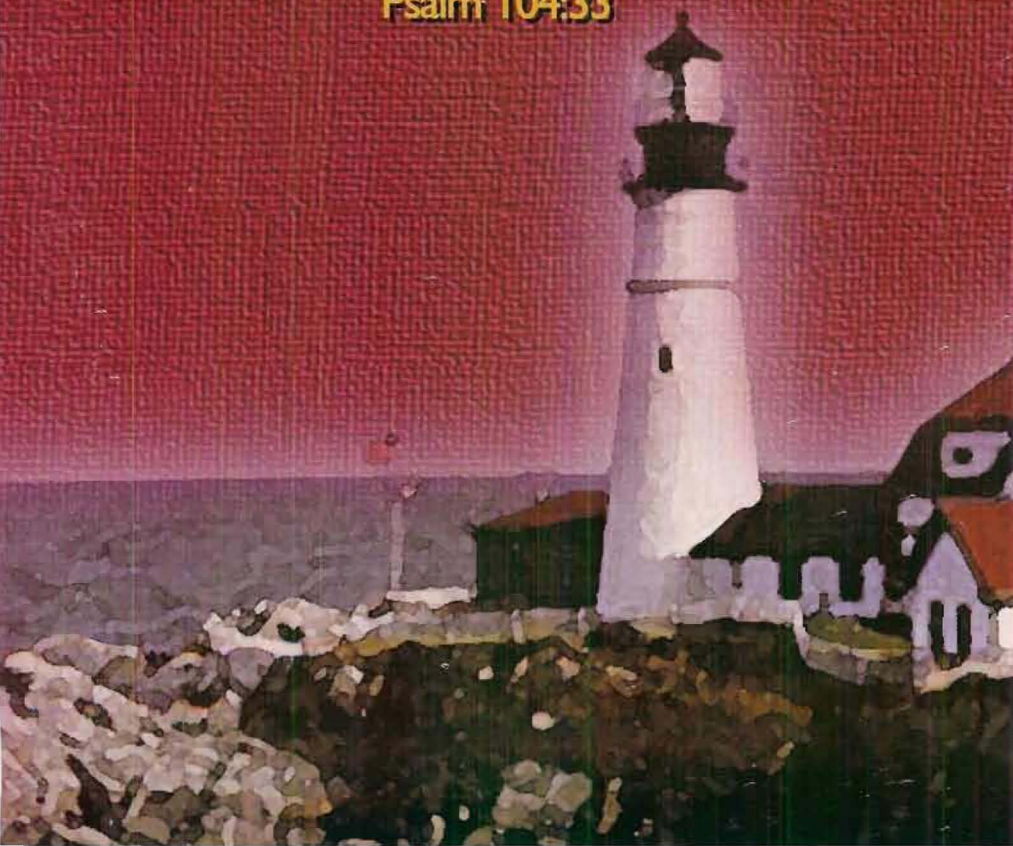


THE SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL
GARFIELD HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST
LECTURESHIP

*I will sing unto the Lord
As long as I live; I will
Sing praise unto my God
While I have my being.*

Psalm 104:33



The Garfield Heights Church of Christ

Presents

THE SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL LECTURESHIP

“Sing Unto The Lord”

Charles Blair
Lectureship Director

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Chapter 1

Singing In The Old Testament

Alan Adams

Singing is one of the members of a larger class known as music; in other words, singing is a specific kind of music. Things within a general class, though distinct in certain ways, **necessarily have attributes** in common. The **Columbia Encyclopedia** makes the following interesting remarks:

Since music is perceived only through the ear, it is necessarily a time art. The most basic element of music is *rhythm*, which originates in motor impulses of the human body.

Melody stems from the capacity of the human voice — undoubtedly the first **musical instrument** [boldface added, AA] — to produce tone, and singing, like the rhythmic impulse, is a motor reaction of the human body.¹

But singing also includes words which themselves are chosen to convey ideas, emotions, images, and so on. Thus, singing is a unique act wherein the mind, emotions, the spirit, and the physical body blend together in marvelous outlet of expression. It is a classic example, among many, of man being endowed by his Creator with a specific need; and at the same time blessed with just the right thing to meet that need.

Man needed an *help meet for him*, thus God made for him a *woman*. He needs to satiate hunger, thus God has made for him *daily bread* and the means by which to have it. Man has need for aesthetic, psychological, conceptual, emotional, and physical expression. God has given him not only the ability to sing, but also the greatest of all objects about which to sing: God Himself and His Law. So, the Psalmist says, *Jehovah is my strength and song* [Psalm 118:14], and *Thy statutes have been my songs* [Psalm 119:54].

The range of our study is limited to the Old Testament, but includes two dispensations of Divine rule over and interaction with the human race: The **Patriarchal Dispensation** began with Adam and continued to the Christian Age. The one which began with Moses, commonly called the **Mosaic Dispensation**, was limited only to the Jews and continued to the Christian Age.

It shall be our purpose to show that singing is a universal phenomenon and as old as the human race. It was designed especially for man and is essential to his total health and well-being as a physical and a spiritual creature. This purpose can be easily accomplished as a concordance search of the Old Testament's thirty-nine books show. Under the words *sing* (and its various grammatical cognates) *song*, *singing*, *music*, and *psalms*, there are more than two hundred references from which to draw information. We will examine our topic under such headings as: **Definition; Biblical Origin and Antiquity; Motivation; Sufficiency; Occasions; Kinds**, and an **Addendum**.

Definition

By *sing* or *singing*, we mean: *To articulate or utter words or sounds in succession with musical inflections or modulations of the voice, so as to*

*produce an effect entirely different from that of ordinary speech.*² And again: *That one of the fine arts which is concerned with the combination of sounds with view to beauty of form and the expression of emotion.*³

Scripture bears out the distinctiveness of singing as opposed to other kinds of speech. As Moses and Joshua descended the mount and heard *the noise of the people as they shouted*, Joshua remarked that it was the *noise of war in the camp*, but Moses said, *It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear* (Exodus 32:17-18). But, the distinction is even more precise as both the Old and New Testaments make clear that singing is its own unique act; it is a form of *speaking*: *“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Jehovah, and spake, saying”* (15:1).

Both Testaments recognize that *playing* — as in playing an instrument — is distinct from “singing.” One may “play” or one may “sing;” one may “sing” and “play” (cf. 2 Chron. 5:13); but, the action of one is not inherent in the action of the other any more than the action of eating is inherent in the action of drinking. Neither should we add any other kinds of vocal, melodic, musical sounds (e.g. whistling or humming) in the act of singing. These distinctions maintained in both the Old and New Testaments are important as we ascertain, based on the New Testament of Christ, how God would have us to worship Him in song today.

Origin and Antiquity

The first mention of the general idea of music is found in Genesis Chapter 4. Mention is made of Cain’s seventh generation, one of which was “Jubal,”

who was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe (v.21). Much of the content of the songs recorded in the Old Testament speaks in pastoral (the peaceful, simple, or natural) terms and scenes. Therefore, it is likely, not coincidental, that Jubal, the musician, is said to be the brother of "*Jabal, the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle*" (v.20).

Given the nature and arrangement of the words in the Hebrew, it may well be the case, that Adam's remarkable declaration, when introduced to that marvel called "woman," was something along the line of an ode, and perhaps actually lyrics to the first love song. Leupold observes,

There is a certain animation prominent in the first recorded word of the first man as he recognizes the purpose of this new gift to him — an animation which is made noticeable by the thrice repeated "this" (*zo'th*). The last two of these cannot be made apparent in the translation of the second clause, which, translated literally would read: *This one shall be called woman because from man was taken this one.*⁴

And so, Leupold's comments continue in this vein showing the unusual nature and arrangement of Adam's words; particularly such poetic words as "*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*" (Gen. 2:23). At any rate, if Adam was the first smitten man to wax poetic and sing of love, he most assuredly has not been the last.

Singing was also a part of the lives of people in the days of later patriarchs such as Abraham and Job (Gen. 31:27; Job 21:12; 29:13).

And most especially, beginning with the song "*sang [by] Moses and the children of Israel unto*

Jehovah" (Exodus 15:1), do we see singing as an integral part of the lives and worship of the Israelites.

It is safe to say that man was brought into this world with such primal needs as eating, sleeping, loving and being loved and with the need to express himself in song.

Motivation

In addition to the natural pleasure and release that comes by singing, the Old Testament records many other things which motivate and prompt man to break forth in song.

There is the need to pay homage or reverence, to *worship* (2 Chron. 29:30; and the entire book of Psalms). Through song, man can express his sense of *awe*: of God's creation (Psalm 65:13; 139:13-16); of God's judgment (67:4); of God's salvation (95:1); of His majesty (98:8); and, of His word (119:172). Singing gives man a wonderful way to express *gratitude* (2 Samuel 22:1; Psalm 13:6; 69:30).

There are times when man needs an outlet for *exultation*: such as in times of victory (Exodus 15; Judges 5) and perceived justice (Jer. 51:48). In times of distress or suffering, singing has the special ability to *comfort* when perhaps nothing else can (Isaiah 26:19; 52:9). It is so often connected with the idea of *joy* (Psalm 126:2). Contrarily, when words so often fail us, singing often meets our need to *mourn* (2 Sam. 1:18; 2 Chron. 35:25).

There is no better means than singing to *stir* or move people to courage (2 Chron. 20:21); to service (Psalm 61:8; Isaiah 12:2), and to passion (Song of Solomon).

Anyone who has ever tried to memorize things knows that it is much easier to remember it in the form of a song. Thus, in the Old Testament, singing was often used as a *memorial* or testimony even

when it was not necessarily pleasant to remember [Num. 21:11; Deut. 31:21].

Of course, as with all "good" things created by God, singing is sometimes wrested from its Divinely intended purposes. Oftentimes, singing is used in connection with things *evil* or impure; such as: debauchery [Exodus 32:18; 1 Cor. 10:6-7; Psalm 69:12; Eccl. 7:5]; the ribald and contemptuous [Isaiah 25:5; Lam. 3:14]; idolatry and arrogance [Daniel 3:5]; and entertaining, self-aggrandizing, will-worship [Amos 6:5; cf. Col. 2:18, 23].

Sufficiency

We alluded to this point in the introduction. When God beheld His creation, He saw that it "was very good" (Gen. 1:31). Perfection, harmony, and symmetry were the order of the day: A world for the man, and a man for the world; a man for the woman, and a woman for the man. In every instance of perceived need, one need not look far to find Jehovah's sufficient provision for that need. The ability to sing is such a sufficient provision corresponding to certain of man's needs and nature.

We are, by our Creator, endowed *aesthetically*. We perceive and thrive on things of beauty. Singing at virtually any time and any place allows the eye, the ear, the mouth, and the mind to come together and transport the singer to "green pastures," and "beside still waters" [Psalm 23:2]. He can merely at mind's thought and with rhythmic sound ascend "his high tower" [Psalm 59:17] and "make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation" [Psalm 95:1]. Through song, he can call upon the mighty choir of nature to join him: "*Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy*" [Psalm 96:12].

And, when in the romantic mood, nothing beats singing for expression of love and beauty. Does it get any better than:

¹¹For, lo, the winter is past; The rain is over and gone; ¹²The flowers appear on the earth; The time of the singing of birds is come, And the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land; ¹³The fig-tree ripeneth her green figs, And the vines are in blossom; They give forth their fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away (Song of Solomon 2:11-13).

Singing corresponds to man *emotionally* and *psychologically*. In the book of Psalms in the Old Testament, the entire gamut of human feeling is run: happiness (Psalm 1), joy (v.100), humility (v.8), peace (v.84), solitude (v.13), fear and anxiety (v.3), remonstrance (v.7), confidence (v.27), courage (v.23), awe (vs.29;33;139), and sorrow (v.51). Truly, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak."⁵

Another marvel of singing is that it allows the physical side of man to be involved in emotional expression. "Lift up your voice," — "make a joyful noise:" This is a means given by God for man to alter his mind and be transported in a positive way. The world says, "be drunken with wine, wherein is riot," whereas God says, "*Speak one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord*" (Eph. 5:17-19).

Most important is the correspondence of singing to man's *spiritual* needs. Man so desperately needs to "*reason of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come*" (Acts 24:25). The singing of "spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19) is no small help. Of "righteousness," one can "*sing of thy word, for all thy*

commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172). It is *"the righteous which sing and rejoice"* (Prov. 29:6). God's people are "righteous" because "they are the ransomed of Jehovah," thus, *"they come singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: They shall obtain gladness and joy, sorrow and sighing shall flee away"* (Isaiah 35:10). Because *"Jehovah is become my salvation"* (Psalm 118:14), then are we *"glad and sing for joy, for thou wilt judge the peoples with equity"* (67:4).

Since our father Adam, man's most pressing need is to once again be in fellowship with God, his Father (cf. Acts 17:29). Two of the great preachers of old looked forward to the coming age of the Messiah and said: *"Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing"* (Zeph. 3:17); and, *"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah"* (Zech. 2:10).

Occasions

"Music, as we know it, has become quite complex as a luxury and entertainment. Music in antiquity, however, was a functional expression of daily life, work, and worship."⁶

There is no doubt that singing in worship became more formal and organized as it was associated with the Temple. First and Second Chronicles contain detailed instructions as to the organization of choirs, choirmasters, song teachers, and veritable orchestras of musical instruments. The headings of many of the Psalms contain musical information and instruction.

But singing had been a part of Hebrew life long before the Temple, and it touched on many aspects of life. "Workers bringing in the harvest might sing a vintage song (Isaiah 16:10; Jer. 48:33), while the

working song of people digging a well (Numbers 21:17) is heard as well.”⁷ Some of the more prominent songs were occasioned by military victories, such as, the defeat of Pharaoh at the sea (Exodus 15:1-21); the Song of Deborah at the defeat of Jabin (Judges 5:1-31); and, the song of the women at David’s return from victory over the Philistines (1 Sam. 18:6-7). Some of the last and most powerful warnings of Moses to the Israelites were given in a song (Deut. 32:1-43).

Kinds

Singing in the Temple worship consisted of choirs of trained men and women (cf. Ezra 2:65; Neh. 7:67). Yet, the assembly would also join the “singers” in unison; and apparently, at times in responsive, or antiphonal chant or singing.

Equally important was the fact that scores and scores of hymns recorded in the Old Testament were written so that any lover of God could easily commit the lyrics to memory. Whenever the opportunity afforded itself, he could with that “first musical instrument” — the voice — break forth in praise to God.

Addendum

Though not specifically the purview of this chapter, we deem it important to make a few comments relative to the use of instrumental music in Old Testament worship, and how that relates to the controversy surrounding the use of the same in New Testament worship.

The fact that instruments of music were used in the Old Testament cannot, as already seen, be denied. Some think that though instrumental music was used in the Old Testament, it was not Divinely authorized.

It is interesting to note that two classes of people think this to be so — One: Those who say that just as it is not authorized in the New Testament, neither was its use authorized in the Old Testament; but the absence of authority for its use in the Old Testament did not preclude its being used, so neither should absence of authority for its use in the New Testament preclude its use now. And, Two: Those who say that it is not authorized under the New Testament, nor was it under the Old Testament; thus, in both instances its use is/was wrong. They would point out that many things (e.g. polygamy, divorce for any cause, etc.) are recorded in the Old Testament as having been done, but which did not meet Divine approval.

From whichever angle, two points are made in support of the claim of the non-authorized use of musical instruments in the Old Testament:

First, it is said that we do not read of any Mosaic revelation as to the use of musical instruments, rather they were a Davidic innovation. It is with agreement that we give J. W. McGarvey's remarks in refutation of this view:

But God's revelation to the Jews did not cease with Moses, as his revelation to us did with the apostles. He continued to speak to them through the prophets, and all that these prophets enjoined or appointed was no less divine than any of the statutes of Moses. Not only was instrumental music divinely authorized, but when the Jews read in the Psalms, in a part of their Bible, the injunction. *Praise him upon the harp &c.*, they must have felt that they were divinely *required* to do so.⁸

David was most assuredly a prophet (Acts 2:30), and it would seem reasonable to conclude that his in-

spired words were precisely what God willed on the matter.

We might also add that the absence of mentioning mechanical instruments by Moses no more precludes their later authorization by the prophets than did absence of his mention of synagogue worship preclude its later Divine approval (cf. Luke 4:16). Furthermore, we know of God's displeasure with David when he sent unauthorized personnel and transportation to fetch the Ark [2 Samuel 6:1-9]. Granting, counterfactually, that God never did authorize David's use of musical instruments, wouldn't his large scale use of them seem to be a far more egregious error than that involving the Ark? Yet, there is absolutely no indication as to God's being at all displeased with the Israelites for using musical instruments in their worship to him, not to mention their use of choirs as opposed to congregational singing.

Second, it is said that the denunciatory words of Amos — *“Woe to them that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David”* (6:5) — constitute proof that God did not like what David had “invented.” A careful contextual reading of the passage, however, will show that emphasis lie not on the “instruments,” rather on the motives and characters of the people using them. Those folks, like many today, saw no conflict between a life of daily immorality and ungodliness and a regular life of worship and religion. For example, reading from Chapter 5, we see that though their acts of worship were the right ones, God said of them: *“I hate, I despise, I will take no delight in, I will not accept them, neither will I regard.”* Because of their incongruity between their moral and religious lives, God said, *“Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream”* (5:21-25). Merely replicating things that even the

great David had inaugurated could not make such people right before God.

In short, yes, musical instruments in worship were authorized in the Old Testament, but they are **not** authorized in the New Testament. Under neither dispensation did, or does, God accept unauthorized worship or service. This should be no odd matter to the Bible student. Much of what was clearly authorized in the Old Testament [altars, incense, animal sacrifice, etc.] would be sinful if used now under the New Testament because they lack Divine authority.

It is also the case that the Old Testament was "*a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things*" [Heb. 10:1]. A study of types and antitypes shows how many of the physical aspects of Old Testament worship were Divinely arranged types of the spiritual realities which came to fruition with the Christian Age. And this matter of musical instruments fits in so beautifully here. In the Old Testament some 13 to 14 mechanical instruments were a part of man's worship of God in song. Those Old Testament instruments are marvelous types of the one and only "spiritual" instrument which God demands when His people today worship him in song: namely, "the heart." In the Old Testament worship there would be those who would strum or pluck the strings of instruments in praise to God. In the New Testament antitype, God has said, "Sing and make melody *psallontes*: pluck, strum with your heart to the Lord" [Eph. 5:19].

Much more, of course, could be said about "Singing in the Old Testament," but that which has been written previously is sufficient to establish our stated purpose: To show that singing is a universal phenomenon and as old as the human race; that it was designed especially for man and is essential to his total health and well-being as both a physical and a spiritual creature.

Isaac Errett said it well,

Among the aids to devotion and spiritual culture, music has ever held an important place. From the book of Job, we learn that “the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy,” when the corner-stone of Creation’s temple was laid by the Divine Architect: A poetical description evidently based on a prevalent practice of employing joyful music at the inauguration or consummation of great events. Even in the dimness of the patriarchal dispensation, God gave “songs in the night” to weary souls that sought His face. The tribes of Israel, on their redemption from Egypt, sang a stirring *recitative* to which Miriam and the daughters of Israel joyfully responded. [We] also appreciate the value of [the] arrangements in the Tabernacle and Temple worship for a full display of the power of music, to hold a nation by a mighty spell to the true religion, and animate them with suitable sentiments of devotion.⁹

Little wonder that someone has said something along the order, “Let me write the songs of a nation, and I will control that nation.”

A study of singing in the Old Testament is indispensable to those who would sing today as God requires, and enjoy the blessings and benefits with which He has endowed this amazing act of harmony, rhythm, and expression.

END NOTES

¹"Music," *Columbia Encyclopedia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 1443.

²"Sing," *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1982), Vol. II, p. 2831.

³p. 1880.

⁴Leupold, H.C., *Exposition of Genesis: Barnes' Notes on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), Vol. I, pp. 135-136.

⁵Congreve, William, "The Mourning Bride (Act I, Sc. I)," *Familiar Quotations by Bartlett* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937), p. 193.

⁶Hopper, Mary, "Music and Musical Instruments," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), Vol. 2, pp. 1501ff.

⁷Queen-Sutherland, Kandy, "Music, Instruments, Dancing," *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), p. 995ff.

⁸McGarvey, J. W., "Instrumental Music," *Millennial Harbinger* (Joplin: College Press [reprint]), Vol. 1865, p. 1867.

⁹Errett, Isaac, "Church Music," Vol. 1861, pp. 551-553.

Chapter 2

Singing In The New Testament

Kenneth Burleson

1. Singing is a part of worship.
2. Singing is as important as any other item of worship.
3. It is as important to participate in the singing as it is to partake of the Lord's supper.
4. One wonders what is going through the minds of those who do not sing while the congregation is singing.
5. One must come to realize that one is not pleasing God when he does not sing in the worship.
6. Not only must we realize the importance of singing we must realize the importance of singing without change.
7. Let us see what the New Testament says about singing.

DISCUSSION:

I. SOME DEFINITIONS:

- A. From lexicons we find five distinct meanings of *psallo*.
 1. To pluck the hair.
 2. To twang the bowstring.
 3. To twitch a carpenter's line.
 4. To touch the chords of a musical instrument.
 5. To touch the chords of the human heart, to sing.

- B. Just because a definition of a word appears in a lexicon does not necessarily mean that word has always had, and still has, that meaning. (Kurfees)
- C. The word *psallo* in the New Testament means the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. (*Thayers Greek English Lexicon*).

II. REASONS FOR SINGING.

- A. We sing praise unto God. We are to praise Him in song.
 - 1. Heb. 2:12
 - 2. Singing praise to the Lord's name is mentioned often in the Old Testament.
 - 3. Some songs of praise are: *Praise Him Praise Him; Praise God; Hallelujah Praise Jehovah; Praise the Lord.*
- B. Sing unto His name. Rom. 15:9
- C. When one is merry, sing psalms. James 5:13
 - 1. There is much joy that should be in our lives as we are delivered from those things that would hold us captive.
 - 2. There is so much for us to sing about today.
 - a. Mercy
 - b. The love of the Father and Christ
 - c. God's wonderful grace
 - d. Salvation that was made available by the death of Jesus Christ.
- D. Melody is to be made in the heart to the Lord.
 - 1. Eph. 5:19
 - 2. Col. 3:16
 - 3. The instrument on which melody is to be made is the heart.
 - 4. Our singing should be out of hearts overflowing with gratitude.
- E. Teaching and admonishing one another. Col. 3:16

1. Many do not realize the importance of teaching and admonishing in song. They need to come to this realization.
 2. Songs change the mind. They influence the mind.
 3. We teach in song. 1 Cor. 14:15
 4. Songs that teach sinners: *God Is Love; He Bore It All; Prepare To Meet Thy God; Christ Arose.*
 5. Songs that admonish one another are: *Did You Think To Pray; Angry Words; Be A Light For Jesus.*
 6. John 4:24 applies to songs as well as preaching.
 7. We must be selective in the songs we sing.
 8. Since each Christian teaches and admonishes, then, each Christian should do his or her best in this. Rom. 12:11
- F. These reasons declare the importance of assembling to sing regularly.
- G. These teach us that we are to sing.

III. NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES ON SINGING.

- A. Matt. 26:30
- B. 1 Cor. 14:15
- C. Heb. 2:12
- D. Eph. 5:19
- E. Col. 3:16
- F. Acts 16:25
- G. Rom. 15:9
- H. James 5:13
- I. In these passages, nothing is mentioned about playing on a mechanical instrument of music.
- J. There are two types of music, Vocal and Mechanical Instrumental. Vocal music is authorized by God in the New Testament.

- K. If we do what they did in the New Testament, we will not use mechanical instruments of music in our worship.
- L. God authorized singing. Authority gives permission to do what is specified and excludes all else not specified or necessary to carry out the command.
- M. We are to speak as the oracles of God. 1 Peter 4:11

IV . THE BIBLE TELLS US THE TYPES OF SONGS WE ARE TO SING.

- A. Psalms. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
 - 1. These praise God and lift high His name, attributes, power and works.
 - 2. Examples: *The Lord Is My Shepherd; The Mighty God, The Omniscient One; What A Savior.*
- B. Hymns. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
 - 1. Hymns are songs of praise, a thanksgiving, and supplication. They teach our dependence on God. Hymns set forth His willingness to hear and bless us.
 - 2. Examples: *Take My life, O Father Mold it; Take My Life, And Let It be; O Thou Fount Of Every Blessing.*
- C. Spiritual songs.
 - 1. These inspire and cultivate feelings of spiritual devotion.
 - 2. Examples: *I Am Resolved; We'll Work Till Jesus Comes; We Plow The Fields.*

V. OBJECTIONS TO THE ABSENCE OF THE MECHANICAL INSTRUMENT IN WORSHIP ARE MADE BY MANY.

- A. "Rev. 14:2 says there are mechanical instruments in heaven:"

1. This does not say that John heard mechanical music. It says that John heard a “voice.”
 2. John described the voice as water, thunder and a harp, that is powerful, loud, yet soothing.
- B. “They were used in the Old Testament.”
1. We are not under the Old Testament law. Col. 2:14
 2. We might as well bring in animal sacrifice as to bring in mechanical instruments on this basis.
- C. “It did not say thou shalt not use mechanical instruments in worship.”
1. It was not necessary, for authority gives permission to do what is specified, and excludes all else not specified, or necessary to the fulfillment of the command.
 2. We were told to sing.
- D. “I like mechanical music.”
1. I like hamburgers too, but we do not use them for the Lord’s supper.
 2. I like coke and tea, but we do not use them in the Lord’s supper.
 3. Just because we like something does not mean it is authorized.
- E. “But psalms means singing with mechanical instruments.” *“psallo”*
1. Classical Greek.
 - a. “To pluck off, pull out-the hair.”
 - b. “To cause to vibrate by touching, to twang.”
 - c. “To touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument.”
 - d. “To play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp.”
 2. New Testament Greek: “To sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” (*Thayers*)

3. If it includes the mechanical instrument, one could not sing properly unless one could also play!

VI. DO WE REALLY MEAN WHAT WE SING?

- A. Some sing but do not mean what they sing, or may not understand what they sing.
- B. Following are some songs we sing; do we really mean it?
 1. *"Send The Light."*
 2. *"Take My Life, O Father, Mold It."*
 3. *"I Am Resolved."*
 4. *"Let Him In."*
 5. *"Did You Think To Pray?"*
 6. *"I'll Live For Him."*
 7. *"I Surrender All."*
 8. *"I Want To Be A Worker."*
 9. *"I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go."*
 10. *"Have Thine Own Way, Lord."*
 11. *"When He Cometh."*

VII. SINGING IS A PART OF THE WORSHIP.

- A. Heb. 2:12
- B. The Ephesian saints were told to sing. Eph. 5:19
- C. The saints at Colossee were told to sing. Col. 3:16
- D. History also speaks of singing as a part of the worship of the church during the first century.
- E. Heb. 13:15
 1. This is worship.
 2. This is what we do when we sing, pray, teach, give and partake of the Lord's supper.

