? That which departs from the normal course of life. Prominence is given to those items which shock and horrify; they are "news makers." A thousand acts of kindness and fidelity can probably be *counted* for every act of cruelty and betrayal about which we hear. Smiles, however, are less dramatic than tears. We may pass a hundred children in the street whose cheery faces warm our heart, but it is most likely the crying child who will stop us in our tracks.

Surely, there are occasional stories about unselfish heroism, fidelity, or love *which* rise to the heights of thrilling drama. Some even find their way into the media. Such nice stories are disproportionate in number to others. Why is this? *"Love is not boastful."* Love doesn't put on airs nor is it rude. Love goes quietly about its business. Hatred, malice, envy and passion are strident, bold and violent. They disregard courtesy and break the rules of social relationships.

It is a shame that we never hear more about little kindnesses and braveries. Though often disregarded, they, in truth, are the saving element in this world's life -- its salt. Should they not at least receive mention?

One of the beauties of St. Paul was his self-effacing love. He frequently found occasion to speak of others while remaining silent about himself. These persons he freely praised -- giving *us* a marvelous example.

They were not written about for their news -- making achievements. No. Their quiet, friendly, faithful service is written to encourage us, who ourselves may be serving the Lord as inconspicuously as they. We also begin to appreciate the standard by which Paul measured his life -- the standard of Christlike conduct. These people are *"...among those mentioned."*

There was, for example, Ampliatus. About him, we know only that he lived in Rome and was probably a Roman citizen. Paul calls him *"my dear friend in the Lord"* (Rom. 16:8, NJB). How suggestive that phrase is. Here was a man who had impressed himself upon the great

Apostle Paul by his sympathy, his consideration, and his kindness! His name is inscribed upon an honor roll because of a friendly attitude towards a man who was frequently in sore need of friends.

There were Tryphena and Tryphosa, manifestly sisters, possibly twins. Paul mentions them because they were *'hard workers for the Lord's cause.* *"Not brilliant workers, mind you, just hard workers!* There are many Tryphenas and Tryphosas today. They keep Bible study groups going, performing the drudgery of religious service, and they deserve a place among those mentioned.

The mother of Rufus is mentioned. Her name is unknown, but Paul calls her son an eminent Christian. He says of her that she had been a mother' to Paul. All the mothering hearts, whether they have eminent sons or not, deserve a place on this roll alongside hers.

Gains *is* more than once referred to. Paul names him as his host and host to the whole church. He was a hospitable man, his doors were open. Any follower of the master was welcome to stay with him, and thus he wins his honorable mention.

In Philippi, there lived Euodias and Syntyche. They were a human pair, sisters in faith if not by blood. They did not always pull together, however. Because they were faithful workers, Paul writes concerning them so that their minor discords would not affect their teamwork. Paul's "true comrade" could do a quiet, worthwhile service by helping them agree as Christians. There are ample opportunities to do the same today, and such true comrades will likewise receive their reward.

There was only one Paul, but there are many people like those whom Paul delighted to mention in his letters. They may never make the first page, but they are doing something far better. They are making life endurable for the rest of us. They weave beauty and love and hope and joy into the fabric of our days. When we are weary of waving the banner of Christ and the blare of the brass band on crowded streets, they are players of chamber music which steals into our soul with its softer harmonies. They are help and comfort and peace. They live by unseen realities, and in their presence faith in God and goodness strengthens (1 Cor. 13:4,5; Rom. 16:8, 12, 13, 23; Phil. 4:2).

## Made Partakers of His Holiness

*"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." - 2 Corinthians 7:1*

From Jesus' lips we learn that the work of the holy Spirit in the life of the believer is (among other things) to "convince" a person of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:9-11). He made this statement in a way that seems to say that the world, rather than the believer, is reproved or convinced. This is, of course, the primary meaning.

It would be equally correct, however, to say that in a special way the Spirit continuously works in the same way in the mind of believers. This is necessarily true. Why? No "babe" in Christ is sufficiently conversant with the facts of sin's eradication (facts to be found in the Word of God). These facts unfold when believers partake of the strong meat of the Scripture (Heb. 5:12-14).

The beginning Christian can have a clear conception of God's attitude towards sin. Indeed, they must have! The act of repentance, which precedes a person's consecration to God, is a proof of some knowledge concerning God's hatred of sin. To realize sin's effect in themselves and to understand how grace works forgiveness and cleansing requires time. This is when the Spirit fulfills the words of the Master, guiding men into all truth.