CONCLUSION:

1. Singing is commanded.
2. It is a part of worship.

3. It is to be without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music.

Singing In The New Testament

Singing is a part of the worship. Singing is as important as any other item of worship. It is as important to participate in the singing as it is to partake of the Lord's supper.

One wonders what is going through the minds of those who do not sing while the congregation is singing. The Christian must realize he is not pleasing God if he does not sing in the worship. We must not fail God in one part of our worship. If we fail Him in one, then our worship is not according to Scripture.

Not only must we realize the importance of singing, we must realize the importance of singing without change. Some want to add mechanical instruments of music, humming, hand clapping and swaying back and forth. We must follow God's Word in our worship.

Definitions

From lexicons we find five distinct meanings of *psallo*: "To pluck the hair." "To twang the bow string." "To twitch a carpenter's line." "To touch the chords of a musical instrument." "To touch the chords of the human heart, to sing."

Now, in considering these five distinct meanings of the word *psallo*, shall we select one of them and affirm that this is the correct one, regardless of the time when used? The word at one time meant "to pluck the hair." If we choose this one and as a part of worship begin "to pluck the hair," do you think that would be silly and sinful? If you think it would be

silly and sinful, you are right. It would not be silly and sinful, because that was not a meaning of *psallo* at one time.

The same course could be pursued with the definition of "to twang on a bowstring" and "to twitch a carpenter's line." Both were meanings of *psallo* according to lexicons. Shall we contend for the use of these in worship? Some would reply that definitions one, two and three were before the New Testament, but in the New Testament it has no such meaning. I will agree and add that the same is true with definition four.

We should be able to see from this that we must use wise discrimination in the use of lexicons. Just because a definition of a word appears in a lexicon does not necessarily mean that that word has always had, and still has, that meaning. (Kurfees)

The word *psallo* in the New Testament means to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. It does not allow the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship.

Reasons For Singing

We sing praise unto God. We are to praise Him in song. "*Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee*" (Heb. 2:12). Compare Psalm 22:22, "*I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*" Some songs of praise are: *Praise Him Praise Him; Praise God; Hallelujah Praise Jehovah; Praise the Lord.*

We sing unto His name. "*And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name*" (Rom. 15:9). Singing praise to the Lord's name is mentioned often in the Old Testament. "*Therefore will I give thanks unto thee,*

O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praise unto thy name” (Psalm 18:49). *“Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious”* (Psalm 66:2). *“Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him”* (Psalm 68:4).

When one is merry, sing psalms. *“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms”* (James 5:13). After Israel crossed the Red Sea they sang because they were merry (Exodus 15:1ff). The people sang after David slew Goliath (1 Sam. 18:6). There is much joy that should be in our lives as we slay the Goliaths of our day and as we are delivered from those things that would hold us captive. There is so much for us to sing about today: The mercy of God, the love of the Father and His Son, God’s wonderful grace, salvation that was made available by the death of Jesus Christ.

Melody is to be made in the heart to the Lord. *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (Eph. 5:19). *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Col. 3:16).

The instrument on which melody is to be made is the heart. Our singing should be out of hearts overflowing with gratitude. Those who do not participate sit there with long and sad faces. Their faces are so long it seems they, as a mule, could eat oats out of the bottom of a churn. They do not seem to be happy. It is obvious they are not grateful for all the blessings they receive from God’s loving hands.

Teaching and admonishing one another. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace*

in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). It seems that many do not realize the importance of teaching and admonishing in song. They need to come to this realization.

Songs change the mind. They influence the mind. Some of the songs of the world influence our young people to do wrong. Spiritual songs influence for good.

We teach in song. *"What is it then? I will pray with the with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also"* (1 Cor. 14:15).

Songs that teach sinners: *God Is Love, He Bore It All; Prepare To Meet Thy God; Christ Arose.*

Songs that admonish one another are: *Did You Think To Pray; Angry Words; Be A light For Jesus.*

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). The preceding passage applies to songs as well as preaching. One can teach error in song as well as preaching error. We must be selective in the songs we sing.

Since each Christian teaches and admonishes, then, each Christian should do his or her part in this. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* (Rom. 12:1).

These reasons declare the importance of assembling to sing regularly. These teach us that we are to sing.

New Testament Passages That Deal With Singing

After Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, He and His disciples sang a hymn and went out into the mount of Olives. *"And when they had sung a hymn,*

they went out into the mount of Olives" [Matt. 26:30].

Paul dealt with singing in 1 Cor. 14:15. "What is it then? *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.*"

The Hebrew writer speaks of singing in the church. "Saying, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee*" [Heb. 2:12].

Paul discusses singing in the Ephesian letter. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" [Eph. 5:19].

The Colossian letter tells us what singing is. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" [Col. 3:16].

Paul and Silas were in a difficult situation in the Philippian jail. They made the best of the circumstance in which they found themselves. They prayed and sang praises to God. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" [Acts 16:25].

Christians were to sing unto the name of the Lord. "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" [Rom. 15:9].

James 5:13, "Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."

In these passages nothing is mentioned about playing on a mechanical instrument of music. There are two types of music, vocal and mechanical instrumental. Vocal music is authorized by God in the New Testament.

If we do what they did in the New Testament time, we will not use mechanical instruments of music in our worship.

God authorized singing. Authority gives permission to what is specified and excludes all else not specified or necessary to carry out the command. We are to speak as the oracles of God. *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever"* (1 Peter 4:11).

The Bible Tells Us The Types Of Songs We Are To Sing

Psalms. *"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"* (Eph. 5:19). *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Col. 3:16). These praise God and lift high His name, attributes, power and works.

Examples: *The Lord Is My Shepherd; The Mighty God; The Omniscient One; What A Savior.*

Hymns. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16

Hymns are songs of praise, thanksgiving and supplication. They teach our dependence on God. Hymns set forth His willingness to hear and bless us. Examples: *Take My Life, O Father Mold It; Take My Life, And Let It Be; O Thou Fount Of Every Blessing.*

Spiritual songs. These inspire and cultivate feelings of spiritual devotion.

Examples: *I Am Resolved; We'll Work Till Jesus Comes; We Plow The Fields.*

Objections To The Absence Of The Mechanical Instrument In Worship

“Rev. 14:2 says there are mechanical instruments in heaven.” This does not say that John heard mechanical music. It says that he heard a “voice.” John described the voice as water, thunder and a harp, that is powerful, loud, yet soothing.

“They were used in the Old Testament.” We are not under the Old Testament law (Col. 2:14-16). We might as well bring in animal sacrifice as to bring in mechanical instruments on this basis.

“It did not say thou shalt not use mechanical instruments in worship.” It was not necessary, for authority gives permission to do what is specified, and excludes all else not specified or necessary to the fulfillment of the command. We were told to sing. God said it, that is it.

“I like mechanical music.” I like hamburgers but that does not authorize their use for the Lord's supper. I like coke and tea but we do not use them for the Lord's supper. Just because we like something does not mean it is authorized.

“But psalms means singing with mechanical instruments.”

“psallo”

Classical Greek: “To pluck off, pull out the hair; to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang; to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument. To play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp, to sing to the music of the harp.”

New Testament Greek: “To sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” If this includes the mechanical instrument, but it does not, one could not sing properly unless one could also play!

Do We Really Mean What We Sing

Some sing but do not mean what they sing, or may not understand what they sing. Following are some songs we sing, read them carefully, do we really mean it: *Give Me The Bible; Send The Light; Take My Life, O Father, Mold It; I Am Resolved; Let Him In; Did You Think To Pray; I'll Live For Him; I Surrender All; I Want To Be A Worker; I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go; Have Thine Own Way, Lord; When He Cometh.*

Singing Is A Part Of The Worship

"Saying I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" [Heb. 2:12].

The Ephesian saints were told to sing [Eph. 5:19]. The saints at Colossee were told to sing [Col. 3:16]. History also speaks of singing as a part of the worship of the church during the first century.

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" [Heb. 13:15]. This is worship. This is what we do when we assemble together and sing, pray, teach, give and partake of the Lord's supper.

Conclusion

Singing is commanded and God expects us to obey Him. It is a part of worship. Therefore, if we do not sing we are not obeying God. It is to be without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music. *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" [Matt. 7:21].*

Chapter 3

We're Marching To Zion

Guy F. Hester

The song that I have been assigned to speak on at this time is "We're Marching to Zion. "

Come we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne,
And thus surround the throne.

Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But children of the heav'nly King,
But children of the heav'nly King,
May speak their joys abroad,
May speak their joys abroad.

The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heav'nly fields,
Or walk the golden streets,
Or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry;
We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground,
We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground,

To fairer worlds on high,
To fairer worlds on high.

We're marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We're marching upward to Zion,
The beautiful city of God.

The apostle Paul wrote,

¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:16-17).

The subject of singing is one of no little importance because it is a Bible subject and all Bible subjects are important. The Bible very clearly teaches that singing is a part of scriptural worship. God's Word tells us how to be saved from our past sins, and it also tells us how to live and worship as children of His that we may be saved eternally at last. In other words, the Bible contains full instructions relative to our worship. According to the passage just noted, one way in which a Christian is to render praise and devotion to God is by singing. For that reason, I am glad this entire lectureship is giving emphasis to this subject, because it is sorely needed. We also learn from the text just stated that one of the prerequisites to scriptural singing is to be filled with a knowledge of God's word. The writer said, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom." Hence, Christians should be thoroughly familiar with the scriptures which tell us how to sing. We learn

from Matthew 26:30 that after Jesus had instituted the supper with His disciples, *“they sung an hymn, and went out into the mount of Olives.”* The things which Christ did while He was here on earth were examples for Christians to follow. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the church at Ephesus, said, *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”* (Eph. 5:19). The writer of the Hebrew letter, in a prophecy concerning Christ, said, *“I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee”* (Heb. 2:12). Then James said, *“Is any among you...merry? let him sing psalms”* (James 5:13). Indeed, there is great and wonderful power in the right kind of singing.

Singing is a very effective method of teaching. Paul said, *“Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.”* We can teach sinners the facts concerning the death of Christ and its meaning by singing such songs as *“There was one who was willing to die in my stead.”* Another fact of the Scriptures is that the blood of Christ is the cleansing power, and only atonement for the sins of mankind. *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7). ¹³*“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins”* (Col. 1:13-14). The great songs about the blood of Christ teach the importance and value of the blood of Christ and the connection between the blood of Christ and obedience (Rom. 6:3-4).

There are songs concerning the splendor and beauty of heaven. Songs that inspire and encourage

weak church members. Songs that teach the importance of prayer. Songs that will lift us when we are down in spirit. *"Does Jesus care when my heart is sad? O yes he cares, I know he cares."* *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Heb. 4:15).

But now to our subject: *"We're Marching to Zion."* There are so many great and important lessons that could be presented based upon the words of this song, but for the sake of brevity, we will use only a few of the most obvious. First, let us take a look at the background of the word "ZION."

The word "ZION" is the transliteration of the Hebrew and Greek words that originally referred to the fortified hill of pre-Israelite Jerusalem between the Kedron and Tyropean valleys. Scholars disagree as to the root meaning of the term. Some authorities have suggested the word was related to the Hebrew word that meant "dry place" or "parched ground." Others relate the word to an Arabic term that is interpreted as "hill crest," or "mountainous ridge."

The name "Zion" was mentioned first in the account of David's conquest of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6-10; 1 Chron. 11:4-9). The phrase "stronghold of Zion" may have referred to only the fortified section of the city. Jerusalem was the name of the city state as a whole and included numerous villages and houses located outside of the fortified area of the city itself. After David captured Zion, he resided there and changed its name to the "city of David."

Zion was used by biblical writers in a variety of ways. Many of the Psalmists used the term to refer to the Temple built by Solomon (2:6; 48:2; 84:7; 132:13). In Isaiah 1:27, the idea of "Zion" included the whole nation. Zion also stood for the capital of

Judah [Amos 6:1]. The most common usage of Zion was to refer to the city of God (Isa. 1:27; 28:16; 33:5).

Zion was understood, also, to refer to the heavenly Jerusalem (Isa. 60:14; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1). John saw the new Jerusalem descending from heaven. This incomparably beautiful city is described in such a way that it is clear that the goal of the whole sweep of biblical revelation (the glory of the nations, the tree of life, a river of life, eternal vision of and communion with God) is fulfilled, and God reigns with His people forever and ever [Rev. 21–22:5]. It is in the later sense that Christians today are “marching to Zion.”

Zion, The Heavenly Jerusalem

“The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel” [Isaiah 60:14]. *“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels”* [Heb. 12:22]. *“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads”* [Rev. 14:1].

“Come, We That Love The Lord”

Only those who love the Lord are “marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.” *“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind”*

[Matt. 22:35-37]. In our everyday dealing with our fellow men, we find it easy to love those who love us, and certainly for this reason we should love God supremely who loved us so much, and has done so much for us. He gave us our very being in this world and has supplied our every need in a temporal way. Then in addition to all of this, He gave His Son to die for us on the cross to redeem us from sin that we might be saved eternally in the world to come. No wonder John said, "*We love him, because he first loved us*" (1 John 4:19).

The test of one's love for the Lord is his obedience to His will. John said, "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome*" (1 John 5:3 NKJV). Hence, God has not required anything that is burdensome or unreasonable of His children. When we do everything God has required of us it is only our "reasonable service." Paul said, "*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*" (Rom. 12:1). If we love the Lord as we should, we get our greatest enjoyment from doing His will. If we fail to obey Him, that is proof beyond doubt that we do not really love Him as we should.

Christ demands we love Him more than we love our parents, wives, husbands, children, and even one's self. He said, "*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*" (Matt. 10:37). "*If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*" (Luke 14:26). We know that the Bible does not teach us to hate our families in the ugly sense of the word for the same Bible tells us we are to love our families (Eph.

5:25). Since the Bible does not contradict itself, we must conclude that this means that we must love Him more than we love anyone or anything else in the world and that He must always come first in every thing. If a choice must be made between the Lord and a member of our own family, we must always choose Jesus.

Jesus said, *"If you love me keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). Keeping part of His commandments is not proof that we love Him. Neither is keeping all of His commandments part of the time, proof that we love Him. Faithful and constant obedience to His will at all times in our everyday lives, as well as our worship, is proof that we love Him.

To love the Lord is to **love His church**. Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25). Certainly we should love the church enough to give our lives in humble service to it. If we love the church, we will not have to be begged to live faithful lives that will not bring reproach on the church. Love for the church will not allow little hindrances to keep its members from attending the services (Heb. 10:25).

To love the Lord is to **love the truth**. People are lost who *"receive not the love of the truth"* (2 Thess. 2:10). If we love the truth, we will search for it (John 5:39). Paul said of the Bereans: *"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so"* (Acts 17:11).

If we love the truth, we will **contend earnestly for it** (Jude 3), **stop the mouths of false teachers** (Titus 1:9-11), **patiently teach it** (2 Tim. 4:1-4), and **have no fellowship with the enemies of it** (Eph. 5:11; John 7:7; Acts 19:8).

To love the Lord is to **love the brethren** (1 John 3:14). *"Let brotherly love continue"* (Heb. 13:1). *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the*

truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). Brethren sometimes have faults of which we do not approve. We are not to approve of their faults, but we are to love them in spite of their faults. We must love the brethren in spite of what they may do or say about us. When Jesus was dying on the cross, He prayed for those who were crucifying Him, and Paul says, "*If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*"

To love the Lord is to **love the lost**. God loved the lost and gave His Son. Christ loved the lost and lost His life. Now finish this statement: "I loved the lost and gave my ____." If we really love the Lord we will give our time, talent, and money for the salvation of lost souls.

"And Let Our Joys Be Known"

The happiest people in all the world are those who are genuine Christians. My father used to say, "The problem with many church members is that they have just enough religion to make them miserable and not enough to make them happy." A little girl, looking at a mule said, "Grandma, is that mule a Christian?" The grandmother replied, "Why no, what makes you ask that?" "Well, he sure has a long face about something," the little girl said.

The first thing that is said about the Eunuch after he obeyed the gospel is that "*went on his way rejoicing*" (Acts 8:39). "*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord*" (Phil. 3:1). "*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice*" (Phil. 4:4).

"Join In A Song With Sweet Accord"

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1)!

The unity of believers is one of the things that weighed heavily upon the heart of the Lord just before he went to the cross. He said in His prayer:

²⁰Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; ²¹That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. ²²And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one [John 17:20-22].

“We’re Marching Thro’ Immanuel’s Ground To Fairer Worlds On High”

There is another song we sometimes sing: *“This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through; My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue.”* Heaven, what a beautiful word! What a beautiful thought! Heaven is the long promised home of every soul that is saved. We like to sing about it, and we like to preach about it. But the question that many people keep asking is, “What is heaven really like?” If I die as a Christian, what can I really expect when I get to heaven? Heaven is so wonderful that it is difficult to describe. In fact, I do not believe it is possible for human language to adequately describe the glory of that eternal home of the righteous. But the Bible gives us enough information that we may understand some of the glories and wonders of that beautiful home of the soul.

Heaven, that beautiful home of the soul in “fairer worlds on high” will be a most marvelous home. Listen carefully to the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:1, *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of*

God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Then consider these words of Jesus in John 14:1-6,

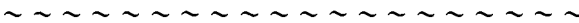
¹Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. ³I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. ⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. ⁵Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? ⁶Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The "fairer worlds on high" is a place without any sorrows or problems. There will be no tears, nor will there be any pain. I don't know how God will do this, but He has promised; and I accept it by faith. Let us look at a couple of passages from the book of Revelation. ¹⁶"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:16-17). How many innocent children went to bed hungry last night! At this very moment there are little children in this world who are dying of starvation, but in heaven they will never be hungry again. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

No tears in heaven, no sorrows given,
All will be glory in that land;
There'll be no sadness, all will be gladness,
When we shall join that happy band.



When we reach that home and lay our burden
down,
God shall wipe away all tears;
When we join the saints and wear a robe and
crown,
God shall wipe away all tears.



When the pearly gates unfold for you and me,
God shall wipe away all tears;
When we see the Christ who set the captive free,
God shall wipe away all tears.



When we sweetly sing with all the ransomed
throng,
God shall wipe away all tears;
No more partings come to mar that happy song,
God shall wipe away all tears.

Chapter 4

There Is Much To Do

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

There is much to do in the Lord's work. This song is calling us to do the Lord's bidding. Consider some reasons why there is much to do for Christ.

First, the United Nations predicted that the world's population would reach 6 billion this year, 8.5 billion by 2025, and 10 billion by 2050. We are told that approximately 97 million people will be added each year until 2000. The U. S. Bureau of the Census tells us that every two seconds nine babies are born and three people die. The net increase of three people each second results in a growth in world population of 10,600 per hour, 254,000 per day, 1.8 million per week, 7.7 million per month, and 93 million per year (*The Universal Almanac* - 1996, Wright, John W., p. 356). And, how many souls are hurled into eternity unprepared to meet God?

Second, there is much to do to strengthen the local church. The inspired record commands us to help the weak. The writer of Hebrews exhorts, "*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; ¹³And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed*" (Heb. 12:12-13). Paul wrote, "*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men*" (1 Thess. 5:14). By the preaching and teaching of the

word of God, we are able to strengthen the brethren (Acts 20:32).

Third, there is much to do in the area of benevolence (Gal. 2:9,10). We must care for the poor and needy (James 1:27; 1 Tim. 5:16; Acts 6:1-7). We can visit the hospitals, nursing homes and shut-ins (Matt. 25:31-46). There is no need for a program to be started by the church in order for a Christian to visit a needy person. Just go! A visit to a shut-in will brighten his or her day. One might consider taking the shut-in for a drive. There is much for all of us to do in the kingdom of our Lord.

Fourth, there is much to do because the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. If we want to continue to enjoy the freedom in Christ, unshackled from denominationalism, we must constantly be on guard against the onslaughts of Satan. So, we must watch for the enemy and warn our brethren (1 Peter 5:8; Acts 20:28-32; Phil. 3:17,19).

Liberalism is making a frontal attack against every distinguishing characteristic of the Lord's church at this present hour. We are living in perilous times. The Change Agents among us are crying that we are "no longer able to capture the imagination of a new generation." Therefore, they tell us we should not look at the Bible as a blueprint, or pattern, but as a love letter. They are fellowshiping denominations and calling some "brothers" who are not in the Lord's church. Max Lucado has denied the essentiality of baptism. Some, who would not dare to deny such, do not hesitate to fellowship Lucado and others of similar persuasion.

Carson Reed, minister for the Westlake Church of Christ in Indianapolis, is standing beside other Change Agents in the church. **Heartland**, sponsored by Westlake, has had sectarians to speak on their program. In 1998, Heartland will have met at a Christian Church.

The musical group called "**Full Access**" initially imitated the sounds of musical instruments, but later decided to go all the way by adding the real instruments to their programs. Their first concert with "a full band" was at the Otter Creek Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee. They have also appeared at the **Nashville Jubilee Youth Explosion** and **Winterfest** in Gatlinburg. There are also special musical groups that are being used in the worship service. Singing during the Lord's supper and clapping is a common practice in some congregations today which claim to be following the New Testament. So, there is much to do in confronting these errors.

Isaiah's Response To God's Call

The chorus of this song of exhortation is based on Isaiah's words in response to God's commission for him. Isaiah said, "*Also I hear the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me*" (Isa. 6:8). How was it that the Messianic Prophet could step forward and volunteer? How can we imbibe that courageous attitude and that willing spirit? Before we can answer the gospel's call today (2 Thess. 2:14) as Isaiah responded to God's calling in the long, long ago, we must look to the directions that the prophet looked. It is then that we can do God's bidding as that eighth century prophet did before the coming of our Lord and Saviour.

Isaiah Looked Upward

Isaiah was carried in a vision to a heavenly scene in the year of king Uzziah's death. The tenth king of Judah after the division of Israel was Uzziah. His reign had been prosperous insofar as conquering other nations and building projects. For fifty-two

years he sat on the throne of Judah. But because he burned incense unto the Lord in the house of God, he was struck with leprosy. Consequently, he lived in a house of isolation until the day of his death, which was approximately 740 B.C. This marks the time of the commission given to Isaiah.

The direction the prophet looks first is up. He sees *“the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.”* It was an awesome sight, an inspiring scene. Above the temple

²stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke (Isa. 6:2-4).

The word of God reveals to us the true and living God. We will not be given a vision such as Isaiah received; but we must see the wonderful and awesome characteristics of God in order to do his bidding. Please consider some of them.

God is everlasting. Isaiah says of him, *“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary...”* (Isa. 40:28, 31)? The Psalmist prays, *“Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. ²Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God”* (Psa. 90:1-2).

God is mighty. Isaiah prophesied of him, saying, *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:*

and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6). Christ introduced himself in the opening lines of the book of Revelation as "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8). Paul shows the exalted place of Christ in Ephesians (Eph. 1:20-23).

The God we must see if we are going to do his bidding was **the creator of this world** (Gen. 1; Exodus 20:11). Paul declares him to the philosophers on Mars Hill (Acts 17:22-31). He also informs his hearers and generations to follow that this same Creator will one day judge us through his Son (Acts 17:30-31).

The **God** whose will we must do **knows all. He is omniscient.** The Psalmist said, "*If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart*" (Psa. 44:20). Jesus knows all men and knows what is in men (John 2:24-25; Acts 1:24). God said, "*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...*" (Isa. 46:9-10).

God is omnipotent; i.e., everywhere. There is no hiding from his all-seeing eye. Just ask Adam and Eve, or Jonah, or the Psalmist. The latter sang, "*Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ⁸If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there...*" (Psa. 139:7-10).

The characteristic of God that is emphasized in the scene depicted by Isaiah is that of **holiness. God**

is holy. The fiery angelic beings cried, *“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory”* (Isa. 6:3). The three repeated words, “Holy, holy, holy,” are for emphasis. The God who is calling for reapers to go into his field today is separate and apart, distinct and different, above and beyond all others. The writer of Hebrews declares that Christ our high priest is *“...holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens”* (Heb. 7:26).

The apostle Peter wrote, *“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: ¹⁵But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”* (1 Peter 1:14-16). In all realms of life, Christians are to live holy lives. We are a distinct and separate people. We have been set apart for a holy use (Eph. 5:26; John 17:17; 1 Peter 1:1-2). The reason why we are to be holy is because He is holy.

Fleshly Israel at one time were God’s special people – a holy nation. After distinguishing between the clean and unclean animals, the former of which the Israelites could eat, God said,

⁴⁴For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: Neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ⁴⁵For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy (Lev. 11:44-45).

Before the receiving of the ten commandments and the rest of the law of Moses, God told Moses to tell the children of Israel,

⁴Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: ⁶And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation... [Exodus 19:4-6].

Israel of old was the apple of God's eye – special, holy.

Likewise, today **the church is God's Israel** (Gal. 6:16; Matt. 19:28; James 1:1). And in all realms of life, children of God are to be holy. We have been sanctified – set apart for a holy use by the gospel (John 17:17; Eph. 5:26; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13-14). We are to live holy lives – not as the world lives (Titus 2:11-14; James 1:27; 1 John 1:15-17). We are to be pure in thought, word, and deed (Phil 4:8; Col. 4:6; 1 John 3:18).

Isaiah Looked Inward

Looking upward at the exalted King caused Isaiah to look inward at himself. The text says, "*Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts*" (Isa. 6:5).

The manifestations of the presence of God or the presence of one of his heavenly messengers caused men to humbly fall in prostration. Joshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship when the captain of the host of the Lord stood before him (Josh. 5:13). Ezekiel fell upon his face when the likeness of the glory of the Lord appeared (Ezek. 1:28-2:1). John, the apostle of love, fell as though dead at the feet of

the Alpha and the Omega who appeared to him on the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:17).

Isaiah saw in the vision the holiness of God and his greatness. We today see the same, but through the pages of Holy Writ (Heb. 1:1-3). But whether by vision, as the prophets of old witnessed, or through the pages of God's word today, God's holiness and greatness should cause us to see our spiritual condition. The Psalmist sang,

¹O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. ²Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. ³When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; ⁴What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Psa. 8:1-4).

Isaiah cried, "Woe is me! For I am undone." He recognized he was a sinner and in need of salvation. No man can do God's bidding until he sees his own sinful condition. The apostle Paul in a clear and decisive manner showed that both Jew and Gentile are guilty of sin. In Romans 1 he showed that the Gentile was guilty of sin; in Romans 2 he pointed out that the Jew was guilty of sin; in Romans 3, he concluded that all are under sin and there is none who is righteous (Rom. 3:9-10, 23). But each man must realize his own sinful state. Such realization should cause one to humble himself (Matt. 5:3; Acts 2:37).

The only way one can learn of his sinful state is through the word of God. Paul said, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not

known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7).