Enlightenment is progressive. It is observable. For example, in the early days of one's spiritual life there is often a positive attitude toward the eradication of gross forms of evil. One thinks the job relatively easy. As the believer grows (2 Peter 3:18), a growing body of evidence demonstrates what it means to be cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1). One progressively finds the reality of cleansing from sin to be a more difficult task than first realized.

One begins with a knowledge that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin (1 John 1:7), thereby securing freedom from adamic guilt and forgiveness for daily trespasses. In time, one learns that there is more forgiveness of sins to be expected. It is learned that cleansing from all unrighteousness and from all filthiness is both retrospective and prospective. God not only forgives the sinner but he progressively accomplishes an eradication of the effects of sin. The faithful saint walks a path of increasing victory (never forgetting that at best all men are unprofitable servants - - Luke 17:10). God is ready to forgive. He is *"faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9) as the work of sanctification progresses.

It is good that a person recognize the need of divine forgiveness for their sins -- through accepting the atonement available through the blood of Jesus and turning their back on the past and its sin. To see no further than that they are delivered from condemnation because of the blood is to miss all possibility -- of progressive cleansing. It is this continuous cleansing that our theme text urges to our attention.

### God Works In You

Paul's statement here does not contradict other Scripture. He suggests that we cleanse ourselves. Elsewhere we are taught that God works in us, both to will and to do. Can these ideas agree? Paul cannot have forgotten that the only power to overcome lies outside self. This is the power which raised Jesus from the grave, and it must operate in us to accomplish our transformation.

*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Rom. 8:11).*

Note how he urges the same thought found in our theme text. Search for holiness! Holiness can affect both flesh and spirit. To the Roman, he sets forth the fullness of cleansing and transformation which lay open to them (and ourselves). It is God's will that we do more than merely renounce sin in our minds (1 Thess. 4:3). He wants us to give him our heart so that we may learn to desire his fellowship. In his presence, his spirit imbues us with an opposition to sin so that as new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17) we will fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12) against the adversary and the worldly spirit of selfishness. Similarly, we will be empowered to engage in the battle against self: against personal weaknesses, filthiness, blemishes, and tendencies toward sin in our mortal flesh.

How does God work in men? Can his work coexist with our cleansing ourselves? God works in us to develop our "will" or "desire" to change. As elsewhere, the miracles and work of God are proportionate to the faith of the recipient. Thus, to believe that a change is attainable by the power of God is to make that change attainable. We can never rise to triumph over self and sin as long as we believe triumph unattainable. By laying hold on the promises of God which have created in us a desire for perfect holiness, we will discover that he is abundantly able to work in them to victory. God gives strength to overcome proportionate to the completeness of one's devotion to him. That will is, above all else, our sanctification. The work which began in forgiveness and begettal continues through the Spirit until a holiness is perfected in the fear of the Lord, culminating in the First Resurrection.

### **Is Anything Impossible For God?**

Look at an illustration. Imagine a mother who sends her daughter to school one morning dressed in clean clothes. Mother says, "Be careful to stay clean." The girl promises to do so -- in all sincerity. When she comes home the dress is soiled. The child wasn't intentionally wayward; she was simply inexperienced in keeping clean! Suppose that the mother could put some of her own experience into the child, some of her own hard acquired knowledge about how to avoid getting dirty. What a difference that would make. Yet, that is impossible. Or is it? By shaping the youthful experiences of the child, the mother does the next best thing. She gives the child its own experience.

This is what the Lord does. He asks for the freedom to work in the heart freely offered up to him. He promises, on such conditions, much more than a life of continual defeat. When he works in the life of one who trusts him, the human's garments will be kept "*unspotted from the world*" (Jas. 1:27), and those easily besetting sins (Heb. 12:1) will be laid aside (overcome). Thus does the believer who is indwelt by the Spirit of God pass into experiential knowledge of God's power to keep, strengthen, and enable them to triumph over their infirmities.

What a blessing lies in store for many. If they would but learn to rely upon simple faith and a heart hungering for the Lord, then they might lay open their Bibles before the Lord in prayer and believingly beg him to make its statements true in their lives. What miracles transpire when we ask God to translate such a text as this into our daily life: "*Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh,*" or as the *Diaglott* has it "*and fulfill not the desire of the flesh*" (Gal. 5:16). Such faith and longing desires would never go unanswered, of this we have God's testimony. God will never turn a deaf ear to one crying for emancipation, not only from guilt but

from the power of fleshly desires, appetites, and weaknesses. Our text indicates that these results are possible. To succeed is to rise above all our innate self pity and indulgent excuses for the weakness of our flesh. It will destroy false standards and set our determination against making provisions for the flesh (Rom. 13:14).