Just as the law of Moses made sin known in Paul's life, the law of Christ, the gospel, makes sin known in our own lives. Paul plainly declared, "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).* Even as children of God, we sin and stand in need of forgiveness. First John 1:8 and 10 reads, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*"

We become sinners, not by inheritance, but by the transgression of God's law. Ezekiel 18:20 says, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*" James wrote,

¹³Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

¹⁴But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

¹⁵Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:13-15).

John tells us, "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).* Children cannot transgress God's law, because they are too young to know right from wrong. They are not accountable (Deut. 1:39; 2 Cor. 8:12). All of us who have reached the age of accountability can cry, "Woe is me! For I am undone." Until a man realizes his need of forgiveness,

he will not step forward in sincerity and say, "Here am I; send me."

Isaiah recognized he was also dwelling "in the midst of a people of unclean lips." He was made aware of the fact that those around him were in need of forgiveness. They needed their iniquities removed and their sins purged too.

But before one can preach to others the saving message, he must begin with himself (Acts 2:41; Phil. 2:12). The ant prepares its food in the summer for the winter. Moses spent eighty years in preparation for his last forty years as leader of the children of Israel. Ezra prepared himself to teach in Israel. "*For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments*" (Ezra 7:10). Jesus spent thirty years on earth preparing for three and a half years of ministry. The apostles were trained by the Lord for the three and a half years in order to become ambassadors for Christ. Timothy was taught by his grandmother, mother, and Paul in order to preach the gospel. Paul commanded Timothy, "*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim. 2:2).

Isaiah Looked Outward

Isaiah looked first upward to God, then inward at his own soul. These views then caused him to look outward at the people about him who were in need of the message of salvation. The prophet then heard the voice of the Lord saying, "*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*" God was looking for someone to send. He did not want to send anyone unqualified. As in every age, God wants men to be faithful. To send a man who was not dependable, would be a mistake. The wise man Solomon wrote, "*Confidence*

in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint" (Prov. 25:19).

These questions still need to be considered by the Lord's church today. When elders are looking to evangelize a certain field, they need to ask, "Whom shall we send?" No unfaithful brother should be sent (1 Cor. 4:2). No false teacher should be sent (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9:11). It may not be wise to send a brother without also sending his wife, because of the situations that could arise. It is certainly scriptural for a church to send both the preacher and his wife (1 Cor. 9:5).

Elders also must consider who is going for them. Paul desired fruit that might abound to the Philippians' account. The preacher sent out is an extension of the congregation(s) or individuals who send him. They are having fellowship in his work. If they send a slacker, then there is little, if any, fruit that abounds to their account. If they send a false teacher, then they are responsible for helping to populate hell (2 Pet. 2:1-3). If they send a man who is morally bankrupt, then the sending church is responsible to some degree for the shame he brings on the church. Churches must be just as concerned about men they support in distant places as they are with the one who is hired to do the preaching locally. It is sad to say that not all elderships are as discerning along this line as God requires them to be.

Isaiah is instructed to "Go and tell this people...." God has often commanded others to "go" and "tell." The angel told the women who had come to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus, "*He is not here: for he is risen, as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you*" (Matt. 28:6). Jesus, before he ascended into heaven, commanded his apostles, "*Go ye*

therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 18:19). The angel of God, after releasing the apostles from prison, told them, "*Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life*" (Acts 5:20). The early church, with a push from her persecutors, went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:1-4). The apostle Paul went on four journeys, preaching the gospel and remembering the poor (Acts 13-28). We, too, must teach others the gospel if we are going to be as they were in the first century.

Isaiah's response to God's queries was, "Here am I; send me." He did not say, "Let George do it!" Nor did he try to flee from his responsibility as did Jonah. He was both willing and able to do God's bidding.

In order for us to be able to respond in like manner to the gospel's call, we must be willing and ready. Unwillingness, a lack of desire to do God's bidding, is one of the biggest hindrances to the growth of the church. It is not that we do not know what to do. It is not that we do not have enough work for all to do. The problem is a lack of desire to do! John 7:17 reads, "*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*" The thought is that if any man resolves or determines to know God's will, he can know it. Too many in the church have the grasshopper attitude of the ten spies; i.e., "We be not able" (Num. 13:31).

God said to Isaiah, "*Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. ¹⁰Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed*" (Isa. 6:9, 10).

Certain events foretold by the prophets of old are in the Scriptures attributed to the prophets. God told Jeremiah that he would root out, pull down, destroy, and throw down nations (Jer. 1:10). The weeping prophet did this by his pointed prophecies of their doom. He also did some building and planting. Ezekiel said, "*And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face*" (Ezek. 43:4). It was Nebuchadnezzar, not Ezekiel, who destroyed the city of Jerusalem; but Ezekiel is said to have destroyed it by his pronouncement of its doom. In like manner, Isaiah would cause the people's heart to wax fat, their ears to become heavy and their eyes to close by his preaching.

Isaiah was warned by God that his audience would not listen. Ezekiel was given a similar message (Ezek. 1). But the fact that people were not going to take heed to Isaiah's message, did not excuse the prophet from his duty to proclaim it. Gospel preachers today are commanded to "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*" (2 Tim. 4:2). Though all should be interested in getting results, our duty is to sow the unadulterated seed of the kingdom. The farmer sows, looking for the harvest. Gospel preachers must faithfully proclaim the gospel, hoping for a harvest, but leaving the results to God (Luke 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:6-15).

It needs to be highlighted by every young preacher of the truth and underscored by every older preacher of the gospel that not all will obey the truth. Some will close their hearts, eyes, and ears from hearing the truth. Just mark it down, not all will be receptive to the truth of God's word. They did not in Noah's day (1 Peter 3:18-20). They did not in Isaiah's

day. The Jews rejected the Son of God (John 1:11; Matt. 13:13-15; Isa. 53). The Jews refused to listen to Stephen (Acts 7:51-60). They hardened their hearts against Paul also; so, he turned to the Gentiles (Acts 28:22-28). Should we expect it to be any different?

How Long Should I Preach?

This was Isaiah's question to God. If these people are going to stubbornly refuse thy word, how long shall I preach to them? This is a question that has weighed heavily upon many a preacher's heart who has contemplated making a move. Jesus said to his apostles who were sent out on the limited commission, *"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet"* (Matt. 10:14). Paul did this very thing in Antioch of Pisidia. Luke records, *"But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium"* (Acts 13:51).

God told Isaiah to *"preach until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, ¹²And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land"* (Isa. 6:11-12). God was referring to the time when Judah would be taken into captivity and the land left desolate. Then there would be no need to preach to them. All hope would be gone. Their punishment would be upon them.

When should the preacher leave? He should not leave at the first sign of trouble. He should not flee because a false teacher or a Diotrephes moves into the congregation. Why should faithful brethren turn over their building to false teachers or some contentious person? One should not leave because he has the opportunity to preach for a larger, more prestigious congregation which might pay better.

When should the preacher leave? If the situation has become so hopeless that it is impossible to influence others for good, it may be time for the preacher to pack his bags. It may be the case that there are not enough in the congregation willing to stand up to the troubling element that necessitates one's having to make a move. Sometimes members of the church will allow the preacher to be the scapegoat, and the problem remains. Many a "goat" has been sent out into the wilderness because weak brethren refuse to stand against the troubler(s). If one's family is going to be hurt spiritually by staying, it would be time to leave. If one can be of greater service in another place, he might consider leaving; but he should be careful not to hurt the work he is leaving. Preachers must constantly check their motives.

Conclusion

Isaiah was ready to do God's bidding after he looked upward to God, inward at himself, and outward toward lost souls. We, too, must look in these same directions in order to do God's bidding. Let us do so in order that we might say, "Here am I; send me."

Chapter 5

The Lord Had Been Mindful Of Me

Sidney White

Man generally has a fear of being alone. This is especially true when we face trying and difficult times in our lives. When sickness comes we want family and friends around us, we want a knowledgeable medical staff close by or others who can help us through. When death seems close at hand, we want our family by our bedside. When we are facing persecution as Christians, we usually want someone by our side to strengthen us. But the greatest source of strength and comfort to the child of God is knowing that God knows, remembers us, is mindful of us.

Another great song raises the question, “Does Jesus Care?” The song raises a number of situations: When my heart is pained, as burdens press, cares distress, the way grows weary and long, when the way is dark, when I’ve tried and failed, when I’ve said good-bye to the dearest on earth to me — does Jesus care? Then a definite “O yes He cares” rings out in the chorus. What a tremendous thought, and reality, that Jesus cares, that the Lord has been mindful of me.

Every spiritually minded person desires God to remember him. We hear Nehemiah plead, “Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof” (Neh. 13:14). Again,

"Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy" (v.22). And again, "Remember me, O my God, for good" (v. 31). Then we hear David pleading with God to, "Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, and thy loving kindness...Remember not the sins of my youth" (Psalm 25:6-7). Again, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation" (Psalm 106:4).

Would it not be the prayer of each of us, "Remember me, O my God." Then when we turn through the pages of inspiration, we have assurance on every page that He does remember us, and in so many ways.

In this study, certain things will be set forth: 1) a look at the word "mindful" in its Biblical context, 2) a brief study of Psalm 115:12, and 3) a look at the song, *The Lord Has Been Mindful Of Me*. Hopefully, this will be a beneficial time of study on a subject that is so vital to the faith of every child of God.

Mindful

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, "mindful," as translated in Hebrews 2:6, which is a quote from Psalm 8:4, means to *"be mindful of, in the sense of caring."* Other passages cited sharing that same idea are as follows:

1). Heb. 13:3. *"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."* If we were in bonds, or suffering some other adversity, would we not want someone to be mindful of us, to care for us? That helps us better understand the significance of the Lord being "mindful" of us.

2). 2 Tim. 1:4. *"Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with*

joy.” When we are in tears, does it not mean much to us for someone to express concern for us?

3). 2 Peter 3:2. *“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”* Are we mindful of the spoken word in the sense of caring? Do we really care about the spoken word? Those who really care, can to a limited degree, understand the significance of the Lord being mindful of us. It means so much just knowing that the Lord is mindful of me, that He really does care.

Another passage that expresses the idea of the Lord being mindful of us is Psalm 8:4, *“What is man, that thou art mindful of him?”* As noted earlier, that verse is quoted in Hebrews 2:6. The same basic question is raised in Psalm 144:3, *“Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him?”*

QUESTION: (as set forth in both the Old and New Testaments), *“What is man, that thou are mindful of him?”* The question is not raised to suggest that man is a worthless being, nothing more than an evolved blob. It seems that many people have reached such a conclusion manifested by the life they live. But even those who are spiritually minded, when considering the greatness of God’s great universe, might consider themselves of little significance. Have you ever gazed into a clear, star-brightened night, considering the vastness of the universe? What was your reaction? Quite an humbling experience. But even beyond that, when one considers the greatness and majesty of God (Psalm 8:1-3), what is man?

Certainly there is no room in the mind of a sober minded person for pride and arrogance. I once came across the idea that man, made from the dust of the earth, and redeemed by the blood of the Lamb has little of which to boast. How true! But again, this is

not to suggest man is worthless. "*What is man, that thou art mindful of him?*"

ANSWER: Brother Robert Taylor, Jr. in his *Studies In Psalms*, has some excellent material on this matter, some of which is included in this section. Consider the following as answer to the question.

1). Man is a product of God's creation. "And God said, Let us make man..." [Gen. 1:26a]. "So God created man..." [Gen. 1:27]. Evolution would attempt to trace man's existence back to some one cell creature billions of years ago. Such would make of man nothing more than a "meaningless, purposeless, product of aimless and mindless evolution at random work in an ancient age of antiquity" [Taylor, p.22].

Could it be that this explains the conduct of many, when their lives are more in tune with animal nature than with a godly nature? "Man has a purposeful maker — not an accidental maker" [Taylor, p.22].

2). Not only is man the product of God's creation, he is made in the image of God. "*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. ... 27So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them*" (Gen. 1:26-27). Of what other part of the creation is this said? Thus the Psalmist refers to man as one being crowned with glory and honor. What greater glory and honor could one have than being created in the image of God?

3). Man is the product of God's creation, created in God's own image, being a little lower than the angels, yet has dominion over the works of God. Man is a unique part of creation and occupies a unique place relative to the rest of creation [Psalm 8:6-8; Gen. 1:26; 9:1-3].

4). The question before us can also be answered relative to man possessing a soul, a part of man that is worth more than the entire physical universe. *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul”* (Matt. 16:26)? The value of the soul of man is further seen in the fact that God gave His only begotten Son that the soul of man might be saved eternally. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life”* (John 3:16). *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man”* (Heb. 2:9).

5). The answer is further seen in God’s providential care of man. He has promised, *“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Heb. 13:5-6). *“If God be for us, who can be against us”* (Rom. 8:31b)?

6). Man is that part of God’s creation that God desires with Him in eternity. *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”* (2 Peter 3:9). *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace”* (Eph. 1:7; cf. also Rom. 5:8-9). Perhaps other points could be considered, but these six should help us understand and appreciate that “God has been mindful of me.”

Psalm 115:12-15

¹²The Lord hath been mindful of us; he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron. ¹³He will bless

them that fear the Lord, both small and great. ¹⁴The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children. ¹⁵Ye are blessed of the Lord which made heaven and earth.

This is further evidence that God has been, is, and will be, mindful of those who respect Him and His will. The phrase "hath been" (v.12) suggests God's mindfulness of man in times past. As a matter of fact, the entire Bible is a record of God being mindful of mankind.

God has been mindful of man even before the foundation of the world. "*Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*" (Matt. 25:34). According to Eph. 3:10-11, God's purpose in Christ Jesus was an "eternal purpose." Consider some people and events in Bible history that manifest to us "God has been mindful of me."

The Seed Promise. "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*" (Gen. 3:15). Immediately after God had created the world and all that in it is, including mankind, He gave them instructions regarding the care and keeping of the garden. There were things they were to do, namely, to dress and keep the garden (Gen. 2:15). Because God was mindful of man, He has provided for man the perfect dwelling place, including all of man's necessities. But there were also some restrictions placed upon them. "*But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. 2:17). It was in connection with that prohibition that Satan brought

sin into the world. It is interesting indeed, in view of the attitude of society in general, including some of our brethren, that says, "you are not going to tell me what I can and cannot do," that it was that very point that caused Eve to sin.

But because of that sin and its consequences, God was again mindful of man and his needs. He provided a plan whereby man could be reconciled to God, and that plan was through the "seed of woman." That promise was renewed to Abraham. *"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice"* [Gen. 22:18]. Paul explained that prophecy in Galatians 3:16. *"He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."*

The Destruction Of Sodom And Gomorrah.

Many events in the life of Abraham show God being mindful of him, but this event is our chosen example at this point. *"And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow..."* [Gen. 19:29]. God remembered Abraham. Abraham had pleaded for the faithful of those cities. If there be fifty, forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, ten was his plea [Gen. 18]. God promised to spare the cities if even ten righteous people could be found within them. Such was not the case. And, then, as the cities were being destroyed, God remembered Abraham.

The Birth Of Joseph. We remember the story of Jacob's effort to marry Rachel, got Leah instead, but continued his labors until Rachel was given to him. In the course of time, Leah conceived and bare a son [Reuben, as well as other children]. Rachel, unable to bear children, spoke to Jacob who became angry. After the birth of other children by Bilhah and

Zilpah, maids to Rachel and Leah, we read, "*And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb*" (Gen. 39:22). She then bare a son and "*called his name Joseph; and said, The Lord shall add to me another son*" (v.24). She knew God had been mindful of her so she said, "*God hath taken away my reproach*" (v.23).

The Birth Of Samuel. Hannah, who had no children, "*prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.*" And, she vowed a vow, that if given a son, that she would "*give him unto the Lord all the days of his life...*" (1 Sam. 1:4-11). Then we read that "*Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the Lord remembered her*" (v.19).

Judges Deliver. Israel's spiritual history was up and down. When Israel would become involved in sin, God would send in a nation to oppress them to bring them to repentance. When repentance had come forth, God would remember His people and send a judge, a deliverer. See Judges 3:5-11 as an example. This happened time and time again. But it serves as a great lesson to us (Rom. 15:4), that when we turn to God and serve Him faithfully, God will be mindful of us.

Because of the past, we have confidence in God, we put our trust in the Lord. "*He will bless*" (Psalm 115:13). As He has been [past tense] mindful of man, He will be [future tense] mindful of us. "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matt. 6:33). "*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you*" (1 Peter 5:7). "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Rev. 2:10b). Do we believe these kinds of promises? God is simply saying to us, "I will be mindful of you."

The Lord Has Been Mindful Of Me

“Though I, through the valley of shadow, O’er mountain or troubled sea, And oft in the darkness, have travelled, The Lord has been mindful of me” (First stanza).

We all go through periods in life where despair and discouragement take over. We travel down the road of life with all of its troubles, yet we have assurance that the Lord is mindful of us. *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”* (Heb. 13:5). *“What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us”* (Rom. 8:31)?

“Much more than my grief and my sorrow, much more than adversity, much more than the all I have given, The Lord has been mindful of me” (2nd stanza).

Regardless of our grief, sorrow or adversity we might face, the Lord can supply “much more” than we need. He has promised to supply all our needs. 2 Corinthians 12 records the account of Paul seeking God’s help with that “thorn in the flesh.” God’s answer to Paul was, *“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness”* (v.9). Will God provide any less for the faithful Christian today? Absolutely not!

“I’m rich, I am saved! I am happy! I’ve health and prosperity! I’ve friends! I have doors ever opened! The Lord has been mindful of me” (3rd stanza).

“I’m rich!” The sentiment is not that of material wealth, but the riches we have, true riches, in Christ. Christ *“became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich”* (2 Cor. 8:9). When we consider, as

children of God, "that we are the children of God," then we must also understand that "*if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*" (Rom. 8:16-17). Since we are in Christ we have access "*to all spiritual blessings*" (Eph: 1:3).

Our treasure is in heaven, not on earth (cf. Matt. 6:19-21). Too often the emphasis is being placed on material things, which, according to Paul, are indeed dangerous (1 Tim. 6:6-12). We are rich because our affections are "*on things above, not on things on the earth*" (Col. 3:1-2).

"I am saved." "*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift*" (2 Cor. 9:15) that made salvation possible. Because of his great love we can be free from the power of darkness and serve God as children of light. When considering the riches we enjoy in Christ and the salvation made possible through Christ, what would be a natural response?

"I am happy." That is the response of the Ethiopian who was baptized by Philip. Understanding that his sins were forgiven, "*he went on his way rejoicing*" (Acts 8:39). Such is the admonition of Paul as he wrote to the church at Philippi, "*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say Rejoice*" (Phil. 4:4). We, as Christians, are reconciled to God, saved from the guilt of past sins, enjoy a Father/Son relationship with God, have continual cleansing as we continue to walk in the light (1 John 1:7), and have the hope of an inheritance with God eternally. What more could we want? But there is more!

"I have friends." Don't ever underestimate the value of friends, especially the friendship of those of like precious faith. Friends, genuine friends, not fair-weather friends, are a great source of encouragement as we struggle through the valley of the shadow, or over mountains or through the troubled sea of life.

Note Acts 4:23ff. Where did Peter and John go when released by the priests, captain of the temple and the Sadducees? They went to their Christian friends and found encouragement and boldness to continue their preaching and teaching in the name of Jesus. Oh, how we need to learn the value of Christian friendship and fellowship.

“I have doors ever open.” Wherever the Christian goes, there is family, Christian family, which is always extending an open door of hospitality. John commended Gaius in this same matter (3 John 5-8). The extent of blessings we enjoy because the Lord has been mindful of us is limitless. “He blesses and blesses again.” Continual repeated blessings flow from the hand of God. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). His blessings are so abundant. He has promised to open *“the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it”* (Mal. 3:10). Why would anyone not want to be a Christian?

A Much Needed Warning

Throughout this study we have repeatedly emphasized how the Lord has been mindful of [remembered] His faithful followers. In Revelation 2 and 3, an oft repeated phrase should get our attention. “I know thy works.” Within that context it is extremely clear that He knows our works, whether good or bad. While He is mindful of us in so many good things, he will also remember evil deeds of those who are not penitent. Even the secret things, whether good or bad, God will remember (2 Cor. 5:10; Eccl. 12:13-14).

Conclusion

We all owe a great degree of gratitude to brother L. O. Sanderson, and others like him, for giving us

Biblically based songs. As we lift our voices in praise to the Almighty, we do so mindful of the many ways which we know, and no doubt many ways of which we do not know, that "The Lord has Been Mindful Of Me." As we sing, let us do it with the spirit and understanding [1 Cor. 14:15]. Such will cause a natural flow of praise from our lips to our Heavenly Father.

Chapter 6

Faith Is The Victory

1 John 5:4

Jim Blankenship

The Apostle John penned the words that sets the theme for our discussion, *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”* [1 John 5:4]. We tie with that the words of the inspired penman to the Hebrews, *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ... but without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”* [Heb. 11:1,6].

Definitions

“FAITH” is translated from the Greek word *pistis* primarily meaning, “firm persuasion” a conviction based upon hearing [akin to *peitho*, “to persuade”], is used in the New Testament always of “faith in God, or Christ, or things spiritual.” The main elements in “faith” in its relation to the invisible God, as distinct from “faith” in man, are especially brought out in the use of this noun and the corresponding verb *pisteuo*. They are: 1) a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgement of God’s revelation for truth, e.g. [2 Thess. 2:11-12]; 2) a personal surrender to Him [1 John 1:12]; 3) a conduct inspired by such surren-

der [2 Cor. 5:7]. Prominence is given to one or other of these elements according to the context. All this stands in contrast to belief in its purely natural exercise, which consists of an opinion held in good "faith" without necessary reference to its proof. The object of Abraham's "faith" was not God's promise (that was the occasion of its exercise). His "faith" rested on God Himself (Rom. 4:17, 20-21). [from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words.]

"VICTORY" is translated from the Greek word *nike* (1 John 5:4) as a noun. It is translated from a later form *nikos* in Matt. 12:20 where Jesus says, "*A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.*" The Apostle Paul wrote,

⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ [1 Cor. 15:54-57].

As a verb, "victory" is translated, "to conquer, overcome," and is translated, "[them] that come victorious [from]." In Revelation 15:2 the Apostle John wrote, "*And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.*" (ibid.)

“Faith Is The Victory”

By John H. Yates

“Encamped along the hills of light,
Ye Christians soldiers, rise,
And press the battle ere the night
shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foe in vales below
let all our strength be hurled,
Faith is the victory, we know,
that overcomes the world.

His banner over us is love,
our sword the Word of God;
We tread the road the saints above
with shouts of triumph trod.
By faith, they like a whirlwind’s breath,
swept on o’er every field;
The faith by which they conquered death
is still our shining shield.

On every hand the foe we find
drawn up in dread array;
Let tents of ease be left behind,
and onward to the fray.
Salvation’s helmet on each head,
with truth all girt about,
The earth shall tremble ’neath our tread,
and echo with our shout.

Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory!
O Glorious victory, that overcomes the
world.”

EXAMPLES OF VICTORIES WITH FAITH IN GOD

David And Goliath

1 Sam 17:1-58. ¹Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which [belongeth] to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim. ²And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. ³And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and [there was] a valley between them. ⁴And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height [was] six cubits and a span. ⁵And [he had] an helmet of brass upon his head, and he [was] armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat [was] five thousand shekels of brass. ⁶And [he had] greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. ⁷And the staff of his spear [was] like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head [weighed] six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him. ⁸And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set [your] battle in array? [am] not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. ⁹If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. ¹⁰And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. ¹¹When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. ¹²Now David [was] the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah,

whose name [was] Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men [for] an old man in the days of Saul. ¹³And the three eldest sons of Jesse went [and] followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle [were] Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. ¹⁴And David [was] the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul. ¹⁵But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. ¹⁶And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. ¹⁷And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched [corn], and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; ¹⁸And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of [their] thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. ¹⁹Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, [were] in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. ²⁰And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle. ²¹For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army. ²²And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. ²³And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard [them]. ²⁴And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. ²⁵And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, [that] the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. ²⁶And David spake to the

men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who [is] this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? ²⁷And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him. ²⁸And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. ²⁹And David said, What have I now done? [Is there] not a cause? ³⁰And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner. ³¹And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed [them] before Saul: and he sent for him. ³²And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. ³³And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou [art but] a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. ³⁴And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: ³⁵And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered [it] out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught [him] by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. ³⁶Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. ³⁷David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee. ³⁸And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head;

also he armed him with a coat of mail. ³⁹And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved [it]. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved [them]. And David put them off him. ⁴⁰And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling [was] in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. ⁴¹And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield [went] before him. ⁴²And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was [but] a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. ⁴³And the Philistine said unto David, [Am] I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. ⁴⁵Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. ⁴⁶This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle [is] the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands. ⁴⁸And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang [it], and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. ⁵⁰So David prevailed over the

Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but [there was] no sword in the hand of David. ⁵¹Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. ⁵²And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. ⁵³And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. ⁵⁴And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent. ⁵⁵And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son [is] this youth? And Abner said, [As] thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. ⁵⁶And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling [is]. ⁵⁷And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. ⁵⁸And Saul said to him, Whose son [art] thou, [thou] young man? And David answered, I [am] the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite."

Gideon And The Midianites

Judges 7:1-25. ¹"Then Jerubbaal, who [is] Gideon, and all the people that [were] with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley. ²And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that [are] with thee [are] too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. ³Now there-

fore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever [is] fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. ⁴And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people [are] yet [too] many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, [that] of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. ⁵So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. ⁶And the number of them that lapped, [putting] their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. ⁷And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the [other] people go every man unto his place. ⁸So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all [the rest of] Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley. ⁹And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. ¹⁰But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: ¹¹And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that [were] in the host. ¹²And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels [were]

without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude. ¹³And when Gideon was come, behold, [there was] a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. ¹⁴And his fellow answered and said, This [is] nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: [for] into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host. ¹⁵And it was [so], when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. ¹⁶And he divided the three hundred men [into] three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. ¹⁷And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be [that], as I do, so shall ye do. ¹⁸When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that [are] with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, [The sword] of the LORD, and of Gideon. ¹⁹So Gideon, and the hundred men that [were] with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that [were] in their hands. ²⁰And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow [withal]: and they cried, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon. ²¹And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled. ²²And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath,

[and] to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath. ²³And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites. ²⁴And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. ²⁵And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.”