To believe that walking in the Spirit and being filled by the Spirit will fortify us against the desires of the flesh, is to confidently seek and expect an increasing perfecting in holiness. This expectation is not based in self. It is founded in what God can do in us. From Paul's standpoint, it is not a question of our ability but of the power of God imparted to us through the indwelling of his Spirit.

'Twas most impossible of all,  
That here sin's reign in me should cease;  
Yet shall it be! I know it shall:  
Jesus, I look to thy great faithfulness:  
If nothing is too hard for thee,  
All things are possible to me.

How God communicates this power through the holy Spirit is an invisible transaction. Nevertheless, it is so effective that it is visibly manifest in our life. This power is so great that it has been called the "greatest of miracles." The miracle is made plain to those who discover that it is all a matter of contact with divine resources, a new contact, as it were, with the inner and eternal movements of redeeming goodness and power.

### **The Spirit Quickens**

*"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live"* (Rom. 8:13). Once again comes the reminder that victory in subduing the flesh is traceable to the work of the Spirit. This is not a self-deadening or mortification.

Self is not powerful enough to conquer self (that is, the human spirit) to get the victory over human flesh. That would be like a drowning man who grabs his right hand with his own left hand so that both may sink beneath the waves. The Spirit of God overcomes our fleshly nature by his indwelling life, on which we depend. Our principal care therefore must be to *'walk in the Spirit'* (Gal 5:16) and *"be filled with the Spirit"* (Eph. 5:18). All the rest will come spontaneously and inevitably. As the ascending sap in the tree crowds off the dead leaves, which in spite of storm and frost cling to the branches all winter long, so does the holy Spirit within us, when allowed full sway, subdue and expel the remnants of our sinful nature.

We are to *"put off the old man with his deeds"* (Col. 3:9). How? By *"putting on the new man who is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him"* (Col. 3:10). *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"* (Rom. 8:2), writes Paul. It is a pointed statement of the case made by describing the transition from the old to the new in one's own experience: from the former life of perpetual defeat to the present victorious life through Christ. Once life was a constant breaking off, now it is a daily bringing in. Formerly we fought to *be rid of the* habits and evil tendencies of the old nature -- its selfishness, its pride, its lust, and its vanity. Now our effort is to bring in the Spirit, to drink in the divine presence, to *breath a holy* atmosphere, his supernatural life. Only the indwelling of the Spirit can bring about the exclusion of sin from a person's life. The truth of this will appear if we consider what has been called the "expulsive" power of a new affection. *"Love not the world, neither the things that are t the wed"* (1 John 2:15). Christian experience proves that godlike love is not enabled through



randomly developing worldly love. Godly love is not the *same as* the world's. More importantly, worldly affection can be overcome by the heavenly.

### Acquiring Christ Likeness

This method is exhibited in the Word. The love of the Spirit (Rom. 15:30) is our tool to overcome the world. The divine life is the source of the divine love. Therefore *"...hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Spirit which is given unto us"* (Rom. 5:5). Because we are by nature wholly without heavenly affection, God, through his indwelling power, gives us his own love with which to love him. Herein is the highest credential of discipleship: *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:35). Christ manifested to the world *the love* of the Father and we are to manifest the love of Christ. This is only possible if we share a common life. As one has said concerning our Savior's command to his disciples to love one another.

It is a command which would be utterly idle and futile were it not that he, the ever loving one, is willing to put his own love within me. The command is really no more than to be a branch of the true Vine. I am to cease from my own living and loving, and yield myself to the expression of Christ's love.

What is true of the love of Christ is true of the likeness of Christ. How is this likeness acquired? Through contemplation and meditation? Some have so suggested. Such would be true if the indwelling Spirit is behind all, beneath all, and effectually operative in all. It is not.

*"But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18, RSV).*

Only the Lord's spirit dwelling within us can fashion us into his image. Who, by imitation of Christ, can become conformed to the likeness of Christ? Imagine one without genius and devoid of an artist's training sitting down before Raphael's painting of the Transfiguration and attempting to reproduce it. How crude and mechanical his work would be! Yet, if the spirit of Raphael could enter the man and obtain the mastery of his hand and eye and mind it would be possible to recreate the masterpiece. Then it would be Raphael reproducing Raphael.