Jephthah The Outcast Son

Judges 11:1-40. ¹“Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he [was] the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. ²And Gilead’s wife bare him sons; and his wife’s sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father’s house; for thou [art] the son of a strange woman. ³Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him. ⁴And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel. ⁵And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob: ⁶And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon. ⁷And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father’s house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress? ⁸And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go

with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. ⁹And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, shall I be your head? ¹⁰And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words. ¹¹Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh. ¹²And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land? ¹³And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah, Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those [lands] again peaceably. ¹⁴And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon: ¹⁵And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon: ¹⁶But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh; ¹⁷Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken [thereto]. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not [consent]: and Israel abode in Kadesh. ⁸Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon [was] the border of Moab. ⁹And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land

into my place. ²⁰But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. ²¹And the LORD God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. ²²And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan. ²³So now the LORD God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it? ²⁴Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess. ²⁵And now [art] thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them, ²⁶While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that [be] along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover [them] within that time? ²⁷Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. ²⁸Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him. ²⁹Then the spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over [unto] the children of Ammon. ³⁰And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, ³¹Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering. ³²So Jephthah passed over

unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands. ³³And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, [even] twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel. ³⁴And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she [was his] only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. ³⁵And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. ³⁶And she said unto him, My father, [if] thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, [even] of the children of Ammon. ³⁷And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. ³⁸And he said, Go. And he sent her away [for] two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. ³⁹And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her [according] to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, ⁴⁰[That] the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year."

Elijah And Baal

1 King 18:17-40. ¹⁷And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, [Art] thou he that troubleth Israel? ¹⁸And he answered, I have

not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. ¹⁹Now therefore send, [and] gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. ²⁰So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. ²¹And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD [be] God, follow him: but if Baal, [then] follow him. And the people answered him not a word. ²²Then said Elijah unto the people, I, [even] I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets [are] four hundred and fifty men. ²³Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay [it] on wood, and put no fire [under]; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay [it] on wood, and put no fire ²⁴And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. ²⁵And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress [it] first; for ye [are] many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire [under]. ²⁶And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed [it], and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But [there was] no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. ²⁷And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he [is] a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, [or] peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. ²⁸And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. ²⁹And it

came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the [time] of the offering of the [evening] sacrifice, that [there was] neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. ³⁰And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD [that was] broken down. ³¹And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: ³²And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. ³³And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid [him] on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour [it] on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. ³⁴And he said, Do [it] the second time. And they did [it] the second time. And he said, Do [it] the third time. And they did [it] the third time. ³⁵And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. ³⁶And it came to pass at [the time of] the offering of the [evening] sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou [art] God in Israel, and [that] I [am] thy servant, and [that] I have done all these things at thy word. ³⁷Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou [art] the LORD God, and [that] thou hast turned their heart back again. ³⁸Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that [was] in the trench. ³⁹And when all the people saw [it], they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he [is] the God; the LORD, he [is] the God. ⁴⁰And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah

brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.”

What Do I Need To Overcome With My Faith In God?

Let's go back and see what seemingly insurmountable obstacles our heroes had to overcome.

David had his giant Goliath. All he needed to defeat Goliath was what God provided. *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose. ... If God be for us who can be against us?”* (Rom. 8:28,31). What kind of giant obstacles do we have to fight to be faithful Christians? Love of money, greed (1 Tim. 6:10), alcohol, adultery, fornication, dancing (Gal. 5:19-21), drugs, tobacco, gluttony (1 Cor. 3:16-17), etc.

Gideon conquered a mighty army with a handful of troops.

Jephthah was an outcast of his family with great leadership potential, who, when the going got tough, his brother knew where to come to. Do we find ourselves in the same predicament with siblings? Sometimes we have to stand for what is right even when it's not popular in the family. Jephthah's brothers had to eat their own words by acknowledging that he was right and they needed his leadership ability against the Ammonites. Do we find ourselves calling on family members when we get in a pinch? Jephthah also made a vain promise he regretted later.

Elijah had to confront King Ahab. *“How long halt we between two opinions?”* Liberal or conservative? Right or wrong? God or Devil? Jesus Christ or Devil? The Word of God or false doctrine? *“The vacillating man is ever at the mercy of the man who talked to him last.”* Elijah defeated insurmountable odds with some 600 gallons of water poured on his sacrifice and

altar, to prove that Jehovah is the one and only true God.

We must always remember, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. ... Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee"* (Psalm 119:105, 111). *"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. ... Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth"* (John 8:32; 17:17). *"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* ¹⁶*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. ¹I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ²preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. ³For the time will come (YEA HAS ALREADY COME emphasis mine JB) when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; ⁴and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. ⁵But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. ⁶For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: ⁸henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not for me only, but unto all them that also love his appearing"* (2 Tim. 3:16–4:8).

Chapter 7

Seeking The Lost

Raymond Hagood

Our song worship to God is designed not only to praise and glorify God, but also to teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16). The song "*Seeking the Lost*" by W. A. Ogden both teaches and admonishes. It makes us aware of those who are lost and the remedy for their lost condition. Further, it admonishes us to fulfill our responsibility to a lost world by showing them the way to Christ and encouraging them to be obedient to the gospel of the Savior.

Ways To Be Lost

In Luke 15, we see the Lord dealing once again with the scribes and Pharisees. They were condemning the Savior in this text and accused him with this statement, "*This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them*" (Luke 15:2).

In response to their criticism, Jesus told three parables, all of which were designed to deal with the concepts associated with something of value being lost. There is certainly no doubt that the Lord did indeed receive sinners. The Savior, in receiving those sinners, never condoned their sin nor did he endorse their evil actions. He received them because they were lost and in need of salvation. Their souls were as valuable as the souls of those scribes and Pharisees. In truth, the scribes and Pharisees were also sinners, because all of humanity sins. If Jesus had

consorted with these evil people and not condemned their evil and sought their souls, then those scribes and Pharisees would have been justified in criticizing the Master.

Those scribes and Pharisees should have rejoiced because the Son of God was seeking to save the lost, but instead, they assumed the role of the elder brother who was angry that the ungodly were repenting and turning to God. These scribes and Pharisees claimed to be followers of God, but they lacked the real and natural love and care that God has for all of humanity.

The Lord spoke three parables in answer to these critics. In the parables, the Master Teacher emphasized important matters. First, the Lord wanted to show profoundly the value of a soul. Second, he taught the essentiality of seeking the lost. Third, Jesus shows every way in which a person can be lost. Fourth, he shows the horror and deadly nature of sin. Fifth, he discusses the willingness and great desire of God to have the lost found and brought home to Him. Sixth, he deals with an unforgiving and calloused attitude toward the lost that had so characterized the critics of the Lord.

It is this third point that we want to examine here. These three parables involve a lost coin, a lost sheep, and a lost boy. They illustrate every way that a person can be lost. One of our great obligations before God is to seek and save the lost. If one is seeking to find something or someone who is lost, then it is important to discover how these things get lost and where they might be found. Not everyone is lost in the same way, and we need to be aware of the diverse ways folks can be lost, so that we can be more successful in finding and saving them.

Some Are Lost Just Like A Coin

Some people are lost like a coin. A coin is an inanimate object. It is lost, but it does not know it is lost. Therefore, it does not know it needs to be found. It has no awareness of its condition at all.

Sadly, the world is full of people who are lost and do not have a clue they are lost and in need of salvation. Thousands of lost souls go into eternity every day unprepared to meet God. Large numbers of those people will learn too late their souls are condemned.

This is why there is such urgency in preaching the soul-saving gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. Folks need to be convicted of their sins and pleaded with to humbly obey God's terms of reconciliation.

Some Are Lost Like Sheep

A sheep is an animal that is quite different from an inanimate coin. A sheep has the ability to know that it is lost, but often lacks the ability to find the way home.

Many people are lost like sheep. They are lost, they know they are lost, and they want to find the way home. These people, however, often do not know how to find the way to God, or they take the wrong roads in the pursuit of Him. Often, this kind of person is very susceptible to the lure of the denominations or cults. They sincerely want to know the truth, but they get lost in the maze of human creeds and sectarianism. They spend their lives making false turns and following blind alleys, until one day they crash into eternity and are lost forever.

Christians need to work hard to find those people who are sincerely seeking God. We need to try to be there first with the truth before these people get

confused and mired down in the mud and quicksand of denominational human doctrine.

Some Are Lost Like The Prodigal Son

The prodigal son was a young man. He was able to know that he was lost, and he certainly knew the way home. The problem was not in his ability to know his condition and the remedy for his condition. The problem with him centered on his will and desire to go home. This boy was so lost in worldliness that he did not care about his lost condition, choosing rather to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Going home could not have been further from his mind as long as he remained on the roller coaster of sin, spending himself in the pursuit of the same.

Many people are like this in the world and, sadly, even in the church. They know perfectly well they are living in sin, and unless they repent, they will be lost. Yet, this reality is not important to them. They themselves do not value their own souls, and their pursuit of the pleasures of sin is far more important to them than being right with God.

It is just as important to seek folks like this as it is to seek the individual lost in ignorance. People like this are hard to reach, just like the prodigal son would have been hard to reach, because they care so little about their condition, and they are so numbed by sin that they are often not responsive. The only real hope for folks like this is that they will come to their senses and go home to God. Often, like the prodigal son, people never turn to God until they have lost nearly everything. Tragically, many, if not most, will not turn to God even after they have lost everything because they become so entangled in sin that their situation becomes hopeless. In theory, a person has hope as long as he remains alive and maintains

mental ability to repent and obey God. It is possible, however, to become so hardened by sin that one will not return to God, regardless of opportunity or situation.

Seeking The Lost

Seeking something involves active and driven pursuit of the thing sought. The very action of seeking implies that the thing being sought is valuable and worthy of energetic pursuit. People will not seek something that is unworthy of their time, energy, and resources.

This matter really addresses the first problem that one encounters in soul-seeking. Tragically, large numbers of Christians either do not realize how valuable a soul is, or they do not care about the soul's value. Often, Christians think that souls should be sought, but they do not think they should be the ones seeking them. In their minds this is always the work of someone else. Yet these same people actively seek a job, a new house, a new car, recreational activities, social promotion, housecleaning, and a thousand other things, all of which together cannot equal the value of even one soul.

It is easy to sing in worship services about seeking the lost, but it is another thing to seek the lost actively ourselves. It is easy to give money to the preacher or some missionary and send them on their way seeking the lost. We satisfy our consciences that we have done all we need to do when we sign the check and give the money. Evangelism by proxy has become the accepted action by a society so lost to materialism and hedonism.

Not realizing how valuable a soul is and not caring about its value is a serious hindrance to seeking the lost. This "in vogue" attitude of thinking that soul-seeking is always someone else's task is

fueling the accepted mind-set that continually sends too few laborers to sow in the vast fields of fertile souls seeking the way, but having no one to show it to them. This trend will not change until lost souls are more important to us than possessions, pleasures, and worldly pursuits.

In Luke 15:4-7 the Lord told the parable of the lost sheep. He talks about a shepherd who has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. This shepherd left the ninety-nine and went in search of the lost one until he found it. Were the ninety-nine sheep as valuable as the one lost sheep? Yes, they were, but there was a great difference between the ninety-nine and the one sheep. The ninety-nine were not lost; and therefore, were not in jeopardy. The one sheep was lost and in serious danger. The shepherd did not need to seek the ninety-nine because they were safe and sound, but the lost sheep was everything but safe. The one lost sheep was so valuable that the shepherd left the ninety-nine to find the one.

The Early Church As A Model

The early church believed and obeyed Mark 16:15,16 and Matthew 28:19,20. From Pentecost onward the church was on the march. Severe persecutions did not stop her or even slow her down. The stoning of Stephen only served to pave the way for the growth and prosperity of the church in Antioch of Syria. The Lord's church in Antioch was the most evangelistic congregation in the first century. It sponsored all of Paul's missionary journeys and worked diligently to advance the borders of the kingdom at home and throughout the world.

It has been estimated that the world's population in the first century was between 250 and 350 million. There were no radios, no televisions, no telegraphs, no phones and no faxes, and yet the success of the

first Christians in preaching the gospel to the world is unparalleled. Almost twenty-five years after the church was established on the day of Pentecost, Paul wrote these words in Romans 10:18: *"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."* About five years later Paul wrote the Colossian brethren and said the gospel had been *"preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister"* (Col. 1:23). The Lord himself had prophesied the gospel would be preached to the whole world before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 (Matt. 24:14). We can see from the words of Paul that which the Savior predicted came to pass.

The apostle Paul epitomized the God-controlled individual who made it his personal business to preach the gospel to a lost and dying world. If preaching the gospel meant sailing the seas, then Paul was ready and willing. If it meant walking through the hills and ravines where robbers often lived, then Paul was prepared for such perils. If it meant being imprisoned, beaten, falsely accused and despised, Paul was willing to sacrifice all for the precious souls for which Jesus died.

Paul was just one of thousands who was actively involved in soul-seeking. Paul alone, in spite of his amazing dedication, could not have preached the gospel to the world by A.D. 70. No one person can do that. Even today with our mass media, no one person can do it because there are still people who do not have a television or radio.

The book of Acts tells about the growth and prosperity of the church. The early chapters of Acts tell of the church's work in the A.D. 30s. The middle chapters describe their activities in the A.D. 40s, and the latter chapters depict the great evangelistic efforts of the A.D. 50s. The church grew because they were actively preaching the gospel to a lost world. It grew

because they were seeking the lost wherever they might be. The lost included farmers who tilled the hills of Palestine, and merchants like Lydia, and even Roman officials like the Caesar himself. Those tireless evangelists did not hesitate to preach the truth of God Almighty to each and every class of folks who were lost.

The early church had a large number of committed workers. The church today is woefully lacking in workers, much less committed workers. Since seeking and saving the lost requires such great sacrifices of time, energy, and resources, there is no room for uncommitted laborers. Uncommitted laborers are like the young John Mark, who turned back when Paul needed him most. Uncommitted workers are the ones who will not walk the extra mile or give the extra push. They are the ones easily discouraged, lazy and void of a real love for lost souls.

Urgency Of The Message

D. T. Niles once defined evangelism as "one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." A starving beggar presents a rather urgent and desperate situation. A person with acute appendicitis cannot wait two years for surgery. An individual with acute bacterial pneumonia cannot afford a delay in the administration of life-saving antibiotics.

All these examples are clearly situations of urgency, and no thinking person could or would deny this. Yet, the problem of lost souls is often viewed solely as a systemic need that requires no real sense of urgency.

The truth is that we do not have forever. Life is short and opportunities can be easily lost. We must do the work of the Lord while it is day and before the night comes. Life is a few winters and a few summers, and soon time runs out. Since time is so

limited, none of us can afford to waste time in our great mission of soul-seeking. There must be a sense of urgency because of the seriousness of the situation and the eternal consequences of failing to seek the lost.

Someone wrote this description of a soul-winner:

Their ears are open to the cries for help from a lost and dying world.

Their eyes are ever searching for a receptive heart, in which to plant the word of God.

Their lips are always ready and willing to proclaim the glory of God.

Their hands are always turning the pages of God's Holy Word seeking His will for them.

Their feet are on the move to carry out the words of Christ to preach the gospel to every creature.

Their hearts are beating and breaking with the urgency to reach the lost before it's too late.

Their heads are bowed in a prayer to the Father in heaven to give them wisdom to carry out the mission.

Their faces glow with the hope that is in them.

Their lives are like the light of a city set upon a hill that cannot be hid.

They are the light of the world.

In Christ they live, and move, and have their being.

So many philosophies and human doctrines are competing for the hearts of men that without a sense of genuine commitment and urgency for the lost, we have no hope of being heard! The church must be motivated to a total mobilization of her forces for the battle which is set before us. The devil labors unceasingly for the souls of men. He is committed, and he realizes the urgency of the situation. He is a deter-

mined adversary, and he above all knows the value of a soul.

The devil can be defeated, but not by summer soldiers and sunshine patriots. It is commitment to God and His Word that will defeat the devil. It is love of our own souls and the souls of others that will motivate us to strive unceasingly to save every soul we possibly can.

Our lives need to be spent in seeking the lost and kindly entreating. We need to point them to Jesus, the Way. If that seeking leads us to the mountains, then let's journey there. If it leads us to the plains, the deserts, or the high sea, then let us not hesitate to go with the saving message of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 8

On The Cross Of Calvary

Charles Blair

The place where Jesus died was called the place of the skull. Matthew, Mark, and John called the place of the skull, Golgotha (Matt. 27:33; Mark 15:22; John 19:17). Luke, in his account of the gospel, renders it calvary. Our songs and our public teaching have caused the word "calvary" to be more prominent in our thinking. Whichever term is used, Golgotha or Calvary, it is the place of the skull.

God, in His infinite wisdom, chose not to reveal the location of this hill. Knowing man's inclinations to often revere places, objects or things, God kept it from us. It is not the hill itself, but rather what happened at calvary when Jesus died that is important.

The Romans often executed criminals by crucifixion. This hill, no doubt, was the scene of many such acts. When Jesus died there, it was an entirely different act. In our study we focus not on the hill, but the act of the Son of God dying for us on that hill.

The animals slain under the old Testament were outside the camp (Lev. 4:12, 21). The writer of Hebrews calls our attention to the place outside of the camp (Heb. 13:11-13). Jesus, he says, died outside the gate (v.12). We are called upon to bear His reproach by going with Him outside the camp (v.13). Jesus died on a hill outside Jerusalem. The hill called calvary.

Jerusalem was the center of the death of prophets. Though slain outside her walls, this Jerusalem was responsible for the deaths of God's servants and the prophets. The Lord said: "...it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13:33). The Lord used Jerusalem to represent the whole of the Jewish nation. He would have gathered them together, but they would not (Matt. 23:37).

Paul makes a contrast between physical Jerusalem and spiritual Jerusalem. Abraham had two sons. One by the bondmaid and the other by the freewoman (Gal. 4:22). The Jerusalem which now is (physical Jerusalem), Paul argues is in bondage with her children (v.25). The Jerusalem which is above (spiritual or heavenly Jerusalem) is free. It was the earthly Jerusalem (that was in bondage with her children) where Jesus died.

The great city of Revelation 18 had the blood of prophets, saints, and all the slain of earth upon her (Rev. 18:24). John shows us that city. It was called Sodom and Egypt, and it was where *our Lord was crucified*. The great city which would have the wrath of God poured out upon it was Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8). All the prophets who died, filled that city with blood, but it was the events on calvary that sealed the doom of Jerusalem.

Here, on this hill called calvary, was the ultimate sacrifice which the Godhead made for our redemption. Jesus was the Lamb of God (John 1:29). He was that scapegoat on which was placed all the sins of the people (Lev. 16). How beautiful the words of John to remind us, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2).

Years before, Abraham had made a difficult journey to offer his only son Isaac (by Sarah) in response to the command of God (Gen. 22:2). When Isaac questioned his father about where the sacrifice was, Abraham replied, "...My son, God will provide"

[Gen. 22:8]. After the events of the attempted sacrifice stopped by God, there was a ram caught in the thicket (v.13). Whereupon Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-jireh (v.14). On calvary, there was no one to stay the Hand of God in the death of Jesus.

How our hearts should be touched by those words, "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...*" (John 3:16). No ram in the thicket, no goat led to the wilderness; His Son dying for US. The blood of animals could not remove a single sin (Heb. 10:4). The penalty for sin was the suffering and death of the Son of God. This is what God required to pay for all the sins which have been or ever will be committed by mankind (Isaiah 53:10-11). At the death of His Son, God would be satisfied as to payment for sin.

The payment for sin meant now that humanity had access to God through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. Those who refuse that payment would be lost (Matt. 7:21). Those who accepted that payment and then went back to the beggarly elements, were in affect, crucifying Jesus all over again (Gal. 4:9; Heb. 6:6). Does it not make us wonder how many times must God revisit calvary by the actions of a world which turns away from Him.

God did not want us to forget calvary. He made arrangements for us in our spiritual devotion to God to return to calvary every first day of the week (Acts 20:7); tugging at our hearts to remind us of the suffering and death of Jesus. Showing us that as often as we eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine, we show His death until He comes again (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Someone quips, "Doing it every Sunday will cause it to lose its meaning."

My friend, God does not care about our "quips." He knows just what we need. We need every Sunday to remind ourselves of the price of our spiritual

freedom. It was freedom at the price of the suffering and death of Jesus. This was the only way God would be satisfied. How dare any of us tinker with God's system. May we each Lord's day return in humbleness of mind to a hill called calvary.

Our songs in public worship are to be psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. It is singing to God because He is the audience in worship and not us. Our songs should show the great truths found in the scriptures. We should no more be willing to sing error than to teach error. We play the instrument of our hearts as truth touches us, and the melody is the harmony between our lives and the Word of God (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

One would expect that some of our songs would speak of calvary and the great sacrifice which God made to save us all. One such song is, "*On The Cross of Calvary.*" We may not possess the ability to hit the notes of this song, but oh how our hearts should reach out to understand the verses and how we can make application to our own hearts.

Universal And Personal

The opening words of this hymn declares that Jesus died for "...*thee and me.*" No person is beyond the scope of God's love. God loved the whole world and proved it by the gift of His Son (John 3:16). In every land the gospel needs to go. Souls, no matter what their natural land of birth, should have the right to be told about access to God through His Son, Jesus the Christ. The appeal of the gospel is universal.

The personal appeal of the gospel is that Jesus died for me. Jesus died for everyone. The power of His love is for me to realize that Jesus died for me. How often through life do people struggle to find someone that will love them. Someone we can have confidence in that they will always be there for us and

stand with US. Jesus died on calvary because He loved me. Think of the countless numbers of people who have ever lived or ever will live. Jesus went to calvary for me. If I were the only person, He still would have gone for me.

There He Shed His Blood

His blood was shed. It was not spilled as though in some accident. The plan for the shedding of that blood was drawn up in the mind of God before the world began (Titus 1:2). The Father prepared a body for His Son. A body which had to be human. Jesus was the Son of God and the Son of man. How marvelous is the mystery of godliness that God was manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). His body ached and grew tired. He needed food and rest like we do. His precious body had blood flowing through it.

It was on calvary that He shed His blood. He gave of Himself; and at the right moment, gave His own life. The soldiers came by to hasten the death of the three men on that hill. When they came to Jesus, they saw He was already dead. To make sure, one soldier pierced the side of Jesus with a spear. From the gaping wound came water and blood (John 19:34). Death had occurred.

How precious was that blood which was shed on that day. Later on, the writer of Hebrews was discussing those who were leaving the faith. Some had taken up the practice of no longer assembling with the saints. The writer then poses the question about how much punishment should such a person receive.

Listen carefully to the description of the individual who was no longer assembling with the saints. The Bible states, "*...and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing...*" (Heb. 10:29). We are bought with a price. We are bought with blood (1 Cor. 6:20). The

precious blood of Jesus makes sanctification of our spirits possible.

Paul speaking about the change in the brethren in Corinth states that they were washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. 6:11). This was accomplished by their hearing, believing, and being baptized (Acts 18:8). None of which could have been possible without the blood of Christ being shed on calvary.

Purpose Of The Death On Calvary

The hymn simply states, "*...that from sin we might be free....*" How much humanity longs for an answer to sin. The great failure of atheism is its inability to deal with the sin problem. One may ignore or deny sin, but such actions do not make sin go away. Sin must be removed from the soul of man. The only cleansing agent with the power to remove sin is the blood of Christ that was shed on calvary.

Once sin is removed, by our contacting the blood of Christ in baptism, the issue becomes not allowing sin to take over our new life (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul, writing to those who had become Christians, warned them to not allow sin to have control over their souls (Rom. 6:12). Sin is always around us. There are times when we fail God, but we have an advocate with the Father which is Jesus the Son (1 John 2:1). When we sin we can confess that which is wrong with a penitent heart, and God will forgive such sin (1 John 1:7-10).

Even though there are times when we fail God, we do not allow sin to gain control. We are now the servants or slaves of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18). When Jesus shed His blood, it was to make it possible for us to be free from sin. We must continue throughout our journey on earth to remain dead to sin in order to be free (Rom. 6:7).

Being free carries with it responsibility. We are devoted to living righteous lives which pleases the Father (1 John 3:22). We are thankful to be free, but wise enough to know the old life continues to call us. The only thing which silences the voice of the old life is the Word of God being living and active in our own hearts (Heb. 4:12). The struggle will continue until the day we die.

Our ultimate freedom comes when we reach the rest prepared for those who love the Lord. Showing the nature of the struggle, we are told in Hebrews to fear. Fear what? Fear that we might come short of the promise of the final rest (Heb. 4:1). We struggle to hold on to our freedom. Freedom which we would never have had, were it not for the blood shed by Jesus on calvary.

White As Snow

We search for word pictures to help our hearts understand the effect of the blood of Christ on our souls. The hymn cites the idea of being washed white as snow. Brethren, we struggle with the idea of being cleansed. The problem is not with what God has provided through His Son. The problem is often our own inability to accept what God has done. Peter states that God accepts those who fear Him and work righteousness (Acts 10:34-35). Can we believe that with all our hearts?

Beginning in Isaiah 2, the Scriptures speak about the sins of God's people. Rebellion, not thinking about God, forsaking the Lord, and going backward are but a few of these sins. The Lord, through Isaiah, goes on to explain that He can no longer accept their worship to Him (vs.12-14). It is not a pretty picture of God's children.

Yet, when we come to Isaiah 1:18, we find the door of mercy being made available to them. God

wanted them to reason with Him. Even if their sins were as scarlet, they could be made as white as snow. Understand, though, what makes the door of mercy swing open. God said if they were willing and obedient, they could receive mercy (v.19). However, if they refused, then they would be destroyed (v.20).

How much we need to see the forgiveness of God for us. What better way could God describe it for us than the idea of being white as snow.

God uses words to describe hell for us. Words that bring up ideas in our minds that this is no place we want to go to in the end. So it is with the beauty of forgiveness. God wants us to see ourselves as being white as snow upon our obedience to His will. This is the supreme definition of peace. I am right with God.

Love And Submission

One would think, if we knew the love God has for us, we would rush to obey Him. Yet, we find a sincere man like Paul, prior to his conversion, kicking against the truth concerning Jesus (Acts 9:5). He was startled on the road to Damascus, but he found the truth in Damascus. After three days he was still in his sins. Upon learning the truth, he gave up his fight against God and truth and humbly submitted (Acts 22:16).

Our song directs our thoughts along this line. What wondrous love brought me down at Jesus' feet. How long can an individual refuse to respond to God's will? God used Moses to give us the truth that His Spirit will not always strive with man (Gen. 6:3). For personal reasons we may fight against the idea of submitting to God. There is a danger of continual rejecting causing our hearts to grow hard (1 Tim. 4:2).

Reality must set in at some point. If we will not submit to God, then we submit to Satan. It is an

either/or type of situation. What legacy do we wish to leave behind? Here was a righteous person who gave all to God, or here was a person who had little time for God. That choice is ours. We can see the sacrifice which Jesus made and know that He is not asking too much of us. What part of our soul can we hold back? It all belongs to Him. We have been bought with blood.

Our Life In His Hands

We place our souls in His hands. The power of God can change us into vessels of honor. The power works when truth is in the soul and is practiced. We purge our souls from the things of this life. Whereupon the Lord can set us apart for His purposes (2 Tim. 2:20-21). Think of how much good is done by those who place their hearts into the hands of God.

Paul asks, "...*Hath not the potter power over the clay?*" (Rom. 9:21). The person who willingly submits to God can be used by God to do great things. At all times we recognize it is God who has the power over the clay of our souls (Rom. 9:16). We desire Him, through truth, to shape us into vessels of honor.