Figuratively, this is what happens to Christian disciples filled with the Spirit. Christ, the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), is perceived as their pattern. Christ, by the Spirit, dwells within the believer and brings forth that image from within the believer. Such a one begins to manifest Christ in them outwardly.

Likeness' to Christ is another name for holiness. When at the resurrection, we awake with his likeness (Psa. 17:15), we shall be perfected in holiness. Sanctification is progressive and not, like conversion, instantaneous.

If a Christian looks at himself as a tree planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth fruit in his season (Psa. 1:3), he judges correctly. To conclude that such growth will be irresistible, like that of a tree, which results from time and proximity to water and nutrients, would be a grave mistake. Christlikeness is more than being planted in Christ by regeneration. The disciple must be disciplined: there need be a conscious, intelligent activity in one's own growth. A tree need not give all diligence to make its calling and election sure, but the Christian is so admonished (2 Peter 1:10).



By saying that the Christian must be active in their own growth, we do not mean self-active. *"Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life?"* (Matt. 6:27, RSV), Jesus asked. We must surrender to God's will by living in the Spirit and praying in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. These conditions are as essential to our development in holiness as the rain and the sunshine are to the growth of the oak. It is possible through neglect and grieving the Spirit that a Christian may be of smaller stature in his age than he was in his spiritual infancy. It is possible to regress rather than to advance. Therefore, in saying that sanctification is progressive let us beware of concluding that it is inevitable.

Up then, and linger not, thou saint of God,  
Fling from thy shoulders each impeding load;  
Be brave and wise, shake off earth's soil and sin,  
That with the Bridegroom thou mayest enter in.  
O watch and pray!

Gird on thy armor; face each weaponed foe;  
Deal with the sword of heaven the deadly blow;  
Forward, still forward, till the prize divine  
Rewards thy zeal, and victory is thine;  
Win thou the crown.

## **"It is Written Again"**

*Selected*

These words of our Savior, addressed to the tempter, suggest an important lesson to all Christians.

The Adversary, in assaulting Jesus, had quoted from Scripture, saying, "It is written..." Very well, replied Jesus, suppose it is written just as you say, "It is written again..." The importance, of course, is that the Scriptures contain more than the tempter had quoted. From these words of our Lord, "It is written again," we find a principle which can govern our doctrinal use of the Scriptures.

**We cannot safely build either doctrine or practice upon an isolated passage of Scripture.**

One passage cannot be interpreted independently of other Scriptures. Here lies our only safety from the grossest of errors. We must not go to solitary scriptures to learn what the will of God is, we must go to the entire record. There is a unity in the Bible like the unity of the human body. One part balances the other. One part requires another to complete its own work. So also Scripture. One portion is explained by other portions. When a man quotes an isolated passage as the basis of some absurd doctrine or practice we need only reply, "It is written again..." There are other verses in the Bible beside the one which may have been quoted, and your interpretation must accord with them all. You have taken this single passage out of its connection and have distorted it while claiming that you have God's truth.

That is the way Satan uses Scripture. He gladly acknowledged the words of Holy Writ if he can use or abuse them to his own advantage without rebuke. Most errors which the church of Christ has branded as heresy are merely one sided truths. They are torn out of connection with the counter truths which balance them

## Steps in Christian Knowledge

*"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." - Hosea 6:3*

by: B.J. Drinkwater

The Apostle Paul was in Athens, that great seat of learning, awaiting Silas and Timothy. They were to rejoin him there after the disturbance in Berea, and he was much stirred in spirit seeing the city given to the worship of idols (Acts 17). History suggests that the Athenians wasted a lot of time listening to any new thing that came along. To Paul's advantage, his message was new to them -- for among other things he spoke of the resurrection of the dead.

Admittedly, the Athenians did not know the true God. Yet, by erecting an altar "To the Unknown God" they admitted to a characteristic to which Paul could appeal. As limited as they might have been in some respects, they possessed a worthy quality. The Athenians were inclined to worship, misdirected as they might have been. Worship seems to be innate in humans. Can the message of truth appeal to anyone who has no sense of worship? If one senses that there is a Supreme Being to whom all must heed, there is in that person the possibility that he will respond to the gospel upon hearing it.