What comes to mind when we think of a Timothy or a Demas? Same God, same truth, but the results are very different. Why? Because one man placed his soul in the hands of God, while the other heeded the call of the old life and it pulled him back (2 Tim. 4:10). Do we wish for people to see us at the end of our journey as having been faithful to God? When someone stands over all earthly remains, what would we want them to say to those left behind? He/she was faithful all the days of their life. Grandpa or Grandma always served the Lord and were present every time the doors were opened.

God can do wonderful things in the heart of any person who lovingly submits to His will. He is the Potter that can shape vessels into honor.

Do we grasp those words in the third stanza, "*Jesus, Thou art mine?*" We are connected to Him through truth (John 15:1-5). We draw our substance for spiritual life from Him. He is that Vine. We belong to Him and He to us. We are joint-heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17). Again, the difficulty is often in our own inability to accept what God is offering us. Jesus placed it on such a personal level for our understanding. Who is my brother or mother asks the Lord (Matt. 12:48)? He answers, it is the one who does the will of the Father (Matt. 12:50).

Look at how the Lord describes it. We are His brother, sister and mother. Our family ties are used by the Lord to show the closeness of our relationship to Him. We are the children of God (1 John 3:1). There is a spiritual family. Christ belongs to us and we to Him. It is a family bound by blood and love. Love for God and for each other. "*Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.*"

It Is Finished

The last stanza focuses in on the darkness of the day when Christ died. At the end it was indeed those words, "It is finished." Through all the insults, pressures of daily living, abuse of Him by a world that did not know Him, He never altered His course. Why? Because He loved us. His face was set toward Jerusalem and a lonely hill outside the walls. When the time was right, He went with His mind made up and His heart set on the will of God.

Darkness is over the face of the hill. The sun would not shine. This was the day Jesus, the Son of God, gave Himself for me. The enemies grow quiet as the deeds of the day are finished. He is dead. Those

who were His followers are confused and hide behind closed doors. The mangled body is taken from the cross and placed in a borrowed tomb.

The account is not finished. For in three days Jesus will be raised from the dead, never to die again. We remember these events each Lord's day.

Some in their life search for proper motivation. What are the gains and what price has to be paid to reach the desired goal. The Father knew we would need the proper motivation. He knew we would have to count the cost of "building the tower." The chorus of this great hymn provides us with an answer.

On calvary it was for me that Jesus died. Motivation and purpose are clearly defined. No price is too great nor any task too hard. Heaven with the Lord is worth it all. He died for me, now may each of us live for Him.

Chapter 9

The Church's One Foundation

James Boyd

Every Christian is aware that singing is a significant part of his worship of God. When the Scriptures speak of music in Christian worship it always authorizes singing, and no other kind of music. As in the other acts of worship, our worship is to be "*in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:24). This means our worship is to be done according to the revealed truth of God, and with the right attitude, intent, disposition of heart, and reverently. To worship "in spirit" necessitates our understanding the significance of the act of worship, and in the act of singing we must understand what we are saying to each other.

Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 show our singing is to speak to, teach, and admonish one another, as well as praise the Lord. This involves not only our minds but also the use and meaning of words. Therefore, an understanding of the sentiments expressed in a song is necessary to be able to accomplish what singing is designed to accomplish. To simply call words without knowing what is being taught is to fall short of the goal.

This study will consider the thoughts and expressions found in the hymn, "**The Church's One Foundation.**" This is an old song, dating from the nineteenth century, but still used frequently by Christians today with good reason as we shall see. In addition to the vigorous and militant musical beat, each phrase has its roots in Scripture and what is taught in this

hymn harmonizes with what the Bible says about the church. While we shall not concern ourselves here with the composer or the background of circumstances that motivated the composition of this song, it is good to know that the writer of the verses did believe that the Bible was the infallible and inspired Word of God and the sole authority in religion. It is also true that the composer was a denominational clergyman. How he harmonized his attitude toward the Bible with his affiliation with a denomination is beyond explanation. However, the identity of the composer does not, in this instance, affect the correctness of what he has written.

Let us consider each of the three verses usually found in our hymn books (originally there were seven verses), and study it phrase by phrase, noting the Biblical tie in each instance.

The overall theme is an *emphasis on the church of Christ, its relationship to Christ, the divine origin of the church, and other characteristics which are revealed in the Bible.*

“The Church’s One Foundation Is Jesus Christ Her Lord”

The song begins with the affirmation that the foundation of the church is Jesus the Christ. In His discussion with His apostles, recorded in Matthew 16:16-18, Jesus announced that He would build His church on the “rock” that Peter had just confessed, that Jesus was “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” On this fundamental truth rests the validity, claims, hope, origin, authority, and integrity of the church. Remove this foundation, not only the church, but everything about Christianity, what Jesus taught, and what was taught by His authority, comes crumbling down to nothing more than just another religion among religions, another religious code among

religious codes, but without any divine authority or approval. Paul wrote, "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor. 3:11).

It was prophesied centuries before Christ of a "stone," tried and precious, that was to come (Isaiah 28:6). Peter referred to Christ as this precious stone (1 Peter 2:6-9), and that it would be a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offense," disallowed by some, but "the head of the corner."

Ephesians 2:20 speaks of the apostles and prophets being the foundation. They were the foundation in the sense that the message they preached, Christ, was the actual foundation. Inasmuch as no building is stronger than its foundation, the church has great strength because its foundation is the Son of God.

In addition to the declaration that Christ is the foundation of the church, this first phrase notes that Jesus is the Lord of the church. The word "Lord" means master. Jesus is the ruler over the church. The church looks to the Christ for guidance, instruction, what its members should and should not do — indeed, all things regarding the church. The final authority in all matters to the church rests with the foundation and master. No regulations of human composition will suffice or replace His will.

"She Is His New Creation By Water And The Word"

The hymn declares the church as the new creation of Christ. In contradiction to some claims, it is nonetheless historically true that the church did not exist before the coming and ministry of Christ, his ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 2), except in the mind of God (Eph. 1:4; 3:11). He did not bring a postscript to Judaism but something new. He was the originator

and builder of it, which affirms its divine origin. Even though its coming had been prophesied down through many centuries, it was Christ that brought it into actuality and reality. It is His new creation.

Furthermore, those that compose the church are those who have become new creatures in Christ. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Cor. 5:17). Those of the church are those who have *"put off concerning the old man...put on the new man"* (Eph. 4:24,25). Members of the church have *"put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man"* (Col. 3:9,10). In this sense the church is a new creation. A person becomes a new creature by being born again (John 3:3-5), being baptized into Christ to *"walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4). Upon this action of obedience, God adds the obedient one to the church (Acts 2:47). Therefore, a new creation.

The means of accomplishing this creation is said to be *"by water and the word."* This refers to Ephesians 5:26 which states that the church is cleansed *"with the washing of water by the word."* Whenever and wherever the church exists it does so because the word has been preached, believed, and obeyed in baptism. Forgiveness of sins is gained according to the word of God. Cleansing is attributed to water, which refers to baptism, when sins are washed away (Acts 22:16). This is also the step of entrance into the church, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

Repeatedly the Bible contends Christians are *"born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God"* (1 Peter 1:23). Paul told the Corinthians he had begotten them *"through the gospel"* (1 Cor. 4:15). We are called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). The seed of the kingdom is the word of God (Luke 8:11). Those of the house of Cornelius were saved by the words that Peter preached to them

(Acts 10:6,32,33; 11:14; 15:7). James 1:21 teaches we are saved by the word. The gospel is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). In every account of conversion to Christ (of which we read in the New Testament) there is first the proclamation of the word, and the obedience to the command to be baptized. Without the word there is no faith (Romans 10:17) or baptism. Without baptism there is no church of Christ.

Little wonder that Christ gave the charge to His people to go and preach the gospel (Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:18-20). The church is the new creation of Christ by the preaching of the word and the obedience to baptism. This song proclaims the truth regarding the existence and entrance into the body of Christ, which is the church of Christ.

"From Heaven He Came"

Before the church was established, Christ came from heaven to this earth. Over and over, particularly in the book of John, Jesus announced that He was sent by the Father. Ephesians 4:10 teaches He descended as well as ascended. John 6:38 explicitly says, *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."* Jesus was the Son of God, and according to the flesh the seed of David (Rom. 1:3). God sent His Son in likeness of sinful flesh and "for sin," that is, as a sin offering for man (Rom. 8:3). So our song contains this glorious truth that Christ came from heaven.

From heaven He came with a specific mission. He sought and bought the church. It was His mission to "seek and save" the lost (Luke 19:10). The church is composed of the saved. The members of the church were once lost in sin, but Christ has saved them from their past sins and, thereby, made them members of His church. So He came from heaven to bring the

church into existence. This reinforces the divine origin of the church, and all men should acknowledge that the church is not concocted by men, designed by men, regulated by men, nor had its origin in the minds of men.

“And Sought Her To Be His Holy Bride”

The relationship He sustains with the church is like that of husband and wife. Ephesians 5:22-32 is the longest passage declaring Christ and the church as husband and wife. While much can be learned from the passage about the relationship of husband and wife, the prime emphasis is the relationship of Christ and the church illustrated with the analogy of husband and wife. *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church”* (Eph. 5:32).

The relationship of Christ and the church is further described with Christ being the head of the church just as the husband is the head over the wife. The church is subject to Christ just as the wife is subject to the husband. Christ loved the church just as the husband is to love his wife. Christ sanctifies it, and is the Savior of it, and to Him it is a glorious church. He nourishes and cherishes the church.

If men considered the church with the same respect and affection that Jesus does, they would not speak disparagingly of it, ridicule it, or relegate it to something optional and indifferent. The fact that some say one church is just as good as another church reveals the fact that they do not look upon the church as does Christ.

Another passage that portrays the relationship of Christ and the church as husband and wife is Romans 7:1-4. Paul teaches the end of the old law of Moses and how we are not subject to that law. Even the Jews, the only ones to whom the law ever applied, are

not subject to that law. Jews, who had been subject to Moses' law but had become Christians, were now united, as being married, to another, and the other is Christ. They had become dead or separated from the old law by the body of Christ (His sacrifice), and "married" to Christ. In this the church is properly called His holy bride.

Even before the establishment of the church, Christ was prospectively presented in His relationship to the saved as the bridegroom that would come. He presented Himself as the bridegroom in Mark 2:19,20, and again in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25). John the Baptist presented himself, not as the bridegroom, but as the friend of the bridegroom, saying, *"I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled"* (John 3:28,29).

When we think on the relationship of Christ and the church we should remember what was said regarding marriage by Jesus in Matthew 19:6, *"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."* It is wrong to even make an attempt to separate Christ from His church. Those who would admonish us to "preach Christ and not the church" would separate the inseparable. How can one logically and Scripturally separate the Savior from the saved, or vice versa? The analogy of Christ and the church as husband and wife ties the two together with a bond that should not be broken, and cannot be broken unless the church leaves the bridegroom.

**"With His Own Blood He Bought Her,
And For Her Life He Died"**

Our song reminds us of the Biblical teaching of the awesome price that was paid for the church. We sing, "With his own blood he bought her," echoing the teaching of Acts 20:28, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*" It was for the life of the church that Christ gave His life on the cross. This is another way of saying it was for the purpose of saving man that Christ was crucified. The church, composed of the saved, is saved because of the blood of Christ shed at Calvary.

No truth is more emphatically proclaimed in the New Testament than the truth that we are saved by the blood of Christ. Romans 5:9, "*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*" He gave himself for the church (Eph. 5:25). We are redeemed and enjoy forgiveness of sins because of the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). For this reason Paul could address the Christians in the church at Corinth as those who "*are bought with a price*" (1 Cor. 6:20). The price was the blood of Christ.

The value of something is determined by the price that is paid to have it. We can know for a certainty the value the heavenly Father has placed on the church because He allowed His only begotten Son to leave heaven, take His place on earth as God in the flesh, only to suffer the cruel death on the cross, willingly shedding His blood, and by that blood making the church a reality. We must be reminded again that the church is composed of the saved. The saved are saved by His blood. Therefore, we easily understand the connection between the blood of Christ and the saved that compose the church.

Notice how different is the Lord's evaluation of the church from that of the denominational world

that would make the church optional, teaching one can be saved outside the church, that one is as good as another, that the church does not really matter, and you can choose the church of your choice with equal benefit. Is it not a deadly thing to declare that which cost the Savior's blood, something we do not need in order to be saved? Hebrews 9:12-14,

¹²Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴How must more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Another Biblical documentation of the connection of the blood of Christ and the church is in Ephesians 2:14-16. There Paul tells us Christ is our peace, having broken down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and abolished it in his flesh (having reference to His crucifixion), and reconciling both Jew and Gentile unto God "*in one body by the cross.*" We cannot escape the connection between the cross, the body, and reconciliation with God. Reconciliation is made possible by the blood of Christ, and reconciliation is realized and enjoyed in the one body, which is the church.

To the churches in Asia, John wrote, "*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" The "us" of this passage referred to the Christians that made up the churches.

We sing another song that asks, "What can wash away my sins?" The answer comes ringing back,

“Nothing but the blood of Jesus.” Does not our hymn also offer praise to the Lord Jesus for the sacrifice of His blood? Does it not show the bond between the church and the blood of our Savior? What a song of exaltation of Christ!

**“Elect from every nation,
yet one o’er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth,
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses with
every grace endued”**

Our hymn sings of the “elect.” This refers to those who are chosen and selected by God for salvation. It is not to be understood as the Calvinistic doctrine teaches. God has not chosen and selected specific individuals for a salvation that has been predestined that cannot be resisted, lost, or about which man can do nothing to obtain. But God has predestined some to salvation and some to condemnation on the basis of what a person does with Christ. Those who believe and obey are to be saved. Those who don’t, won’t. The saved are the “elect.” The “elect” are those who make up the church, the saved.

These “elect” come from every nation. This means that people from greatly varied backgrounds, races, colors, geographical areas, cultures, social conditions, material and educational differences, and all the many other barriers that separate people one from another in this life, can be members of His church. But the gospel of salvation is for everyone because everyone needs to be saved from sin (Romans 3:23; 11:32).

It was always God's intention to include all mankind in the offer of salvation. When He made His promise to Abraham He said the seed of Abraham would be the source of blessings for every nation and every family of the earth (Genesis 12:3; 18:18).

The prophets spoke of the mercies of God being extended to both Jew and Gentile (Isaiah 55:3; Acts 13:34; Amos 9:11,12; Acts 15:16,17). Christ commissioned His apostles to preach the gospel to all the world, yes, every creature. On Pentecost, where people from many nations were gathered (Acts 2:5), Peter spoke the inclusive words that probably he did not fully grasp at the time by quoting from the Old Testament prophecy of Joel that "*whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21). As another hymn suggests, "Whosoever, surely meaneth me." It means anyone who will call on His name according to the Scriptures.

Additional evidence that the gospel is for all is seen in other passages. The vision Peter was allowed to see before going to the house of Cornelius convinced him that God "*is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him*" (Acts 10:34,35). Isaiah 2:2 foretold "*...all nations shall flow unto it.*" Revelation 22:17 extends the invitation, "*And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*" This is a universal offer.

There have been people from all over the earth that have heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel of Christ, and became members of the church of Christ. Since the need for salvation is universal, we are not surprised that the offer of salvation is universal, or that people from all over the world have chosen to be spiritual children of God.

Christians everywhere labor under the same charter, having the same authority, with the same purpose and goal, following the same divine author-

ity, and enjoying the same privileges and blessings. The work of the church is to bring glory to God (Eph. 3:21), and to be the "*pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15), that very truth that makes one free (John 8:32), and produces salvation and members of the Lord's church.

Even so, people so varied in so many ways, are one, united, brothers and sisters in Christ, in the same household of God regardless of race, color, nationality, or whatever else. There is but one church (Eph. 4:4,5).

The unity of the church is a cardinal theme throughout the epistles. The church in Corinth suffered from division and Paul taught them, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1 Cor. 1:10). Philipians 1:27 and 3:16 admonish being "*with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,*" and "*let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*" No chapter shows the glory of the unity of the body of Christ, even with many different members, than the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, which shows every member to be important, and every member having his or her work to do, and contribution to make. After all, we are reconciled in the one body (Eph. 2:15). When Christ promised to build His church He spoke of its unity by speaking of it in the singular, "my church" (Matt. 16:16). He had prayed for unity among His followers (John 17:20-22).

Those in the church, bless, praise, and glorify the one name of Christ. They partake of one holy food, which may refer to the Lord's supper, but what seems a more appropriate meaning, the word of God which feeds and nourishes the soul (1 Peter 2:2).

Those in the church entered the church by the new birth, the one spiritual birth, all coming to Christ the same way (John 3:3-5). Like Paul of yesteryear who said he would "*press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 3:14), those in the church hold that one hope in their hearts toward which Christianity is directed, the hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7).

"With every grace endued" is the description of the blessings and spiritual benefits that belong to every faithful Christian. Paul wrote that God had "*blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*" (Eph. 1:3). The graces and favors from God have been provided those who are "in Christ," which is the same relationship with Deity as being in His church. God blesses everyone in many ways whether they are "in Christ" or not, but the spiritual blessings, such as forgiveness of sins, the privilege of prayer, the purpose in life of glorifying God, the providence of God in this life, and the hope of heaven after this life, belong to the unworthy and undeserving person who has come to Christ and has been added to His church. What blessed assurance the Christian has! Do we fully realize the bounty that is ours to be in the church?

"Tho' With A Scornful Wonder, We See Her Sore Oppressed"

Our hymn turns attention to conditions of the church that have existed in the past, and still exist in the present, and will likely exist in the future. Paul wrote, "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*" (2 Tim. 3:12).

From the beginning, the Lord's church has had its enemies and opponents. There have always been those who have been "*enemies of the cross of Christ*" (Phil. 3:18). Even before the church began, there were

those who resisted the Lord Jesus just as men have rebelled against God from the Garden of Eden. While we see scorn, ridicule, and hostility directed against Christ and His church, we wonder in amazement that people would oppose that which is designed and given for their eternal benefit. The fact remains that the church has been and still is sore oppressed.

Before considering some of the resistance against the church, let us remind ourselves that we need not be too surprised this is the case. After all, the darkness of the world of sinful men has consistently been in opposition to the light of the glorious Lord and His gospel (John 3:19-21). When the Lord's people take the stand that they must take and tell of the "*more excellent way*" (1 Cor. 12:31), and expose and oppose the sins of men (Eph. 5:11), those who love the low path feel threatened, and they react against the truth taught and those who uphold it. Only in this way can they pacify themselves to reject the authority of the Lord which they are determined to ignore.

Wicked people were against Christ. Matthew 10:24,25, "*The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household.*" Jesus said, "*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you*" (John 15:18). He went further in His warning, "*Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also*" (John 15:20). So the church, like Paul, may be "*troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, yet not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed*" (2 Cor. 4:8,9).

Shortly after Pentecost we read of Peter and John being imprisoned and commanded to cease preaching Christ in Jerusalem [Acts 4:21]. Persecution arose against the church with the stoning of Stephen [Acts 8], even Saul made havoc of the church, and the disciples were scattered [Acts 8:1; 11:19]. James was killed by Herod [Acts 12:2]. This same Saul, upon his conversion, began a life of suffering persecution because of his faith [2 Cor. 11]. Were not the churches in Asia undergoing hardships and persecutions (Rev. 2,3)? In fact it was reported to Paul that the church was spoken against everywhere [Acts 28:22]. Peter warned of the coming of scoffers [2 Peter 3:3].

The history of Christianity has been stained with the blood of martyrs. During that historical period called the Dark Ages, those who dared follow the Scriptures were tortured and eliminated. Even in many places today the preaching of Christ is unlawful and those who do so are immediately subjected to cruelty and harassment. Here in our nation where there is what is called religious freedom, a freedom that has evidently been understood by some to give them license to, trash religion, especially the New Testament faith; it is not uncommon for the faithful to be ridiculed, ignored, shunned, misrepresented, and held up for scorn. The church has been sore oppressed, and so long as this world stands it will be that way.

“Her Doctrine Rent Asunder, By Names And Creeds Distressed”

The song speaks of “her doctrine.” Actually the church neither makes nor alters doctrine, but has the charge from God to uphold the doctrine of Christ [1 Tim. 3:15; 2 John 9-11]. While there is such a thing as Baptist doctrine, Methodist doctrine, Presbyterian doctrine, etc., doctrine that is peculiar and

distinctive to each denomination, there is no such thing as “church of Christ doctrine” because the church is not empowered to originate doctrine, but to teach, defend, and live the doctrine of Christ. The Lord’s doctrine, and we should speak of it in the singular as Scripture does (even though there be many points in that doctrine), can be called the church’s doctrine only in the sense that the church proclaims His doctrine, like the phrase, “the apostles’ doctrine” [Acts 2:42]. It was their doctrine, not because they originated it, but they preached it as they were guided by the Holy Spirit.

Who can dispute successfully but that the doctrine of Christ has been wrested, twisted, misused, abused, maligned, misrepresented, distorted, ignored, displaced, and relegated to the realm of the non essential? Men have adopted their own chosen names, subscribed to various and sundry creeds of their own making, substituted their own will in the place of His, made their laws, and dismissed the law of the Lord. The result has been the confused, chaotic, divided, and hopelessly inept denominational world, secularism, and atheism. Rather than going the way of the Savior, many prefer to imitate the theologians, so-called “scholars,” clergymen, and those who would present themselves as “somewhat.” Many such people have arisen from the ranks of the church itself as they have digressed from the truth and apostatized.

But here again, have we not been warned that such would be the case? Did not Paul warn the brethren in the churches of Galatia of those who taught a different gospel, a perversion of the gospel, something at variance from what the apostles of Christ had been authorized and guided by the Holy Spirit to teach [Gal. 1:6-9]? John urged, “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are*

gone out into the world" [1 John 4:1]. When Paul gave his final admonition to the elders of Ephesus, he included, "*For this I know, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them*" (Acts 20:29,30). Peter warned of "*false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction*" (2 Peter 2:1). Was not First Corinthians written primarily to correct the error being promoted, the false doctrines being taught and the truth was being abused?

Human names and creeds perpetuate false doctrines of men which make our worship vain (Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:7). Consider in your study the descriptions used by the Holy Spirit through Jude to depict false teachers (Jude 8,10,12,13).

The churches in Ephesus had encountered those who said they were apostles, but were not (Rev. 2:2). Pergamos was rebuked because of their toleration of those who taught the doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14). Thyatira also was rebuked because there was one called Jezebel teaching error among others (Rev. 2:20). Down through the years there have been those who have torn asunder the doctrine of Christ, in spite of the teaching that we must neither add to nor take from what the Lord has said (Rev. 22:18,19).

**"Yet Saints Their Watch Are Keeping,
They Cry, 'How Long, How Long?'
And Soon The Night Of Reaping Shall
Be The Morn Of Song"**

In the face of this persecution the way grows weary and long at times. Those who were martyred for the cause of Christ were heard to cry out, "How

long, O Lord?" (Rev. 6:10) before they and the cause for which they died would be avenged? But the saints must keep going and their watch they are keeping. 1 Corinthians 16:13, "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.*" Paul wrote, "*And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*" (Gal. 6:9). The only way to meet opposition in our service to God is to keep serving faithfully. Revelation 2:10, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" No fight, no victory! No cross, no crown!

Paul had confidence in his eternal destiny with God because "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*" (2 Tim. 4:7). Christians can be encouraged by the words of Romans 8:18, "*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" Peter said, "*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of person ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting [eagerly awaiting, JWB] unto the coming of the day of God...*" (2 Peter 3:11,12). It will be those who "*by patient endurance in well doing*" (Rom. 2:7) who shall be given "*glory and honor, immortality, eternal life.*" "*Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain*" (1 Cor. 15:58).

There is coming the day when the "night of weeping shall be the morn of song." There is the place where there will be no temptation, sorrow, pain, tears, disappointment, nor sin to mar our happiness. Our mourning shall be turned to eternal joy, peace, blessedness, and we shall possess our habitation in that city whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10).

What a glorious future awaits the Lord's church, even for everyone who remains faithful in the church. In so doing, they will remain faithful in Christ, and the inheritance that God has reserved in heaven shall be received and it shall never fade away (1 Peter 1:4).

What Does Our Hymn Tell Us?

It reminds us of the church's foundation, the relationship of the church with Christ, its divine origin, that it is blood-bought and loved by the Lord. Composed of the redeemed from every nation, yet, it is the one body, united in the truth it proclaims, enjoying the spiritual blessings God has provided and promised.

In spite of those who would oppose it, even seek its destruction, victory belongs to the faithful in the church. The ways and teachings of men are hindrances, but they shall be overcome. A sure reward is over there in the morning of joy for the church of Christ. We have good reason to use this hymn in our worship.

Chapter 10

Go Into The Field

Garland M. Robinson

“Go Into The Field” is the subject of this lesson. I have chosen to group each line of this song into fundamental thoughts and concepts. The overall theme and message of this song is evangelism. The command to take the blessed Gospel into all the world was among the last words uttered by the Lord when He was on earth. It deserves a major place among the many great themes of the Bible.

“Stand No Longer Idle”

The Bible condemns inactivity. There is no room for free-loaders in the Lord’s army. We will either be marching forward or retreating. There is no middle ground! Therefore, we must march forward!

Idleness works mischief. Some have said idleness is the devil’s workshop. Those with time on their hands get into trouble they would not otherwise be involved in if they were busy in righteous deeds. Paul said of younger widows, *“And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not”* (1 Tim. 5:13).

Solomon recorded, *“Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger”* (Prov. 19:15). *“He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich”* (Prov. 10:4). *“He that gathereth in summer is*

a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame" (Prov. 10:5). The tiny ant is used as an example of industrious, untiring labor. There is nothing idle about its workers. They have no guide, overseer or ruler; yet, they work diligently gathering food in the harvest. Solomon urges us to "*consider her ways and be wise*" (Prov. 6:6-11).

Preparing the hearts of the people for the coming of the kingdom/church, the Lord told about a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a penny a day and sent them out. He went out later in the day and found "*others standing idle in the marketplace.*" His question was, "*Why stand ye here all the day idle*" (Matt. 20:1-7). Their reply was that no man had hired them. This lesson is appropriate for so many today.

There are at least six categories of individuals when it comes to working for the Lord.

There are those who are not interested in working and therefore will not do it. Such individuals are Christians in name only. They have gone through the motions of obeying the Gospel but desire to do no more. It may be they never truly repented nor understood what service in the Lord's house (church) involved (cf. Luke 14:25-33).

Perhaps they did truly obey but have since lost their zeal in performing their task. Their soul is in serious jeopardy of eternal loss unless they repent and begin working faithfully in the Lord's vineyard. Perhaps the church at Laodicea had fallen into such a condition. They were simply "keeping house." They had lost their zeal. They were standing idle — going nowhere. The Lord described them saying they were neither cold nor hot (Rev. 3:15). They were indifferent. They were rebuked by the Lord and told to be zealous and repent (Rev. 3:19). We must get

busy and work in the Lord's business, especially in the area of evangelism, teaching the Gospel to the whole world. The best place to start is at home.

There are those who see nothing to do. How tragic it is when one cannot see a job that needs to be done and then busy himself in the performance of it. Many of those who stood in the market place saw nothing to do (cf. Matt. 20:6-7). Did they take the initiative in finding work? It doesn't appear so. Surely the opportunities were many, but they still had to be approached before they would work.

As the Lord's people, we ought to look for opportunities to be involved in the greatest work on earth. We even should seek to create opportunities. Rare are the occasions when someone will approach us desiring to study the Bible. Therefore, don't wait for others to make the first move, we ought to approach them and encourage them to study the Scriptures and obey the Gospel.

There are those who wait for others to tell them what to do. This appears to be the case with those in Matthew 20:6-7. They waited to be approached and told what to do. Far too many sit back and wait for others to give them a task to perform. Why not take the initiative to work yourself. Jesus told about those servants who knew the master's will and did it not in Luke 12:47. "*And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*" James also speaks of such a situation in James 4:17, "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" These two examples could very likely fit the situation of those who wait to be told what to do.

There are those who see the work but do not have the motivation to do it. Many things of the world compete with our time so that we never get around to doing what we know we should, and many times actually plan on doing, someday. Our priorities must be set in the proper order. The apostle John said,

¹⁵Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever [1 John 2:15-17].

To be an effective worker, one must be a self-starter. There won't always be someone around to motivate and prod us along. We need to become the motivator ourselves, instead of the one that needs motivating.

There are those who see the task before them but don't know how to go about it. Surely, there are many soldiers in the Lord's army that would be effective workers if they knew how to go about it. Here's where we ought to study and train ourselves to be effective workers. This begins with our knowing the will of God and committing it to memory so we may teach others. The great commission tells us to teach all men and women "*to observe all things*" the Lord has commanded (Matt. 28:20). We can't teach such if we don't know it ourselves. Speak with others who are evangelizing and learn their techniques. Learn what not to do as well as what to do. "*...Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*" (Matt. 10:16). We have not won the victory when we

turn people away because of our harshness or lack of tact. *“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient”* (2 Tim. 2:24). Read books on the subject or enroll in training classes where you might learn how to teach the Gospel effectively.

There are those who see the work to do and take it upon themselves to do it. The two and five talent servants were faithful to the charge given them by their master (Matt. 25:16-17). They did not shirk responsibility. They simply did that which they were commanded. The apostle Paul was such an individual. His life was devoted in carrying the Gospel to the whole world. He performed that task whether others joined with him or not (2 Tim. 4:10-11). He was willing to die in the process if need be (Acts 21:13). To such individuals will come great reward. *“His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord”* (Matt. 25:21,23).

The Gospel Call

“Shall He Call In Vain?” The Lord calls all His servants to work in His vineyard. The invitation, yea command, is to go into the whole world and preach the whole Gospel.

¹⁸And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded

you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matt. 28:18-20).

*"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). Paul said to the church at Ephesus, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. ²⁷For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all the counsel of God**" (Acts 20:26-27).*

Paul was sent to "preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1:17). He said, *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16)! Shall the Lord "call in vain" for more workers to enter the field of harvest?*

The Lord's call is by and through the Gospel. *"Whereunto he called you by our gospel..." (2 Thess. 2:14). "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15). The call of the Gospel is an ever present call. It never subsides.*

Without the proclamation of the Gospel, souls cannot be saved, for it, the Gospel, the Word of God, is **the instrument** through which God saves. It is powerful! Paul said, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for **it is the power of God** unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). "For the word of God is quick, and **powerful**, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved **it is the power of God**"*

[1 Cor. 1:18]. *“But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you”* [1 Peter 1:25].

Without faith, no one can please God. *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him”* (Heb. 11:6). The only way one can have faith is by hearing the Word of God. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). It’s through the preaching of the Gospel that people believe (Acts 15:7).

Take away the Gospel and there is **no salvation**, no **eternal life**. When the Gospel is not preached, souls are lost. *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost”* (2 Cor. 4:3). We read of Christ *“...who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”* (2 Tim. 1:10).

It is by the Gospel that we will be **judged**. *“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel”* (Rom. 2:16; cf. John 12:48).

The Gospel **brings peace** to those who embrace it. *“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things”* (Rom. 10:15)! *“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace”* (Eph. 6:15). *“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 4:7).

The vengeance of the Lord will come upon those who do **not obey the Gospel**. *“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (2 Thess. 1:8)? *“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin*

at us, what shall the end be of them that **obey not the gospel of God**" (1 Peter 4:17)? "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report" (Rom. 10:16)? This shows the urgency of spreading the blessed Gospel.

The Gospel is to be **defended**.

*⁷Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the **defence** and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. ... ¹⁷But the other of love, knowing that I am set for **the defence of the gospel** (Phil. 1:7,17).*

The Gospel of Christ can be **hindered** (1 Cor. 9:12).

We are to use whatever circumstances that befall us to **further** the proclamation of the Gospel. Paul said of all his persecutions, "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. 1:12). "But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention" (1 Thess. 2:2).

The Gospel can be **perverted** and moved away from.

*⁶I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: ⁷Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would **pervert the gospel** of Christ. ⁸But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be*

accursed. ⁹As we said before, so say I now again, *If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed* (Gal. 1:6-9).

*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not **moved away from** the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister* (Col. 1:23).

The **Gospel is the truth**. “*To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the **truth of the gospel** might continue with you*” (Gal. 2:5). “*But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to **the truth of the gospel...***” (Gal. 2:14)?

We can **labor together** in the Gospel. “*And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life*” (Phil. 4:3). “*And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith*” (1 Thess. 3:2).

The Gospel is **in our hands**. “*But as we were allowed of God to be put in **trust with the gospel**, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts*” (1 Thess. 2:4). “*But we have this **treasure in earthen vessels**, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*” (2 Cor. 4:7).

The Gospel is to be **received**. “*These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they **received the word with all readiness of mind**, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those*

things were so" [Acts 17:11]. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" [Acts 19:20]. Those in Samaria received the Word of God [Acts 8:14].

The Gospel can and does bring **persecution**. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the **afflictions of the gospel** according to the power of God" (2 Tim. 1:8). "Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the **bonds of the gospel**" [Philemon 1:13].

Our brethren of the first century were diligent in **spreading the Gospel**. Note these many verses: "And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and **preached the gospel in many villages** of the Samaritans" [Acts 8:25]. "And there they **preached the gospel**" [Acts 14:7]. "And when they had **preached the gospel** to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch" [Acts 14:21]. "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to **preach the gospel** unto them" [Acts 16:10]. "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to **preach the gospel** to you that are at Rome also" [Rom. 1:15]. "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully **preached the gospel** of Christ" [Rom. 15:19]. "Yea, so have I strived to **preach the gospel**, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" [Rom. 15:20]. "And **the word of God increased**; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" [Acts 6:7]. "Therefore they that were scattered

abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

*³⁶The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) ³⁷That word, I say, ye know, which **was published throughout all Judaea**, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached (Acts 10:36-37).*

“But the word of God grew and multiplied” (Acts 12:24). “And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews...” (Acts 13:5).

Many people are **eager to hear the Word of God.**

⁴⁴And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. ... ⁴⁸And when the Gentiles heard...they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region (Acts 13:44,48,49).

The Word of God will **build us up.** “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

“One And All”

It is the will of our heavenly Father that **every-one work.** He is ready and willing to hire all that come unto Him. No one will be turned down who

truly desires to work. However, we must work His work, not our own work. He has certain requirements to be met if we expect to be rewarded. Simply saying we want to work is not enough, we must get our "hands dirty" in His business, doing His work, His way.

Teaching and preaching the Gospel is not limited to a select few in the kingdom. There is no clergy and laity in the Lord's house. We are all servants of the Master. Every Christian must work. "*Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, **with many others also***" (Acts 15:35). Acts 8:4 tells of every Christian preaching the word — "*Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.*"

Everyone Must Prepare To Work

"Reapers get ready." The apostles and other inspired teachers of the first century were given what to speak by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "*But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak*" (Matt. 10:19).

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe (1 Thess. 2:13).

Unlike the apostles, men and women today are not given what to speak. Each one must study, learn, and prepare. "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Tim. 2:15).

“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all” (1 Tim. 4:15).

¹²For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. ¹³For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe (Heb. 5:12-13).

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

The Task Is Urgent

“Reapers, the hours are speeding.” Friends, our time is quickly passing. Opportunities will soon be no more. The time is short. We know not how many hours, days, months or years we have to do this precious work. Why wait? Why put it off? We must **“work while the sun is glowing.”** The urgency of the task before us is made clear by Jesus. *“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).*

It may already be the eleventh hour! *“And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle” (Matt. 20:6)?* I or you may be at the very end of our life on this earth. It may be that we cannot work tomorrow. Our health may fail us. Thousands die every day and go out into eternity unprepared to meet God. It may be the Lord will bring events upon this earth to a close. What about those who are yet untaught? What about those who

would only need a little encouragement? **"Reapers, the hours are speeding!"**

To a certain scribe the Lord said, "...*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God*" (Mark 12:34). How many are around us today that are as this scribe? Our task is urgent in finding such people. Will you help? Will you do your part? Will you heed the Master's call? **"Heed his loving plea."** **"Take up your sickles and speed away."**

"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" [2 Cor. 6:2].

"Labor For The Lord"

Jesus, is needing our help. Won't we show love for the Master and go to work for Him? We sing in this song about being **"true to Jesus,"** are we? When we sit back and do nothing to teach the lost, we are not laboring for the Lord. We are laboring for ourselves.

The Lord needs and requires laborers. He has no hands but our hands. He has no feet but our feet to carry the Gospel to the whole world. The Gospel has been committed to earthen vessels [2 Cor. 4:7].

The Fields Are White Unto Harvest

"Fields are waiting for your hands today." **"Go into the field."** **"Reap the golden yield."** **"Gather now the grain."** If the time to spread the Gospel is not now, when will it be? Should we wait till we expect a better harvest? Is that decision to be left in our hands? What about those who die in the meantime? What if we die in the meantime? Will the Lord accept our feeble excuses? We know he won't!

Jesus told his disciples, “Say not ye, *There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and **look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest***” (John 4:35). Jesus was not talking about a harvest of wheat or barley. He was talking about a harvest of souls! His Word was that the time is always ready. At any moment, there are souls who are hungering and thirsting for the pure waters of life. Our task is to find them and teach it to them.

When Paul was in Corinth, the Lord spoke to him one night in a vision and said, “...*Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: ¹⁰For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for **I have much people in this city***” [Acts 18:9-10]. There were many souls, even in a city as corrupt and immoral as Corinth, who would believe and obey the Gospel when they heard it. The text says, “*And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them*” [Acts 18:11]. The church was established there and did much good for the cause of Christ.

This same pattern of sowing the seed of the kingdom and reaping a harvest was repeated wherever Christians went. The first, second, and third missionary tours of Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Luke, and many others verify this fact. Even in those places where they were persecuted severely, nigh unto death, the church was established and thrived within those with an honest and good heart.

The Lord Is With Us

**“There to shield and help you He will be.”
“His dear voice shall cheer you through the day.”**

In the great commission the Lord said, “...*lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen*” [Matt. 28:20]. Though this is a well-known

fact, it appears it is often forgotten. Men often want an ali, a partner, someone to be with them. They do not want to be alone. Children are often heard to say, "I'll go if you go with me." Adults often exhibit the same. They often forget that Jesus has promised to be with us. We need to remember what Paul said, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13).

The promise of the Lord's presence also proves his deity. How else could He be wherever His disciples are without it? As we journey throughout the world, even in the remote corners of the earth, Jesus goes with us. He is a friend. He provides comfort and contentment. He is concerned. When Stephen was stoned, the Lord was with him. "*But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God*" (Acts 7:55).

Deity has always been with faithful servants. God said to Joshua, "*...As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*" (Josh. 1:5). To Paul we read, "*...Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: ¹⁶For **I am with thee**, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city*" (Acts 18:9-10). "What shall we then say to these things? *If God be for us, who can be against us*" (Rom. 8:31)? "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:31).

¹⁶At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. ¹⁷Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion [2 Tim. 4:16-17].

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

The Great Reward

**“Fruitage of your labors you shall see.”
“Jesus will reward for what you do.” “Life’s fair
crown of glory give to you.” “Perfect rest when
ends life’s little day.” “Gain the great reward.”**

The reward of faithful service is great, not only for the ones that are saved but for the ones laboring to accomplish such as well.

¹⁹*“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall **save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins**” (James 5:19-20).*

²⁴*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

²⁵*For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. ²⁶For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then **he shall reward every man according to his works** (Matt. 16:24-27; cf. Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26).*

¹¹*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;*

¹³Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man's work abide which he hath built there-upon, **he shall receive a reward.** ¹⁵If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

Notice these many verses which speak of reward for being faithful unto the Lord. "...Be thou faithful unto death, and **I will give thee a crown of life**" (Rev. 2:10). "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but **the righteous into life eternal**" (Matt. 25:46). "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but **he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved**" (Mark 13:13).

²²**Blessed are ye**, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. ²³Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, **your reward is great in heaven:** for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets (Luke 6:22-23).

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that **they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me**" (Acts 26:18). "But **glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile**" (Rom. 2:10). "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that **ye should inherit a blessing**" (1 Peter

3:9). *“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so **an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”* [2 Peter 1:10-11]. *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it”* [Rev. 2:17]. *“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest”* [Rev. 7:14].

*¹⁴And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. ¹⁶They shall **hunger no more, neither thirst any more**; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes* [Rev. 7:14-17].

Conclusion

Faithful service in the Lord's kingdom, what a blessing!

Are you faithful? Are you a child of God? Are you working — busy — in His kingdom? It's time to obey and get busy for the Lord — today — now! Only then shall you receive the great reward.

Chapter 11

It Is Well With My Soul

Gilbert Gough

Horatio G. Spafford, a Presbyterian business man from Chicago, had decided to take his family to Europe for a vacation.¹ The planned date of their vacation was in the month of November, 1873. At the last minute before leaving, Spafford had some business developments arise; and it was necessary for him to remain in Chicago. He sent his wife and four daughters ahead with hopes of meeting them in France in a few days. His wife and children boarded the *Ville du Havre* with other friends and set sail.

In midocean the *Ville du Havre* was struck by an English ship called the *Lochearn*. Within twelve minutes the ship boarded by Spafford's family had sunk. Happily his wife survived, but sadly his little daughters perished. It does not take a great deal of imagination to comprehend how Spafford's soul was troubled at the loss of his children.

Upon receiving the news, Spafford headed to New York City and boarded a ship to join his wife. As his ship was crossing the ocean, he came to the place where the tragedy occurred. He stood on the bridge of the ship contemplating the loss of his children. Then he went down into his cabin and wrote the following poem.

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea-billows roll;

*Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.*

*My sin — O the bliss of this glorious tho't —
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more:
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

*And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be
sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound and the Lord shall
descend,
Even so — it is well with my soul.*

Out of his bereft heart and sorrowed soul came these beautiful words. The lyrics he wrote helped to calm his troubled spirit.

Throughout the years people have sung Spafford's lyrics which was set to music by P. P. Bliss. We in the church have loved and still love this song. It is a favorite of many.

Knowing Spafford was of a Calvinistic background being a Presbyterian, it cannot be detected that his false doctrinal beliefs infiltrated his poem. Properly understood in comparison to Bible teaching, the song teaches the truth and gives comfort to our souls in worship to God. It cannot be certain what verses of scripture Spafford may have had in mind, but his lyrics set forth scriptural thoughts of how it can truly be said, "It is well with my soul."

In Peace Or Sorrow Contentment [Verse One]

Every parent in their last hour of life wishes to leave their children with a gift — a gift for the happiness of their children. When Christ was about to

depart this life, He desired to leave His disciples a gift. His garments were left with the soldiers who crucified Him (John 19:23,24). His mother was left in the care of John the apostle (John 19:27). But unto His disciples He left the most precious gift, peace! "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*" (John 14:27).

The Nature of His Peace

The peace Jesus promised was not an outward peace. It was "not as the world giveth." The world offers a peace of the easy life of pleasant surroundings based upon material things. Such a peace cannot last because the world is a temporary place. John wrote:

*¹⁵Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the **world passeth away**, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever (1 John 2:15-17. emp. mine GG).*

Real peace does not come from the world. What the world cannot give, it cannot take away. Even though the United States of America has outward peace from war, nowhere can we find more discontented people. It is not well with the souls of the many who only know outward peace and are destitute of the peace Jesus gives.

The peace that Jesus gives is an inward peace. "*My peace I give unto you.*" This peace is a state of mind undisturbed by the storms of life, or it is a

quiescent heart as the “sorrows like sea billows roll” as Spafford worded it. It is unaffected by the world. Its value consists not in freedom from the trials and burdens of life but in the power to endure life’s trials. As Paul wrote, “*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 4:7). Here is the peace that gives contentment to the inner man, so the heart of man can truly say, “It is well with my soul.”

This inward peace which Jesus gives is like a river that “attendeth my way.” God through the prophet Isaiah said, “*Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream...*” (Isaiah 66:12). The origin of a river is unseen. It keeps on giving as it grows wider and stronger approaching the sea — the sea of eternity.

The Giver of the Peace

Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you.” Jesus came from the God of peace. Paul wrote, “*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*” (Rom. 16:20). Jesus is the “Prince of peace” (Isaiah 9:6). He had a tranquility that no storm could disturb. All was well with His soul. At the end of His earthly life, He ascended back to the “God of peace” (Rom. 15:33).

The peace Jesus possessed, He had the power to bestow. In Mark 4:35-41 nature’s elements relented to the peace of Christ, and so did the disciples fears. In Mark 5 He gave peace to a man tormented by evil spirits within him.

The Recipients of the Peace

Jesus said, “*I give unto you*” that is to His disciples. The disciples were students of Christ. They must be spiritually minded for “...to be carnally

mind is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

Those who have faith in God, trusting Him and not in themselves, will have that peace: *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).*

Those who forsake sin have peace. *"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20, 21).*

Those who hearken to God's commandments have peace. *"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments; then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18).*

Thus, peace comes to those who live in harmony with God. Only those who live in harmony with God's Word, can truly say, "It is well with my soul." But those who refuse to do the will of God are deceived and are or will be tormented. They have no lasting peace, only a temporary peace that this sinful world has to offer.

Sin And Redemption [Verse Two]

Sin is no respecter of persons. What it will do for one person, it will do for another. It is dangerous and injurious to the souls of men, women, and accountable young people. Since this is true, we had better understand what sin is.

Sin and Its Consequence

Literally sin is "missing the mark," and it is like an archer who misses the bulls eye. Perhaps Paul had this in mind when he wrote, *"For all have sinned*

[missed the mark], *and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23). Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). There are many synonyms for sin used in the Bible that help us understand its nature: evil, err, iniquity, wrong, trespass, transgress.

Sin comes in varieties and combinations of ways. There are sins of *commission*, the outright sin. Commission comes from the word "commit," thus this kind of transgression is a presumptuous, willful desire to violate God's law. The Hebrew writer refers to those who "*sin willfully after*" they "*have received the knowledge of the truth*" (10:26).

There are sins of *omission* or neglect. James describes this kind of sin in James 4:17. "*For him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" Many will be lost in sin because they have omitted from their lives or neglected in their lives to do God's bidding.

There are sins of *ignorance*. God places no premium on ignorance. Paul writes when Jesus returns "*in flaming fire*" that He will take "*vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" In Paul's sermon of Acts 17 he says, "*And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent*" (Acts 17:30). Since ignorance is no excuse for sin, men must learn the truth and obey it (Psalm 119:11; Eph. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:15). Whatever kind of sin one may commit, it will separate you from God. "*But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear*" (Isaiah 59:2).

Redemption through Jesus

Since sin separates us from God and makes us filthy in His sight (Psalm 14:3; 53:3), God through the shedding of the blood of His Son Jesus Christ

cleanses us and redeems us from sin. "O the bliss of this glorious tho't." John wrote, "...unto him (Jesus) that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5). He further added, "...and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). But for sinful man to access the blood of Christ shed upon the cross, he must be baptized to be redeemed. As Ananias commanded Saul of Tarsus, so must all men obey the preacher's words: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Thus, when one is baptized they have redemption. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" [Col. 1:14]. Man's sins, "not in part but the whole" are forgiven [Acts 2:38] and "we bear it no more."

Jesus died a death of substitution, a vicarious death. Vicarious means "substitutionary, someone or something taking the place of another." From a Biblical standpoint it means that the innocent Lamb of God suffered in place of guilty sinful man. He took your place and my place. He died for us! Nothing is more emphatically set forth in God's divine Word that the Lord died, not for His own sins, but for our sins [cf. Isaiah 53:5,6]. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" [Rom. 5:8]. In 1 Corinthians 15:3,4, Paul wrote, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for **our** sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." No wonder the inspired Hebrew writer declared in Hebrews 2:9, "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

When our sin is forgiven through Jesus Christ by obedience to His will, we can truly say, "It is well with my soul."

Second Coming of Christ (Verse 3)

It is not guessing, theorizing, nor speculating. This much is known; Jesus is coming again! It is certain, because God, who cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18), has assured us of His Son's return in His Word.

The Bible's Teaching of Jesus' Coming Again

Jesus' teachings overflowed with His promised coming. In the Parable of the Pounds He tells of a nobleman who goes into a far country, then returns (Luke 19:12ff); thus a picture of Jesus' return. In the Parable of the Talents He tells of a wealthy man who calls his servants and gives them talents to use in His glory, and "*after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them*" (Matt. 25:19). In John 14:1-3 Jesus pledges,

*¹Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In 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. ³And 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 (emp. mine GG).*

We can rely on the testimony of angels who said "*this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, **shall so come in like manner** as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:11; emp. mine GG).

Inspired preachers taught Jesus is coming again. Paul wrote, "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-*

angel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16). Peter penned these words: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise..." (2 Peter 3:10). James recorded, "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 latter rain" (James 5:7). John expressed, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

In the 260 chapters of the New Testament, His return is referred to over 300 times. One verse in every twenty-five speaks of His coming.

"Maranatha"

There was a word which was on the lips of those early Christians which indicated the return of Jesus. It was their salutation and benediction — "Maranatha" meaning "Oh Lord, come!" or "Lord, come quickly" (1 Cor. 16:22). When the song reads, "And, Lord haste the day..." one understands the looking forward to Jesus second advent.

The Manner of His Return

He will come in "like manner" as He personally ascended into the cloud, so shall He personally descend (Acts 1:9,11). His coming will be public, and as He returns the "clouds will be rolled back as a scroll" and every eye shall see Him. It is the judgment of this writer that Revelation 1:7 speaks figuratively of Jesus' return in judgment upon the wicked who persecuted the saints and not necessarily refer-

ring to Jesus literal second coming. However, the figure is found in what literally will happen some day. *“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”*

He will return audibly as the trump will sound. *“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God...”*

Time of His Return Is Unknown

It is certain He is coming back, but the timing is unknown to man, to angels and even to the Son of God. *“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father”* (Mark 13:32). So we must be ready at all times. As Jesus said in Mark 13:33, *“Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.”* Also, He said in Matthew 24:42, *“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”*

What then should be our attitude as we await His coming? It can be summarized in three words: EXPECTANCY, ACTIVITY, and PURITY. Are you ready for His return? *“There is a great day coming.”* People who do not look forward to Jesus’ coming either fear His coming, know they are not ready, love this present world, or are ignorant of His coming. While there is time and life, prepare for Jesus’ coming again.

Jesus said, *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”* (John 5:28,29). Those who are resur-

rected unto life at Jesus' second coming can truly say, "It is well with my soul," and that will be for an eternity!

END NOTES

¹Reynolds, William J. *Songs of Glory: Stories of 300 Great Hymns and Gospel Songs*. Baker Book House. Grand Rapids, MI. 1990 pp. 329, 330.

Chapter 12

Nothing But The Blood Of Jesus

Philip Davis

Religious man, faced with life's great issues, must eventually answer the profound question, "what shall I do in view of my sins?" He must cry as the Pentecostians, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do*" (Acts 2:37)? Peter's answer turned them to the cross. Though humanistic philosophy, psychology and theology may try to explain away this universal trait, all who have not hardened their God-given consciences realize that right exists; and to violate it is "wrong."

The concept of right is objective and it transcends the wishes or plans of humanity. Personalized and individualized ethical value systems (subjective axiology) is an absurd concept, devoid of meaning. In appearance only is it a rational concept. Some people wander life's desert seeking the water of the mirage that would validate moral pluralism and relativity. Ontologically "oughtness" cannot be rationally conceived to be subjective and at the same time have real, absolute, universal, objective meaning. Even unbelievers conclude that when one violates whatever is his standard for behavior he feels guilt.

Man wants to feel the relief of exoneration.¹ Since he cannot possess it by his own effort, he must seek forgiveness (or, more properly, remission, Acts 2:38, etc.). How many minds and lives are twisted and wrecked by unresolved or false guilt? How many people have sought respite in drug, drink or desire?

Though one may search from heaven to horizon, from heights to depths, he can find but one satisfactory answer — forgiveness.

Try as he may, mankind fails to find solace for his mind and soul. He needs above all "a way out." Through limitless ages of endless forms of idolatry, man has believed healing to flow from a higher power — something outside himself.² Humanity reasons that this is not merely a matter of offending another man.³ Something is missing; there must be more. Our sense of duty, of obligation of "oughtness" requires a source, a measure and a guarantor of that good which we realize we have transgressed. Human explanations of "herd instinct" and "evolutionary ethics" or "social contract" will not fulfill the requirements of this urge. Abundant ethical theories fall far short of explaining "why" one should or should not act in a certain way. What will our answer be? We find our answer in the lyrics of an old hymn:

Nothing But The Blood⁴

What can wash away my sin?
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
 What can make me whole again?
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon this I see—
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus
 For my cleansing, this my plea—
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Nothing can for sin atone—
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
 Naught of good that I have done—
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

This is all my hope and peace—
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
This is all my righteousness—
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

REFRAIN

Oh! precious is the flow
 That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

DISCUSSION

“What Can Wash Away My Sins? What Can Make Me Whole Again?”

Man's sin has strangled him. Futilely he flounders in a moral morass beyond his ability to fully comprehend. Sin is lethal and it is killing him. Sin is real; and its reality implies our need for purification. Scripture tells us, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23); *“For the wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23).

Isaiah realized sin's enormity when he wrote, *“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts”* (Isaiah 6:5). David lamented his plight in these words,

¹Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me... (Psalm 51:1-3).

Leper-like, our spirits cry "Unclean! Unclean!" We wander hoping against hope for an angel-stirred pool in which to bathe and wash away our reproach. We find it in the Lord (John 5:4,8).