In that possibility Paul declared to the Athenians the way of truth. Paul saw their worship, but in effect they did not know what it was they were worshipping. So he preached to them the one God who made the world and who did not dwell in temples made by hands. This God, he told them, was not worshiped with human hands, as though he needed something from man. Indeed, nothing man could erect or perform was adequate worship of the God in whom we live, and move, and have our being.

### Reverence Expressed by Worship

Paul caught the people's attention, and he proceeded to preach important doctrines of Scripture -- repentance, judgment, and resurrection. Soon the Athenians fell back into their habitual practice of disputing about matters, and few listened any longer.

The Bible distinguishes between head knowledge and heart knowledge. These Athenians, reasoning for the sake of the first, declined Paul's offer of the second. Nevertheless, upon that one good quality which they possessed, worship, Paul laid hold. He was restating the Old Testament axiom, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

This is the first step in Christian knowledge -- reverence expressed in worship. Some may reason: How can man worship One of whom he has no knowledge? The truth is that worship and knowledge go hand in hand and cannot be separated. Their close link will be noted when we remember that knowledge is often synonymous with appreciation; appreciation means valuing; and praise is, a part of, worship. Reversing the order -- worship finds expression, in praise; praise means appreciation; and appreciation shows that knowledge is in the heart as well as in the head.

## **Reverence Begets Spiritual Knowledge**

Another incident associating worship with knowledge occurs in the story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). The keen-minded woman (an outsider of the Jewish faith) had a better sense of worship than had the intellectuals on Mars Hill, and her willingness to talk to the Jewish stranger was rewarded. The stranger began the conversation by asking for water. That conversation about "living water" may have been beyond her but she listened and, when the conversation turned to her personal life, she perceived that the stranger was a prophet. Immediately, she questioned whether Jerusalem was the true center of worship. In reply, our Lord spoke of a coming change when acceptable worship would not be restricted to any place but would be "in spirit and in truth."

Jesus added these words: "Ye worship ye know not what we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). Here is the next step in Christian knowledge -- one which all must know in head and in heart. Salvation had not entered the mind of the Athenians; the Samaritan woman was nearer to that knowledge for she wished to appropriately worship the one true God. Her knowledge was limited. She did not know the gift of God (John 4:10) or the identity of the stranger who asked for water. But, she professed knowledge of one thing (John 4:25): that when Messiah came he would tell them all things. This earned her further knowledge. What knowledge that was! She received a revelation that the stranger was indeed Christ. Our Lord did not answer the casual or unworthy inquirer who asked whether he was the Christ, but this woman received that affirmation without asking just because her little knowledge was coupled with worship. Let us not pass by this story without noticing that in verses 10 and 14 (John 4:10, 14), knowledge leads to eternal life.

## **Knowledge Begets Fellowship With God**

These examples show that additional knowledge of God accompanies a closer relationship to him and a higher worship of him. That being so, what knowledge and relationship is the portion of Christians? Does the New Testament reveal God in closer relationship to the Christian than to all others? Indeed, yes! There is almost no reference in the Old Testament to God as Father, but with the coming of his Son, this knowledge and the relationship of being sons of God was initiated and later confirmed in the writings of the Apostles.

With such a standing before God, with such knowledge, more acceptable worship will surely follow. True, our worship, praise, and thankfulness are never adequate, considering the honor bestowed upon us. Nevertheless, they increase as we see sonship as a blessed truth rather than a doctrinal fact. Thus, we shall proceed to that pinnacle of knowledge when we experience in Paul's words (Eph. 1:18), *"The eyes of your heart being enlightened, that ye may know..."* We cannot pass on without noticing the word "enlightened" -- knowledge by illumination.

Reflect upon the Lord's teachings in chapters 14 to 17 of John's Gospel. Jesus' life drew to its climax, but the central figure in that small community was perfectly calm. He abode in peace while his companions groped in uncertainty. Was it because of his perfect knowledge and the worship of his Father -- during the hours that he remained unshaken? He knew the Father's plans. He knew that he had to seal the divine purpose of redemption by his own death. He knew that he would be raised from the dead when the great work was finished. Most of all, he knew his father. It was his full knowledge (a higher knowledge than all the others we have considered) that enabled him to stand.

What of the chosen disciples? He gives to them in these four chapters certainties of knowledge which he himself possessed. If he could implant in their hearts the knowledge and the love of God, they would survive the coming ordeal and triumph. The position of the disciples at that time was so critical that an experiential knowledge of the love of God would probably be of greater help and comfort than factual knowledge of his purpose. This has often been true of later Christians, for it is another way of trusting God where lie cannot be traced.

### **Eternal Life / The Fruit of True Knowledge**

The disciples asked many questions that evening (John 14:5,8,22; 16:17,18). Should we assume by these that their knowledge of the Father and of his purpose was meager? Or should we assume that Jesus' summing up of their faith (John 16:31,32) showed their weakness? We suggest instead that their Lord knew them better than they knew themselves. In John 15:15, he tells them that their knowledge of God's workings had raised them to the position of friends with the Father. He is clearly pleased with them in spite of their doubts and uncertainty.

The Lord's personal prayer (chapter 17) tells us how much of the truth concerning Jesus' truth and ministry they had accepted. He details his First Advent work in these words:

*I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work ...I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me ... and ...I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them (John 17:4-9).*

For all their seeming doubts, the disciples were growing in Christian knowledge far surpassing their Jewish brethren. When the Spirit of Truth came to them at Pentecost (following the resurrection of their Lord), it fulfilled one of its functions: leading them into all truth; showing them things to come. Further knowledge, with the satisfaction that it brought, awaited them which would result in a sweeter fellowship and greater incentive to worship him who in grace had done so much for them by bringing them out of darkness into marvelous light.

A year or two later, the Apostle Paul arrived on the scene. His knowledge has been a great stimulus to those who have since believed. Much of his knowledge was gained by revelation, and he soon appeared as the great champion of the truth in Christ Jesus. He was instrumental in spreading that knowledge throughout the then known world, and he was ever thankful for the knowledge granted him. His prominence notwithstanding, Paul continually sought to know more. His aspiration for understanding is summed up in these words: "*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death*" (Phil. 3:10). Yes, the knowledge he sought was that learned by experience, the kind that would produce a thankfulness and worship of him who has so richly blessed us all. Fullness awaits the time when we shall know even as we are known.

The world does not yet know God (John 17:25), but when the world has been sanctified by God's truth they will be made perfect in God (John 17:23). One might ask, To what end? Jesus tells us clearly: "*That they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*" (John 17:3).

With that knowledge comes eternal life. Knowledge, worship, eternal life: the three move together. Of what purpose is life to man without knowledge of God to accompany it?

Of what purpose is knowledge with life through which to express it in worship? With the knowledge of him who gave his son and the knowledge of the son who gave his life, there must come worship and thankfulness. They cannot be separated: the goal of knowledge will be reached, and then the Samaritan woman and others will fully understand the answer of Jesus to her question:

*If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, "Give me to drink"; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water (John 4:10).*

## **Troubles Made Beautiful**

Most oyster shells are pearly in the interior. Pearls are merely the animal's reaction to irritation, all oysters can produce pearls of varying quality. An irritant, like grains of sand between the oyster's mantle and shell, causes the creature to bathe the obnoxious object with layers of pearl. Generally, this material attaches the foreign object to the interior of the shell. Man made pearls are produced by placing such substances in the oyster's shell.

Pearls are annoyances made beautiful. The oyster is not valuable. But the result of the oyster's reaction to its treatment, the irritation -- the pearl is something of great value. Apart from monetary value, the pearl is morally significant. It suggests that human troubles may be made beautiful in the same manner as the oyster manufactures a pearl. Some martyrs are better remembered for the glory with which they endured sorrow than for their beliefs. Biographies offer us moral pearls that are treasured long after the creatures of them have perished, just as the pearl remains of value long after the oyster is discarded.

## **What Have We Done Today?**

We shall do so much in the years to come,  
But what have we done today?  
We shall give out gold in princely sum,  
But what did we give today?  
We shall lift the heart, and dry the tear,  
We shall plant a hope in place of a fear,  
We shall speak with words of love and cheer,  
But what have we done today?

We shall be so kind in the after while,  
But what have we been today?  
We shall bring to each lonely life a smile,  
But what have we brought today?  
We shall give to truth a grander birth,  
And to steadfast faith a deeper worth,  
And shall feed the hungering souls of earth,  
But whom have we fed today?

## The Pathway of Suffering

*"That I may know ... the fellowship of his sufferings."* - Philippians 3:10  
Selected

What strange ambitions are here expressed! What a peculiar passion moved Paul! Anyone could understand Paul's seeking the fellowship of Christ's power, or his eager longing for the communion of Christ's joy and the longing for the Master's love. This yearning to share in Christ's sufferings, however, seems to carry us beyond the range of human passions.