The Metaphor Of Washing

Scripture paints sin as defilement and uncleanness.⁵ People daily violate their obligation toward God and their fellow man. Sin's reality demands punishment. Avoidance of that penalty necessitates purification. Thus sin's reality demands a means of purification. Since God requires of each man an accounting and a "payment" for his iniquity, no greater task lies before us than the solving of that problem (Isaiah 59:1-2; Luke 13:3; et al).

Consider the following verses: "*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord*" (Acts 22:16). "*But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the **washing of regeneration**, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*" (Titus 3:4-5). "*And such were some of you: but ye are **washed**, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*" [1 Cor. 6:11].

Scripture also describes this dynamic in other places, including Hebrews 10:22, "*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies **washed** with pure water,*" and Ephesians 5:26, "*...that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the **washing** of water by the word.*" Obviously, God considers us to be in dire straits which can only be remedied by the efficacy of the sacrifice of the Christ's life.

“What Can Make Me Whole Again?”

Sin tears a gaping hole in our spiritual fabric. We are defiled, abased and separated. We need to be mended and restored [Matt. 4:21; Gal. 6:1ff]. Paul uses the word *katartidzo*⁶ to express the tear that needs sewing, the defect in the fabric of godliness that needs healing. Sin renders us incomplete and damaged. Paul pleads with us, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted”* [Gal. 6:1]. Again, listen to David:

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
⁸Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the
bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
⁹Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all
mine iniquities. ¹⁰Create in me a clean
heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within
me. ¹¹Cast me not away from thy presence;
and take not thy holy spirit from me.
¹²Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
and uphold me with thy free spirit [Psalm
51:7-12].

“For My Pardon This I See, For My Cleansing This My Plea”

Our unrighteousness needs justification. Our debt needs redemption, remission and repaying. Our uncleanness and abasement need sanctification. Our transgression demands forgiveness. Violation cries out for atonement. Defilement seeks purification. We must find a propitiation for our transgressions lest we collapse under God’s righteous judgment [Heb. 10:31]. Alienation from God must seek reconciliation

and the removal of enmity — atonement.⁷ Sin creates our greatest needs.⁸ It results not only in our initial need for God's saving grace in becoming Christians, it continues with the demand for a "second law of pardon" [Acts 8:9-24; 1 John 6-2:1].⁹

These terms describe different aspects of the same working of God upon our spirits. All of this implies that before sin, we were whole in the sight of God. Sin means wholeness prior to sin and deficiency afterwards. We were innocent and without condemnation. The fact of sin shouts out our deficiency. We need a "law of pardon" available only through the vicarious death of Jesus upon the cross shedding his blood instead of ours. Let us consider several of these terms of pardon.

Sanctification and sanctify come from the kindred Greek terms:¹⁰

38. *hagiasmos*, hag-ee-as-mos'; from G37; prop. purification, i.e. (the state) purity; concr. (by Hebr.) a purifier: — holiness, sanctification.

37. *hagiazō*, hag-ee-ad'-zō; from G40; to make holy, i.e. (cer.) purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate: — hallow, be holy, sanctify. [1 Cor. 6:11]

Paul uses this root word in 1 Corinthians 6:11, "*And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are **sanctified**, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*"

Washing translates the word *apolouo*.

628. washed - *apolouo*, ap-ol-oo'-o; from G575 and G3068; to wash fully, i.e. [fig.] have remitted (reflex.): — wash [away].

Redemption¹¹ is a closely related concept:

629. *apolutrosis*, ap-ol-oo'-tro-sis; from a comp. of G575 and G3083; (the act) ransom in

full, i.e. (fig.) riddance, or (spec.) Chr. salvation: — deliverance, redemption.

The biblical example of its use is 1 Corinthians 1:30, "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*"

Forgiveness and Remission

Forgiveness and remission often translate the same Greek word:¹²

859. *aphesis*, af'-es-is; from G863; freedom; (fig.) pardon: — deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission.

Col. 1:14, "*In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*"

3929. *paresis*, par'-es-is; from G3935; praetermission, i.e. toleration: — remission. (See Romans 3:25, pd.)

Rom. 3:25, "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*"

Justification

Justification and **justify** take on a legal tone. "There is no reconciliation, no justification, except through and by and for Christ."¹³ Its origin is:

1347. *dikaiosis*, dik-ah'-yo-sis; from G1344; acquittal (for Christ's sake): — justification.

1334, justified, *dikaioo*, dik-ah-yo'-o; from G1342; to render (i.e. show or regard as) just or innocent: — free, justify (-ier), be righteous. [1 Cor. 6:11]

Rom. 8:33, "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*"

Reconciliation / Removal of Enmity

2433. *hilaskomai*, hil-as'-kom-ahee; mid. from the same as G2436; to conciliate, i.e. (trans.) to atone for [sin], or (intrans.) be propitious: — be merciful, make reconciliation for.

2 Cor. 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of **reconciliation**."

Heb. 2:17, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make **reconciliation** for the sins of the people."

Propitiation

2434. *hilasmos*, hil-as-mos'; atonement, i.e. (concr.) an expiator: — propitiation.

Rom. 3:25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a **propitiation** through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"

1 John 2:2, "And he is the **propitiation** for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." [Cf. 1 John 4:10].

Purification

Part of the value of Jesus' sacrifice is purification from defilement. It is more than simply washing from "dirt" as Peter explains.¹⁴ It is the removal of that which renders one spiritually unclean and unfit for service to God. The word translated **purify** derives from several original stems:¹⁵

48. *hagnizo*, hag-nid'-zo; from G53; to make clean, i.e. [fig.] sanctify [cer. or mor.]: — purity [self].

49. *hagnismos*, denotes a ceremonial purification [Acts 21:26; for the circumstances of which with reference to the vow of a Nazirite].

2511. *katharizo*, kath-ar-id'-zo; from G2513; to cleanse (lit. or fig.): — (make) clean [-se], purge, purify.

2512. *katharismos*, kath-ar-is-mos'; from G2511; a washing off, i.e. (cer.) ablution, (mor.) expiation: — cleansing, + purge, purification, [-fying]. *Katharismos* is rendered "a cleansing," (Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14; Heb. 1:3).

2514. *katharotes*, kath-ar-ot'-ace; from G2513; cleanness (cer.): — purification. (Heb. 9:13 – purifying or cleansing)

We find Jesus purifying us so that we may be found acceptable by Heaven.

“Nothing Can For Sin Atone — Naught Of Good That I Have Done”

Restitution is impossible for man with his sinful acquired “second nature.” One cannot live so righteously as to atone for even one sin. Paul reminds us *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast”* [Eph. 2:8-9; Certainly, though, this is the obedient faith he explains in Romans].

• One unforgiven sin can and will keep one from Heaven. After all, how can one “unbreak” a law? One well said, “...atonement is fundamental in the nature of God in his relations to men and...redemption is in the heart of God’s dealing in history.”¹⁶ Atonement carries the significance of putting two “at-one” with each other.

Atonement is defined:

2643. *katallage*, kat-al-lag-ay'; from G2644; exchange (fig. adjustment), i.e. restoration to (the divine) favor: — atonement, reconciliation [-ing].
Atonement

Rom. 5:11, "*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*"

Inherently, atonement can only be attained by satisfaction of the conditions of reconciliation. We cannot fulfill these by our own initiative. Isaiah mourned that, "*All of our righteousness are as filthy rags*" [Isa. 64:6]. Paul warned, "*There is none that is righteousness, no not one*" [Rom. 3:10,12]. Jesus taught us that we should say, "*We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do*" [Luke 17:10]. We have no merit to offer, no basis upon which to appeal other than "*Jesus Christ and him crucified*" [1 Cor. 2:2].

"This Is All My Hope And Peace — This Is All My Righteousness"

Shakespeare, in his play "*Measure For Measure*" [Act iii. Sc. 1.] wrote, "The miserable have no other medicine, But only hope." To paraphrase what Paul stated by divine inspiration, "*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*" [1 Cor. 15:19]. "*For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance*" [Rom. 8:24-25, NKJV]. What is the **hope of a Christian?**

Someone observed, "We live in hope though we die in despair." Certainly the Lord fights our tendency to despair [John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13]. God wants us to be optimistic about the future. He assures us of the forgiveness of sins both upon becoming a Christian and as we fallibly walk the Christian life. Peter requires us to be able to give a "reason for the hope" that lies within us [1 Peter 3:15]. Do we truly believe that we have that hope?

We can! We possess it on the basis of the sacrifice of Christ and the faithfulness of the Christian (2 Cor. 5:19; Titus 2:11-13).

That sacrifice and our dependency upon it can give us the confidence which affords us the “great recompense of reward” and our “full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:22,35,39). Our responsibility to the Lord and his efforts in our behalf is a whole-hearted devotion and faithful dedication to the Lord — a “good-faith effort” (1 Cor. 4:2). Our love of God and mankind, our understanding of the consequences of our actions, our sense of being dedicated to that which is right and our gratefulness for the Lord’s sacrifice — these are parts of our motivation (Rom. 12:1,2).

We sing “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness....” We can proclaim with Paul and Peter, “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*” (2 Tim. 4:7-8) and

*8...for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... ¹⁰Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: ¹¹For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:8,10-11).*¹⁷

These do not use the exact word “hope”¹⁸ but they carry its meaning.¹⁹ We base our future on the truth

of the words of Peter, "*Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God*" [1 Peter 1:21].

Peace

Paul best stated our confidence when he penned the words of Romans 5:1, "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"²⁰ Jesus reassured us of the peace of mind and heart that we should possess when our lives are attuned to the Divine will: "*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. In my Father's house there are many mansions...*" [John 14:27]. Paul echoed this thought: "*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*" [Phil. 4:7]. In fact Jesus "is our peace..." [Eph. 2:14-17] sent from the Father [Gal. 1:3].

Ours is a confident and rejoicing hope which assures our hearts [Heb. 3:6; 6:11]. It is an anchoring hope which saves [Heb. 6:18f; Rom. 8:24]. This peace-producing hope is ours because of what Jesus did on Calvary:

²⁰And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. ²¹And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled ²²In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: ²³If ye continue in the faith grounded

and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:20-23).

“This Is All My Righteousness”

When one considers his own life contrasted to the holiness and righteousness that Deity possesses infinitely, he might well despair.

¹⁰As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Rom. 3:10-12).

But we are not left hopeless:²¹

²⁴O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. ^{8:1}There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 7:24-25; 8:1).

There is a real sense in which the righteousness of Christ is “reckoned” (*logidzomai*) unto us, not by transference, but judicially.²² *“For 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).*

God has arranged, through the atonement of Jesus, to cause us to stand before him complete and without unforgiven sin so that we might be acceptable to his holiness (Rom. 15:16; Eph. 1:6). ²⁷*“To whom God would make known what is the riches of*

*the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the **hope** of glory: ²⁸Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" [Col. 1:27-28].*

The song is correct that teaches the words "Without him we would be nothing." His righteousness is our only hope.

"Oh, Precious Is The Flow"

That which is precious is dear, costly and hard to acquire. When Jesus died on Calvary, his blood flowed. It was not spilled but shed voluntarily — he was no martyr (John 10:15-18). That flow was made ours at a premium in life and in death: *"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34).*

His blood symbolized more than mere sacrifice, because it also gave us a new covenant with God: *"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). God reminds us how precious was the cost of our redemption: ¹⁸"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹But with the **precious** blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).*

"That Makes Me White As Snow"

An old adage describes complete purity as being "pure as the driven snow." When waking on a winter morning and gazing out over the horizon's glistening, dazzling brilliance, before man or animal has set foot upon it, we see the crisp, clean, unblemished snow.

It is as white as one can imagine. It represents the ethical standing God's forgiveness grants us. "*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*" [Psalm 51:7]. "*...Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool*" (Isa. 1:18).

Washing in the blood of the Lamb, our sin-stains vanish. We come into the presence of the Almighty undefiled and worthy in his sight.

"No Other Fount I Know"

Knowing our plight, where else could we turn? All other sources are "wells without water" (2 Peter 2:17). One cannot go to any other to find the one whose name called over the spiritually dead can cause them to rise to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Buddha won't do! Mohammed is dead! "*There is no other name: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). Jesus is exclusive in his claims: "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6). But he is the source of living water which shall never run dry. "*But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*" (John 4:14). "*And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely*" [Rev. 21:6].

Life's desert thirst is not quenched by poison wells. Satan inspires false hope in other names and plans. Our spiritual lives' survival and deliverance depend solely upon the living waters of Jesus' goodness.

"Nothing But The Blood Of Jesus"

Even spiritually, the life is in the blood (Lev. 17:14). Christianity is a "bloody religion" (Heb. 9:22). It required the shedding of the blood of the only begotten of the Father who came to earth to share our lot (John 1:14). For his perfect life (Heb. 5:8-9) and vicarious death²³ to benefit fallen man, human-kind must "contact the blood." But his blood was shed in his death. *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"* (Eph. 1:7) (He) *"took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ³And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (Phil. 2:7-8). *"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"* (Rev. 1:5).

⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: ⁶Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ⁷For he that is dead is freed from sin. ⁸Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him²⁴ (Rom. 6:4-8).

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom.

5:9). *“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ”* [Eph. 2:13]. *“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven”* [Col. 1:20]. *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God”* [Heb. 9:14]?

Thus, our “point of pardon” comes when we reenact that death, contact that blood and are saved by “faith in the operation of God” [Col. 2:12] through his grace. Consider these scriptures. It is true without question that we must, before the throne of Divine judgment, plead the merits of the blood of Christ.

Conclusion

This old hymn teaches truths vital to our Christian understanding. We stand defiled, undone, condemned save for the credit of the crimson cross of Christ. Here we stake our claim. Here we seek our defense. And here we find our deliverance. Without it, all our good deeds and faith are pointless. With it, even our imperfections can be forgiven and our lives made whole [Heb. 12:23]. We reel at the critical ultimacy of the issues settled at Calvary and in the eternal mind of God. *“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”* [Rev. 13:8]. *“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”* [John 15:13].

We rejoice with near abandon the deliverance there procured. Our voices blend in precious pristine praise that “Christ died for sinners” [1 Tim. 1:15]. Though myriads of multitudes should tirelessly tell

and sing redemption's sweet song, they cannot state the half of that which God has accomplished at Calvary. "Sing it o'er and o'er again, Christ receiveth sinful men." "Oh the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary!" "Oh the depth and the riches of God's saving grace...." "Who can speak the matchless worth?" "Christ doth great deliverance bring." "Oh, what marvelous mercy, what infinite love! What immeasurable grace I see...through his suffering on Calvary" [2 Cor. 9:15]! "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." "Praise the Lord...!" "Holy! Holy! Holy!"

END NOTES

¹**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** (hereafter called ISBE), 1980 reprint, Sv.: "redemption," by Francis J. McConnell: "More than just the payment of price, the changing of the person."

²Secular humanism would have us believe that all answers flow from within the being and abilities of humankind.

³C. S. Lewis: **The Best Of C.S. Lewis: The Case for Christianity** [excerpted from **Mere Christianity**], (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1969), p. 403.

⁴Amos R. Wells, **Treasury of Hymn Stories**, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1945, Reprint 1992; 5th printing 1995), Originally published under the name **Treasury of Hymns**, p. 330. (This hymn was written by) Robert Lowry, D.D. He was born in Philadelphia, March 12, 1826, and died at a good old age in 1899. Educated at Lewisburg University in Pennsylvania, he became a Baptist minister in New York, Brooklyn, and other cities and professor of belles-lettres in Lewisburg University. ... Dr. Lowry was editor of ten or a dozen of the most popular Sunday-school song-books ever published, and he contributed to these some of their best hymns and tunes. Among his hymns that are most widely sung are "My life flows on in endless song," "One more day's work for Jesus," and "Where is my wandering boy to-night?" For all of these

he also wrote the tunes. ... But Dr. Lowry's most famous hymn is "Shall we gather at the river?"

⁵Scripture describes throughout its limits, cleansing in terms of washing. Consider the brass laver of the Tabernacle. The purification rites of ancient Israel and even her predecessors pictured sin as filth and atonement as a purification by washing. The New Testament amply pictures, and even explicitly calls our approach to God in terms of cleansing by water and blood.

⁶*New American Standard Concordance, Electronic Edition* [hereafter called NASC] G2675. *katartizw*, from G2596 and G739; to complete, prepare: — complete(1), equip(1), fully trained(1), made complete(m)(2), mending(2), perfect(1), prepared(4), restore(1).. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 2675. *katartizo*, kat-ar-tid'-zo; from G2596 and a der. of G739; to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair (lit. or fig.) or adjust: — fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect (-ly join together), prepare, restore.

⁷R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of I & II Corinthians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937, 1963), p. 250, [re: 1 Cor. 6:11]. "All three verbs are aorists and not perfects. It has been said that there are sermons in tenses and there is a sermon in these. Perfects would mean that the activity expressed by these three verbs as definite facts still continues into the present as an unchanged condition, and that it remains unchanged. The three aorists state only what occurred in the past (historical aorists) and stop there. These aorists thus leave open the question as to whether the present still fully agrees with what took place so blessedly in the past. Yes, there is a sermon in these tenses." [Note: Lenski errs in nearby comments — P.D.]

⁸These are different aspects of the same working of God upon our spirits. They respond not only to our initial need for God's saving grace in becoming Christians, but also to our continued need of forgiveness, sometimes referred to as a "second law of pardon" (Acts 8:9-24; 1 John 1-2).

⁹Zechariah assures us of God's intention to save all the faithful redeemed of all ages: "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them

toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be" (Zech. 14:8).

¹⁰Numbering is as is in Strong's Concordance

¹¹Cf. 1805. *exagorazo*, ex-ag-or-ad'-zo; from G1537 and G59; to buy up, i.e. ransom; fig. to rescue from loss (improve opportunity): — redeem. [Gal. 5:4]

¹²*ISBE*, Sv. "remission," by H. E. Jacobs: *aphesis*, *paresis* - The two Greek words, of which the latter occurs only in Romans 3:25, were translated by the same English word in AV. In RV, *paresis* is translated "passing over." It is contrasted with the other term as pretermission with remission. Remission is exemption from the consequences of an offence, forgiveness; pretermission is the suspension of the penalty (Philippi, Erlicott, Trench [Synonyms, XXXIII, Weiss; cf. Acts 17:30]. Cremer [Lexicon of NT Gr.] regards the meaning of the two words as identical, except that the one refers to the O.T. and the other to the N.T. Sins are remitted when the offender is treated as though the offence had never been committed. Remission is restricted to the penalty, while forgiveness refers more particularly to the person, although it may be used also of the sin itself. Remission also is used of offences against God's law; forgiveness against either Divine or human law. See Absolution; Forgiveness.

¹³*ISBE*, sv. "justification," by John Alfred Faulkner.

¹⁴1 Peter 3:21 [*New American Standard Translation*, 1995 revision] "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,"

¹⁵W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, [McLean VA 22101: MacDonald Publishing Company], [undated]

¹⁶*ISBE*, sv., "atonement," by William Owen Carver.

¹⁷*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, [Electronic Edition] 1 Timothy 1:1-4, "Jesus Christ is a Christian's hope; all our hopes of eternal life are built upon him; and Christ is in us the hope of glory. The apostle seems to have been the means of Timothy's conversion; who served with him in his ministry, as a dutiful son with a loving father. That which raises questions, is not for edifying; that which gives

occasion for doubtful disputes, pulls down the church rather than builds it up. Godliness of heart and life can only be kept up and increased, by the exercise of faith in the truths and promises of God, through Jesus Christ.”

¹⁸1680. *elpis*, el-pece’; from a prim. *elpo* (to anticipate, usually with pleasure); expectation [abstr. or concr.] or confidence: — faith, hope.

¹⁹Please consider these other verses that bolster our hope: Rom. 5:2 [KJV], “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Rom. 5:4-5 [KJV], “And patience, experience; and experience, hope: ⁵And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Rom. 8:20 [KJV], “For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.” Rom. 8:24-25 [KJV], “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? ²⁵But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” Rom. 15:4 [KJV], “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Rom. 15:13 [KJV], “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” 2 Cor. 3:12 [KJV], “Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.” Gal. 5:5 [KJV], “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” Eph. 1:18 [KJV], “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” Eph. 2:12 [KJV], “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” Eph. 4:4 [KJV], “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.” Col. 1:5 [KJV], “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.” Col. 1:23 [KJV], “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away

from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister." Col. 1:27 [KJV], "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." 1 Thess. 1:3 [KJV], "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; (We are not to sorrow unduly for the death of godly relations and friends, considering the glorious resurrection of their bodies at Christ's second coming)." 1 Thess. 4:13 [KJV], "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." 1 Thess. 5:8 [KJV], "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." 2 Thess. 2:16 [KJV], "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." 1 Tim. 1:1 [KJV], "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." Titus 1:2 [KJV], "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Titus 2:13 [KJV], "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Titus 3:7 [KJV], "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Heb. 3:6 [KJV], "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Heb. 6:11 [KJV], "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." Heb. 6:18-19 [KJV], "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: ¹⁹Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." Heb. 7:19 [KJV], "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw

nigh unto God.” 1 Peter 1:3 [KJV], “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” 1 Peter 1:13 [KJV], “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:21 [KJV], “Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.” 1 Peter 3:15 [KJV], “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” 1 John 3:3 [KJV], “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

²⁰Note that this is not Martin Luther’s “faith only” false doctrine.

²¹2 Cor. 5:19, “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not *imputing their trespasses* unto them....”

²²Phil Davis, *Answering False Doctrines, No. II*. in: *Studies In James (The Ninth Annual Denton Lectures, 1990)*, ed. Dub McClish, (Valid Publishing: Denton TX, 1990) Pp. 341-352. (*In this chapter I discuss the means of this reckoning and some false views of it.*)

²³John 15:13, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

²⁴Consider the line of reasoning concerning blood and forgiveness found in such verses as Heb. 9:12-15; 9:22,26, 28; 10:2; etc.

Chapter 13

When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder

Paul Sain

Appreciation is expressed to the elders, Charles Blair, and all at the Garfield Heights congregation for the invitation and opportunity to be a part of this good lectureship. For years I have appreciated the good works in which you have been involved and the good material that comes as a result of this lectureship. When the record regarding the church of our Lord has been written in regard to this time in history, no doubt good and faithful lecture series will have made a tremendous impact in standing for the truth.

May we notice again, before beginning our study of this particular song, our singing is to “teach and admonish” one another.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19).

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16).

Our emphasis in this lesson shall be on the biblical truths which are taught in this song. Though the song is not “inspired” as we understand inspiration, it is an inspiring hymn.

When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder

What a marvelous ageless song. How thankful we should be to examine the thrilling and chilling truths found in this hymn. We shall not spend our time looking at the author or date. Such information is most often readily available. More importantly, let us plunge into the Bible-based truths taught herein.

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound.

The end of time, as we know and measure it, is coming. Exactly when the end shall come we do not know. In fact, no man knows (Matt. 24:36). Many have attempted to predict (forecast) the end of time, but to no avail. A small booklet was published some decades ago entitled “*Millions Now Living Shall Never Die.*” The author outlived the date of the predicted end of time. How foolish for finite man to strive to play God Almighty. Some even in our day and time have sought to forecast the time of the Lord’s return, or similar events. Waiting for the Lord to take a group from the top of a house, or waiting for a comet to take them are just a few of the baseless concoctions of man.

The Holy Bible refers to the “day of the Lord” or “that day.” It further reveals to us a few facts concerning that day:

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 (1 Cor. 15:52).

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first [1 Thess. 4:16].

And time shall be no more. And the morning breaks eternal, bright and fair. There will no longer be hours, days, weeks, months and years. The Lord is not limited to the restraints of time. Simon Peter stated it this way: *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" [2 Peter 3:8].*

Our existence after this earthly sojourn has concluded will be ETERNAL, EVERLASTING. Such words are impossible for our human minds to comprehend. How can we grasp the thought of "time shall be no more?" How can we possibly understand "eternity?" Many have sought to illustrate it (earth a steel ball and an ant walking around the equator which would finally cut a one inch deep rut in the steel ball – or – a small bird flying from earth to the moon with a single grain of sand, ultimately to carry every particle of sand to the moon), but even these mental pictures fail.

When the saved of earth shall gather over on the other shore. The saved shall be assembled together. The goats shall be separated from the sheep (Matt. 25:32-33). We are either for Him or against Him (Matt. 12:32). We are either "in Christ" (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27) or out of Christ, either not having known the Savior or having refused to obey Him (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Our Lord and Savior shall present the saved of earth, the faithful followers, to the heavenly Father on the other shore:

24Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all [1 Cor. 15:24-28].

How thrilling and wonderful to know “this world is not our home.” We are mere “pilgrims” and “strangers” (1 Peter 2:11) on this earth. We are just passing through this land, endeavoring to reach our eternal destination. Compare traveling from one city to another [as LaDon and I journeyed from Pulaski to Indianapolis]. The “other shore” reflects our home for which we long and desire to see [Phil. 1:21].

Reflect for a moment on the scene and lessons we can learn from the rich man and Lazarus [Luke 16]. Contrast in your mind’s eye being in paradise and torment. Remember also the finality of death and how it seals our eternal home. If we are righteous we will be saved, and at that point cannot go to torment (a great gulf is fixed between the two abodes). If we are lost, there is not one thing that can be done to remove the consequences of our rejecting Christ (John 12:48).

Be reminded also that the earth shall be destroyed, completely! *“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also*

and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

There is no room whatsoever in this or other Scriptures for the false doctrine of Christ supposedly establishing an earthly kingdom and reigning a thousand years on earth.

SECOND VERSE:

On that bright and cloudless morning when the dead in Christ shall rise. Without doubt, the end of time for the faithful disciple of Christ will be a "bright" and happy morning. He/she will have lived under the "clouds" of temptation, troubles and trials for their span on earth. On that morning, all such things will have ended.

The dead in Christ shall rise first:

*¹⁶For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the **dead in Christ shall rise first**; ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord* (1 Thess. 4:16-17, emp mine, ps).

Paul wrote these words of instructions to ones who were concerned about those in Christ who had gone on before (in death) would be raised first. The message was comforting (v.18). The great apostle Paul tells them emphatically that ones which are alive at that time shall be "*caught up together with them in the clouds.*"

And the glory of His resurrection share. Christ was the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18). He was raised by the power of Almighty God (1 Cor.

6:14). The inspired Word of God simply and powerfully declares that God shall also raise us up (2 Cor. 4:14).

²⁰For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Phil. 3:20-21).

When the chosen ones shall gather to their home beyond the skies.

⁹But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: ¹⁰Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2:9-10).

¹Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ²In 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. ³And 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 (John 14:1-3).

The faithful of God look forward to the eternal home prepared by our loving Savior which was “not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5: 1). Note a few additional picturesque phrases: “city of

the living God" (Heb. 12:22); "*paradise of God*" (Rev. 2:7); "*new heavens and new earth*" (2 Peter 3:13); "*paradise*" (2 Cor. 12:4).