Though that may be, this is the spirit of the soul that truly loves Jesus Christ. The willingness to share the Lord's sufferings is born out of passionate devotion to him.

O the rapture of surrender  
To the claims of love divine!

This desperate desire to participate in Christ's reproach is necessary to a life of close prayer and communion with God. The finer one's sensitivity to God's thoughts and standards, the more one becomes acquainted with grief and suffering. Others who choose to live on the fringe of things may escape the administration of discipline, but life for them will be absent its sweetest fruit and will miss its highest and holiest purpose.

Friendship and fellowship always seem to reach their noblest expression when two hearts are welded together in the furnace of affliction. It is the hammer of suffering that releases the most fragrant spiritual influences, and it makes hearts flow together in ultimate harmony. No music is so rich as that which pain provokes; the deeper the waters through which we pass, the sweeter the songs we sing.

Show me, blessed Master, that it is as I suffer with thee that your image shall be perfected in me! Show me that the vessel that is shaped according to God's design must pass through the fire, just as you did. Make me understand that it is in the fellowship of thy passion that I shall be initiated into the mystery of your love. The splendor of your cross will be seen (and known) to its greatest advantage as I view it from Gethsemane.. The heaviest burdens shall add most to the happiness of my heart. The sharpest thorn shall strengthen my tender spirit. The hardness of the pathway will promote holiness in my life. Even the hammer blows of life will serve only to bind me closer to thee. The wounds that I win on the battlefield of temptation will be marks of my oneness with you.

O blessed mystic union  
With sacrificial love,  
On earth a willing offering,  
Enthroned with Christ above

## Coming By and By

A better day is coming, a morning promised long,  
When truth and right with holy might  
Shall overthrow the wrong;  
When Christ the Lord will listen  
To every plaintive sigh,  
And stretch his hand o'er sea and land,  
With justice by and by.

The boast of haughty tyrants no more shall fill the air,  
But age and youth shall love the truth  
And speed it everywhere.  
No more from want and sorrow  
Shall come the hopeless cry,  
But war shall cease and perfect peace  
Will flourish by and by.

The tidal wave is coming, the year of jubilee;  
With shout and song it sweeps along,  
Like billows of the sea,  
The jubilee of nations  
Shall ring through earth and sky;  
The dawn of grace draws on apace --  
'Tis coming by and by.

Oh, for that glorious dawning we watch and wait and pray,  
Till o'er the height the morning light  
Shall drive the gloom away;  
And when the heavenly glory  
Shall flood the earth and sky,  
We'll bless the Lord for all his works  
And praise him by and by.

-- Linda Beck, 1934



## Spiritual Presence, Spiritual Life

*"Yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you." - John 13:33 Contributed*

Jesus startled his disciples with these words shortly after Judas left the Passover dinner. It must have been distressing to learn that they would not be able to follow him. *"Whither I go, ye cannot come,"* was an expression Jesus had applied to the Jews (those who opposed Jesus). Here he also applied the idea to them!

Peter quickly asked, *"Whither goest thou?"* -- Jesus responded, *"Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."*

Peter therefore asked, *"Why cannot I follow thee now"* (John 13:36, 37)? Jesus response was immediate and clear. Peter was not ready to lay down his life for his Master. Jesus even predicted that, very soon, Peter would deny his Master three times.

Jesus knew what extremely troubling times were coming for his disciples. Peter and the others would need special encouragement if their faith was to survive those events. So it was that he assured them saying:

*"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know"* (John 14:1-4).

Thomas and Philip spoke up and then the Master added these words:

*"Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love Him, and will manifest Myself to him ... Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. I go unto the Father. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe"* (c.f., John 13:36-38; John 14:19-21, 28-29).

Jesus' promises suggest a series of questions. Where was Jesus going? What was "the way" he said "they knew"? Where and when would "they live"? Why did Jesus forewarn the disciples so that they would "believe" then -- if he intended these words to be interpreted as a promise that they would "live" in resurrection glory?

Our Master was a careful teacher who cared for his disciples. He formed his encouragement as the pieces a puzzle; one that the disciples would assemble as they reasoned on his words.

Jesus would shortly go to the Father. This he would do because he would faithfully endure every test of denial and suffering. Every earthly right, including life itself, was surrendered. He was completely loyal to God's will.

*"Lord, why can I not follow you right now? I will lay down my life for you"* (John 13:37). Peter thought he understood his Master. He understood that complete dedication [consecration] was required in exchange for fellowship with the Creator. What Peter claimed to know he was in re-



ality unprepared to do. Peter soon would be ready, however. Jesus encouragement and his prayers would sustain the impetuous one and soon he would emulate Jesus in faithful service. That began after our Savior ascended on high for our justification and sent the gift of the Holy Spirit. *"He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification"* (Rom. 4:25, NASB).

Spiritually, faithful believers began to "live" at Pentecost. Jesus and the Father there came to us, and made their abode with us. *"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him"* (John 14:23). His prior promise anticipated that those present when he spoke would be present also when he came again in this manner. There would be doubts. What was to occur at Pentecost, and what did occur, would trouble them and they would question how it had happened. Our Lord assured them so, saying *"when it is come to pass, ye [you same disciples] might believe"* (John 14:3,29).

These promises were made to encourage and maintain their faith and belief -- particularly so at a time when they would be sorely tested. Those words applied to the disciples then.

Jesus taught that he would go and that they would remain. He also taught them a new commandment and that they were disciples who should love one another. He taught them about his comfort to, and spiritual fellowship with, them. *"in My Father's house are many abodes"* (Marshall Interlinear). *"I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also."* What an assurance! He would then receive them because their faith would spur them on to action. They would lay down their lives for his sake. This act would show them to be God's children.

*He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name* (John 1:12).

Sonship with God depended upon Jesus' interceding with God on behalf of believers. He must and did *"appear in the presence of God for us"* (Heb. 9:24). He prepared a place for all his disciples. There they would receive nourishment and protection. There they would develop spiritually. There they abide in peace and joy. We, along with all believers, have been seated *"together with Him in the heavenlies"* (Eph. 2:6). He has been with us, and we are with Him. It has been thus since Pentecost, and will be so until the end of the age. *"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matt. 28:20).

## Scriptural Varieties of Divine Revelation

Type	Manifestation	Scripture	Significance
General Revelation	In Nature	Psa. 19:1-6	Reveals that God exists Reveals God's Glory
		Rom. 1:18-21	Reveals God is omnipotent Reveals God will judge
people	In Providence	Matt. 5:45	Reveals God is benevolent to all
		Acts 14:15-17	Reveals God provides food for all
people			
rulers		Dan. 2:21	Reveals God raises up and removes
	In Conscience	Rom. 2:14-15	Reveals God has placed his law within the hearts of all people
Special Revelation	In Christ	John 1:18	Reveals what God is like
		John 5:36-37	Reveals God's compassion
		John 6:63; 14:10	Reveals that God gives life to those who believe in Jesus
In Scripture		2 Tim 3:16-17	Reveals all the doctrine, rebuke, correction, and guidance that
			Christian needs for life
the		2 Peter 1:21	Reveals all that God has chosen to disclose through human
authors			directed by the holy Spirit.

-----  
When someone tells me he has never had a moment of probing religious doubt I find myself wondering whether he ever had a moment of vital religious conviction.

-- Harold A. Bosley

-----  
As I grow older, I care less and less what people think about me and more and more about what God thinks of me. I expect to be with him much longer than with you.

-- Robert Baker

-----  
What is hazardous in my life is my work as a Christian. Every day I put faith on the line. I have never seen God. In a world where nearly everything can be weed, explained, quantified, subjected to psych cal analysis and scientific control I persist in making the center of my life a God whom no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, whose will no one can probe. mars a risk

- E Peterson

-----  
'Thy will be done.' No greater words than these Can pass from human lips, than these which rent Their way through agony and blood and sweat, And broke the silence of Gethsemane, To save the world from sin.

-- Studdart Kennedy

-----  
Never try to explain God until you have obeyed him. The only bit of God we understand is the bit we have obeyed.

-- Oswald Chambers

-----  
Envy, hatred, jealousy, animosity, bitterness, and all manner of uncharitableness, are the mental deficiencies of a disordered mind (Gal. 5:9-21). Love, generosity, kindness, goodwill, forbearance, are the mental vitamins necessary to bring about a proper mental balance, and spiritual adjustment, scripturally termed "The spirit of a sound mind" (Eph. 4:23, 5:9-11; 2 Tim. 1:7; Gal. 5:22-23).

-----  
**Entered Into Rest**

Agnes Niedzielkowski, WI  
Carl Shanessey, CANADA