What will heaven be like? Where is heaven located? Who will be in heaven? Will there be only singing in heaven? Are there degrees of reward (punishment)? While we are not told all things about this marvelous prepared mansion, we do know some things. It will be wonderful, grand, marvelous, a beautiful place. The righteous of all ages will inhabit this eternal home. We will sing praise and glory to our heavenly Father, but we are not told in detail what will comprise our existence there. The exact location of "heaven" is unknown. Such information is totally immaterial. Our heavenly Father has planned and prepared it. We shall rise to meet Him. The saints shall go up. Thus, it is acceptable to merely refer to it as "beyond the skies." *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them"* (Rev. 14:13).

Whether there are degrees of reward and/or punishment in heaven and hell is really insignificant. If we are able to receive the smallest portion of heaven, it will be unbelievably wonderful. We would be thankful for it. If we receive the smallest portion of hell, it will be torture, pain and anguish untold. We want no part of it.

THIRD VERSE:

Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun. Our Almighty Father prepared a way by which we can be free from the burden of sin. His scheme of redemption makes eternal salvation possible. Though man had sinned, was living in wickedness, God commended His love toward us: *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we*

were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8-9).

Jesus Christ died that we might live in heaven. He was tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). He was falsely accused, tried and sentenced to die – without reason or justice. He purchased the church with His blood (Acts 20:28).

If we believe in God (and we must) and the Son of God (and we do), and believe in and want to live forever in heaven eternally (and we surely do) – then we must obey and live for the Master "from dawn till setting sun." Christ must be our life (Col. 3:4). We must seek Him first (Matt. 6:33). We must not love our father, mother, son or daughter more than Him (Matt. 10:37).

"Labor" and "work" are key words for the faithful child of God. We are created unto good works (Eph. 2:10). Paul exhorted all Christians to abound in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). To Titus, Paul instructed him to be "zealous of good works" and "maintain good works" (Titus 2:14; 3:14). To the Thessalonians Paul spoke of their "labor of love" (1 Thess. 1:3) and how he had labored "day and night" (1 Thess. 2:9) and that their labor would not be in vain in the Lord (1 Thess. 3:5).

Note this challenging message: "*Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father scaled*" (John 6:27).

Christ is our Master and Lord (Luke 6:46). He is our commander-in-chief in the army of the Lord of which we are soldiers (2 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-18). We must remain faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10), enduring to the end (Matt. 10:22), laboring stedfastly until the time our Savior calls us home.

Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care.

When we speak of the love of God we approach an indescribable and unfathomable subject. How much did God love us which prompted the gift of His Son? How great is the love of God that would offer salvation to vile, filthy, sinful mankind? How unbelievable is the love of God that would allow His Son to hang on the rugged, cruel cross for rebellious, hateful, sinful man? *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:34-35).

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. ³⁷Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:35-39).

Our heavenly Father has made adequate and thorough provisions for every need of man! Physically, mentally, socially and spiritually. Every thing we have or hope to have is because of the grace of God:

³According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁴Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust [2 Peter 1:3-4].

We often sing, “Why did my Savior come to earth?” ... and then answer, “Because He Loved Me So!” We love Him because He first loved us.

All spiritual blessings are found in Christ (Eph. 1:3). The Word of God (the all-sufficient, complete, inerrant will of God) is complete, and has been once and for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Then when all of life is over and our work on earth is done. Life on earth is brief at best (Job 14:1). James speaks of life as a vapor which appears for a few moments and then vanishes away (James 4:14). Especially when we compare our brief earthly sojourn to the ETERNAL home which follows, life is so very brief.

⁹The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up [2 Peter 3:9-10].

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Life on earth will one day end. Our work on earth will be done.

And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there.

Few things in life are as CERTAIN as this fact! In the Scripture we find reference to the "*day of the Lord*" (2 Peter 3:10); "*the great day*" (Jude 6); "*day of the Lord Jesus*" (Phil. 1:6,10); "*last day*" (John 6:39-54); "*day of wrath*" (Rom. 2:5), and similar terms. All will appear in judgment. "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad*" (2 Cor. 5:10). "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*" (Heb. 9:27). "*Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*" (Acts 17:31).

Judgment will begin with God's people.

¹⁷For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Peter 4:17-18).

The books will be opened.

¹²And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and

another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. ¹³And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death [Rev. 20:12-14].

Whether we are a child of God or a child of Satan, we will be there. Whether we died “in Christ” or “out of Christ” an alien sinner, we will be there! Whether we have lived for Jesus and faithfully followed His will or not, we will confess His matchless name. “*And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil. 2:11).

What will take place at that time? We are given brief glimpses of what will happen. The Lord will come with His mighty angels to judge (2 Thess. 1:7-8). We know God will judge the world through Christ (Acts 17:31). He will sit on His throne and judge all people (Matt. 25:31-33). The dead in Christ will rise first (Rev. 20:12-13) to be judged. The standard of judgment will be the words Christ has spoken (John 12:48). The righteous will be separated from the unrighteous (Matt. 10:34-35).

The judgment of God will be righteous and true (Rev. 16:7; 1 Peter 2:23). According to the apostle Paul, we know...

⁶Who will render to every man according to his deeds: ... ⁵But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) ⁶God

forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? (Rom. 2:6; 3:5-6).

Judgment will be a great gain (Phil. 1:21) for the good and faithful servant of God. At judgment the sad and tragic pronouncement will be made to the rebellious, disobedient, sinful ones: "*Depart from me...*" (Luke 13:27).

Conclusion

Every person who has ever lived, in any age, in any culture, in any dispensation will be there **"When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder!"** There is no escape. No exceptions. No delays. No rescheduling the appointment. We will ALL be there.

Chapter 14

Christ Receiveth Sinful Men

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

It is always a joy supreme to come to this great and good lectureship at Garfield Heights. Genuine gratitude is expressed to the elders, brother Blair, and the entire congregation for the treasured invitation to appear on this current one. From the initial one, back last decade, this lectureship has been on the cutting edge of truth. May this ever be its stance of spirituality and solidity.

Awesome power resides in psalms of praise, hymns of holiness and songs of spiritual stimulation. Exhortations and admonitions permeate so many of the stately songs we hymn in unison. Eloquent examples of such abound.

A skeptic had addressed a large audience. He had mocked the Mighty God of Heaven and His Blessed Book of Beauty. At his infidelic conclusion, an older man, a faithful Christian, stood and began to sing alone, "Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus." Quickly, other voices joined him. Soon nearly everyone was singing this stately song in unison much to the evident consternation of the sneering skeptic. A great song diffused the poisonous propaganda that had spewed forth in the scorner's speech.

The inimitable G. K. Wallace once went to preach in a meeting for a deeply troubled church filled with feuding and fussing. Witnessing such in full bloom, brother Wallace requested the song director to lead "Blest Be The Tie" at every service. After a few

services one of the much moved brethren spoke up in desperation and pleaded, "Let us settle our difficulties NOW!" And they did that very service. This was an exceptionally wise move on brother Wallace's part.

Well selected songs enable us to praise and adore God in eloquence, elegance, and excellence. Moving and decision — instigating invitation songs have enhanced many great sermons causing alien sinners to respond to Heaven's call of merciful redemption. Songs of comfort aid aching and breaking hearts at funerals. "*Trust And Obey*," "*O Happy Day*," and "*Ye Must Be Born Again*" have been sung countless times subsequent at one or more immersions which have been witnessed by genuine lovers of souls. Some of us who are older are turned off when there is hand-clapping or the singing of "Happy Birthday To You" at baptismal services. I think many young people are also, as evidenced by the following story. Some years back I baptized a young man into Christ. He was visiting his grandparents down at Ripley, Tennessee. His father was in the military and where they attended in the northeast, they clapped at baptisms and echoed birthday greetings in songs subsequent to the immersion. He wanted no part of it. Neither did his parents. Is it any wonder that baptism is no longer held in regal reverence by so many of our people?

Our Selected Song

We know it by two titles, "*Sinners, Jesus Will Receive*" and "*Christ Receiveth Sinful Men.*" It is an old song. It has been sung countless times. It has served well as a stirring invitational hymn at the end of an impassioned message by a preacher on fire for the Lord. Many have responded to its demanding directives and its stately sentiments.

An Appropriate Text

In the singing of this song across the years, there is one text that comes to mind more frequently than any other. It is the duet of verses prefacing the fifteenth chapter of Luke filled with powerful and provoking parables. The beloved physician wrote, *"Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them"* (vs. 1,2). These carping critics meant this as a stinging indictment of the Lord. Quite to the contrary, it was a tremendous tribute to Him. He came to seek and save that which was lost as per the affirmation of Luke 19:10. Those lost are sinners. Were there no willingness on His and the Father's part to receive sinners, redemption would be beyond the grasp of all of us — no exceptions! Jesus promptly gave the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost boy away from home, and the lost boy still at home. In all these, there was a lost object and great concern was evidenced. In each, the owner anxiously sought the reclamation of the object lost. The shepherd sought till the lost sheep was found. The woman sought till the lost coin was found. The Wonderful Father, the real hero of the latter half of this chapter, never gave up on the prodigal in that far-off country of sin and dissipation. When the lost son returned, the Father ran to meet him. Will God run? He did in this stirring parable. The Wonderful Father represents God for a stately surety. This same Wonderful Father went out to bring in the sullen son but to no avail as the curtain drops. His lack of brotherly love and brotherly pardon greatly marred the happiness of the festive occasion.

The sermon preached on Execution Hill that Friday morning and afternoon said, in essence,

"*Sinners Jesus Will Receive*" or "*Christ Receiveth Sinful Men!*" This was the bottom line of every sermon preached in Acts and every exhortation permeating the epistles. The Lord's church was established in order that Christ might receive sinners who had heard and heeded the gospel.

The Proposed Approach

In my analysis of it, I shall have four segments based on the four stanzas with the fifth and final segment based on the chorus in repetitious emphasis.

STANZA ONE

*Sinners Jesus will receive:
Sound this word of grace to all
Who the heavenly pathway leave,
All who linger, all who fall.*

That the Merciful Messiah is wonderfully willing to receive sinners is the golden thread interwoven intently throughout the fabric of both Testaments. Isaiah 53, one of the clearest Old Testament prophecies about the coming Christ, presents Him as the One upon whom the Lord would lay the iniquity of us all. One cannot read this passage without sensing the vicarious sufferings of the Messiah. As the totally innocent One, He would suffer for the totally guilty ones — you, me, and all others.

Perplexed, Joseph was told in Matthew 1:21, "*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*" He preached and taught to save sinners. He performed miracles to confirm His mission. That mission was spelled redemption. He prayed for His executioners on Calvary that forlorn Friday. He and the Father forgave them when, later, they obeyed the

gospel under the merciful auspices of established Christianity on Pentecost in Acts 2 and onward. Simon the sorcerer was received upon his obedience to the gospel in Acts 8. So was the fiery persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, in Acts 9 with precious parallels in Chapters 22 and 26. Corrupt Corinthians in Acts 18 were received to the extent that they heard, believed, and were baptized (v.8). Paul delineates what they had been and now are in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. No one can be so sinful but what the atonement of Christ on Calvary can save when he hears and heeds the redemptive call of God's glorious gospel.

These wonderful words of grace are to be sounded to all. Calvinism does not believe they are to be sounded to any except the elect. No reprobate, as per their contention, need apply. They have NEVER made with certainty nor clarity just how a person determines with definitive certainty whether he is elect or of the pathetic non-elect category. The grace-only proponent and the Universalist do not believe there is any need to hear and heed this word of grace for any person. By their contention ALL are going to be saved whether the graceful gospel is ever sounded at all by proclaimers and its sound received by nonacting auditors. Matthew 11:28-30, the Precious Invitation, makes clear that the call is for ALL who labor and are heavy laden. Not ALL will accede to the call, nevertheless, redemptive provisions have been made for all. All nations are to be taught as per Matthew 28:19. Every creature is the focus of Mark 16:15. Luke 24:47 stresses that repentance and remission of sins are to be taught to all nations. Acts 1:8, the final directive Jesus gave the faithful eleven on Mt. Olivet, maps out the apostolic agenda — preach in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the whole earth. Acts and the epistles unfold uniquely the thrilling saga of their doing this very thing. Paul wrote, *“For this is good*

and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3,4). Peter expressed the matter both eloquently and excellently by writing, "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (2 Peter 3:9). John 3:16 and Revelation 22:17 affirm in unique unison that whosoever wills to come may come and be saved. These are the wonderful words of life that are to be sounded forth to all.

Those who need to respond to this word of grace are those "Who the heavenly pathway leave." This gets the accountable whole of the race. The Psalmist spoke of those who go astray in 58:3. He did not say they were BORN ASTRAY; they WENT astray. There is a tremendous difference in the two concepts — the former being Calvinistic and the latter Scriptural. He told how they went astray — by speaking lies. Obviously, they had to be old enough or accountable to the extent that they could speak and speak lies! This is how they became estranged from God. Isaiah 53:6 states succinctly, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*" Peter's inspired eye was riveted to this very Old Testament passage in 1 Peter 2:25.

This stanza further focuses on "All who linger, all who fall." This is intently inclusive of all Adam's accountable race. When responsible and accountable we yield to the inducements of sin. As a result, we fall from that state of innocence in which we were born and which we possessed until that first fatal fall into the greedy clutches of Satan and sin.

STANZA TWO

*Come, and He will give you rest;
Trust Him, for His word is plain;
He will take the sinfulest:
Christ receiveth sinful men.*

“Come” is one of the great consoling and comforting words of the Bible. Jehovah God said to Moses at the base of Sinai, *“Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off”* (Exodus 24:1). Moses, alone, was instructed to *“come near the Lord”* (Exodus 24:2). The Psalmist exhorted, *“come before his presence with singing”* (100:2). Isaiah’s message from God to adamant Jerusalem and Judah was, *“Come now, and let us reason together...”* (1:18). The Precious Invitation, to which allusion has already been made, begins with a trio of thrilling terms, *“Come unto me...”* (Matt. 11:28). A trio of commands is given in this invitation — come, take and learn. A duet of rewards is promised — rest NOW in verse 28 and HEAVENLY rest in verse 29. This stanza speaks of this dual rest. To the duet of disciples — Andrew and quite possibly John — in quest of where the Messiah dwelt, Jesus said tenderly and longingly, *“Come and see”* (John 1:38,39). Sadly, Jesus assessed His peers in John 5:40, *“And, ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”* The final invitation of the Bible, Revelation 22:17, has both the bride, the church, and the Spirit to say, *“Come.”* Those who hear this word of welcome are enjoined also to echo the same sentiment — COME. Man is anything but passive in this coming to Christ. It is not a coerced coming by Heaven; it is a willing coming by man acting in his free moral capacity.

Just as surely as man comes in the heavenly appointed way, just that certainly will the promise be

fulfilled of providing promised rest. We do the coming; He tenders the rest. What a great and glorious combination!

Trust is another key term of the Bible. One of the hallmark passages on trust comes from Solomon, Wisest of the Ages. He wrote early in the book of Proverbs, "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths*" (3:5,6). Paul wrote, "*And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward...*" (2 Cor. 3:4). Trust placed in men is frequently a misplaced faith. Not so with trust in The Timeless Trinity. Paul, in Acts 27, assured his sailing colleagues on board the storm-tossed Mediterranean Sea that the totality of his trust and the beautiful breadth of his belief were in the God of heaven, earth and SEA (vs.21-25).

Affirmed in this second stanza is the plainness of His word. What must I do to be saved, what must I do to stay saved, how must I worship God and what preparation must I make for such sobering realities as death, judgment and the eternal destinies of heaven and hell, are plainly presented upon the pages of Holy Writ. For a surety, there are deep things in the gospel of God's Son. There are difficult books, chapters, verses and even words; but the stipulations of salvation or the conditions of conversion are couched in the lovely language of crystal clarity. In the early part of 2 Corinthians 1:1, Paul referred to "*the simplicity that is in Christ*" (v.3). In his eloquent and excellent epistle to the Ephesians, Paul wrote in such fashion that "*when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ*" (3:4). In Ephesians 5:17 Paul makes another apostolic allusion to our understanding of God's will. He stated, "*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what is the will of the Lord.*" Man's problem is not inability to understand his obligations to God, but his adamant

refusal to bend his proud will to that will of the Almighty.

Christ can and will take the sinfulest. Some of the converts in the early chapters of Acts had stained their hands with the crimson blood of God's Son. Peter made that clear in his message on Pentecost in Acts 2 and on Solomon's porch in Acts 3. Some, such as the Sanhedrin in Acts 4 and 5, were still stubbornly impenitent. Those who did hear and heed, even though they had committed the crime of the ceaseless centuries, were received graciously by the Merciful Messiah. They prove that Jesus receives the sinfulest of men. Simon of Samaria was steeped in sorcery and gross deception of his Samaritan peers; and yet, Christ received him when he believed Philip's message, and was baptized as per Acts 8:13. Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul, presided at Stephen's stoning in Acts 7, made havoc of the church, imprisoning both male and female saints in Acts 8, and breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord in Acts 9:1,2. He later called himself a blasphemer, one injurious to the church, and the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:13-15). Christ saved him, proving that even the sinfulest of men can be received by the Compassionate Captain of our salvation. The corrupt at Corinth were saved as per 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Idolaters were saved at Ephesus as per Acts 19. A man on the very brink of suicide was saved in Acts 16.

For many years I have worked in a prison ministry at Cold Creek in West Tennessee. I have witnessed firsthand what the gospel can do to men behind prison walls. If my life were in danger at some visit among them, I believe they would lay down their very lives to protect me. No crime can be so great but what Christ will receive its perpetrator provided there is submission to the Saviour.

The repetitious refrain is right on the target of truth — "Christ receiveth sinful men."

STANZA THREE

*Now my heart condemns me not:
Pure before the law I stand;
He who cleansed me from all spot
Satisfied its last demand.*

The apostle of love has some choice gems of thought relative to heart condemnation or no condemnation of heart. He wrote, "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. ²⁰For if our heart condemn us not, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" [1 John 3:19-21].

There is a twofold basis for our confidence along this line. **(1) Christ does not condemn the heart of the obedient. (2) Because we have done His will relative to redemption, we have divine assurance that neither Christ nor our heart condemns us.** Man's heart is not the physical blood pump in the chest region, but his mind. This is what the Lord meant when He pronounced a beautiful benediction upon the pure in heart assuring them they would see God [Matt. 5:8]. Man's heart is composed of intellect, emotions, will-power, and conscience. This means we are not condemned intellectually, emotionally, in intent or in conscience. With the intellect we think, reason, etc. With the emotions we love, trust, etc. With the will-power we establish our course of action. With the conscience we have a built-in monitor urging us to do what we consider to be right; it is our ought mechanism. There are things we ought to do; there are things we ought not to do. What a priceless blessing to have this type of heart

composition or make-up. It is one of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ Jesus of which there are many [Eph. 1:3]. Note the attractive adverb used in this lovely lyric — NOW. There was a time when our heart did condemn us. This was prior to our conversion. Paul employs this very concept in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. There was a time when they lived in grievous sins. This was before conversion to Christ and sanctification in the Saviour. Paul described what they were. Then he used the present. In essence he wrote, NOW ye are washed; NOW ye are sanctified; NOW ye are justified.

The lovely lyric continues, "Pure before the law I stand." The writer of this song witnessed no antagonism between grace, mentioned in stanza one, and law, mentioned here in stanza three. Paul affirmed in Romans 8:2 that "*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath stated made me free from the law of sin and death.*" Jesus Christ in John 8:31,32, "*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" Law, word, and truth in these three verses are stately synonyms. But in Ephesians 2:8 grace and faith combine to save man. Hence, grace, faith, law, word, and truth enjoy the holiest of harmony. Peter reinforced this by declaring in 1 Peter 1:22, "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*"

James adds these significant statements in the first chapter of his practical epistle, sometimes called "The Gospel of Common Sense."

*18*Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures ... *21*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naugh-

teness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls [James 1:18,21].

Gratitude ascends in crescendo fashion as we sense that Jesus Christ's cleansing is the one who has cleansed us from all spot. There is cleansing from sin except by Him and His blood. His blood was shed for the cleansing of the faithful in both patriarchal and mosaic times as per Hebrews 9:15 wherein we read,

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

His blood was shed also for our sins. A well-deserved tribute along this redemptive line is paid God's Son in Revelation 1:5, "*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*" The new song to be sung in Revelation 5:9 links redemption with His blood. This passage states, "*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*" One of the twenty-four elders told John, "*These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*" [Rev. 7:14].

The cleansing by Jesus is not partial. At conversion, He does not forgive us of some sins and retain on our records other sins. They are ALL forgiven. He does the same for erring children of God when we walk the route of repentance, confession, and prayer [Acts 8:22; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9].

Obedience as an alien, or later as an erring child of God, wipes the slate totally clean. Pure and spotless, we then stand before Him.

God's system of justice had to be satisfied. His immaculate nature could not ignore sin without wrecking His whole government. The price had to be paid whether with the damnation of all sinners or the ransom paid by one totally innocent and absolutely sinless. The Merciful Jehovah chose the latter. "Jesus paid it all" says another lyric we have often hymned together. Paul deals with this very principle in Romans 3:25,26 by saying,

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The cross exhibits the enormity of sin, God's mercy, Christ's love, that sin could not be passed over lightly, and that a ransom had to be paid for man's redemption. Paul knew all this and this is why he determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). Paul would never have been satisfied to do the type of talking that goes for modern-day preaching filled with bland sentiments and smooth sayings.

STANZA FOUR

*Christ receiveth sinful men,
Even me with all my sin;
Purged from every spot and stain,
Heaven with Him I enter in.*

By the time this stately song is sung in totality, each singer has sung over and over again this quartet of wonderful words, "Christ receiveth sinful men." This stanza begins with this noble note.

From the general usage of men in the opening part of this stanza, the song writer switched to an individual focus in the second line — "Even me with all my sin." No Calvinist could sing this with totality of assurance. He cannot know for a surety that he is of the elect; for all he knows he may be non-elect, a hopeless, helpless and hapless reprobate. He can never be sure that any of his children are among the elect. He cannot be sure that their mother, his wife, is of the elect. For all he knows his whole family may be eternally damned to hell and there is NOTHING any of them can do about it. There is no more cruel, calloused, or cold error taught anywhere today than devilish and diabolical Calvinism. In merciful contrast, we have Christ, Calvary and Christianity. Calvary is universal in the precious provisions it makes as we see in Hebrews 2:9. Attractively affirmed therein is the fundamental fact that Jesus tasted death for every man. Calvary is individualistic in that provisions were made for YOU and for ME. The wonderful "whosoever" about which we read in John 3:16 and Revelation 22:17 has individual focus and emphasis. Calvinism has never understood the stately significance and the graceful comprehension of the wonderful word of "whosoever."

Christ will save the obedient, even though burdened down with sins of the mind, the mouth, and the manner of life. Who can know the full computation of all his/her sins? Only the Heavenly Computer, the infinite minds of The Timeless Trinity, can and do know of sin in its entirety in the lives of any of us. Yet marvelous mercy and generous grace will cover them all and remit each one when we come to the

Lord trusting and obeying as another lovely lyric states so eloquently, elegantly, and excellently.

The third line completes the thought of the second. He has purged us “from every spot and stain....” — sin spots. James admonished readers to remain “unspotted” from the world. This is one of the two prongs of that religion that is pure and undefiled (James 1:27). Sin stains. It contaminates everything it touches. Dishonesty stains a once sterling reputation of total honesty. Fornication robs the young man and woman on a date of their virginal purity. Lying robs a person, who once had the reputation as a truth teller, under any and all circumstances. Coming to Jesus by gospel obedience, purges us from every spot and stain. Simon Peter speaks of being purged from old sins in 2 Peter 1:9. The writer of Hebrews, in all probability the apostle Paul, speaks of Christ in His high priestly role as having purged our sins. This means He made purification for our sins (Heb. 1:3).

As Christians, we access “*all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ...*” (Eph. 1:3). Dying in the Lord means Hadean paradise in Abraham’s bosom from death onward and heaven itself from final judgment onward. On the threshold of Calvary, Jesus earnestly entreated His Heavenly Father that His disciples might be with Him in heaven at last (John 17:24). To those situated on His right hand in judgment, He will tender the wonderfully welcomed word of “Come” (Matt. 25:24). It is vital that we come to Him in the here and now in order that we might be invited to come to Him in heaven in the there and then!

THE REPETITIOUS CHORUS

Soprano and alto sing,

*Sing it o'er and o'er again:
 Christ receiveth sinful men;
 Makes the message clear and plain:
 Christ receiveth sinful men.*

Tenor and base sing,

*Sing it o'er again,
 Sing it o'er again:
 Christ receiveth sinful men,
 Christ receiveth sinful men,
 Makes the message plain,
 Make the message plain:
 Christ receiveth sinful men.*

There is royalty in repetition. We are enjoined in the lyric to sing the words "Christ receiveth Sinful Men" over again and again. When the song is completed that lyrical directive has been honored magnificently, marvelously, and majestically through the royalty of repetition.

The chorus also enjoins us to make the message clear and plain. This is the wonderful way God planned it, Christ proclaimed it, the Spirit revealed it to the holy apostles and prophets and they, in turn, preached it fully, fervently, faithfully and fundamentally.

Conclusion

This song has blessed millions who have sung it; it still blesses each new generation that learns it and hymns it in unison; it deserves to be sung till Jesus Christ sounds the last trumpet, signalling His second advent.

Chapter 15

Ere You Left Your Room This Morning

Ferrell Hester

Ere you left your room this morning,
Did you think to pray?
In the name of Christ our Savior,
Did you sue for loving favor, as a shield
today?

When you met with great temptation,
Did you think to pray?
By His dying love and merit,
Did you claim the Holy Spirit as your guide
and stay?

When your heart was filled with anger,
Did you think to pray?
Did you plead for grace, my brother,
That you might forgive another Who had
crossed your way?

When sore trials came upon you,
Did you think to pray?
When your soul was bowed in sorrow,
Balm of Gilead did you borrow At the gates of
day?

O how praying rests the weary!
Prayer will change the night to day;

So when life seems dark and dreary,
Don't forget to pray.

"Did you think to pray?" is a subtitle of this song and will serve as the main thought of our study on the subject of prayer. How many times we try to act on our own without thinking of prayer! There is not a greater blessing that mortal man enjoys than that of prayer; yet, often times, we make important decisions without first praying for the Lord's help and guidance. Let us look briefly at a few of the questions that are posed in this song.

"Ere you left your room this morning, Did you think to pray?" What better way could we begin each day of our lives than with prayer! Someone has said, "If we hem each end of the day with prayer it will not come unraveled in the middle." The Psalmist said, *"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice"* (Psalm 55:17). If only we would follow this example, how much better our days would be.

"When you met with great temptation, Did you think to pray?" How many Christians are overcome by temptations! But the Lord has promised: *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"* (1 Cor. 10:13).

"When your heart was filled with anger, Did you think to pray?" So many sins are committed under the influence of anger. Cursing, swearing, child and spouse abuse, and on and on we could go. There is no sin in being angry. The sin is in uncontrolled anger. Paul admonished: *"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath"* (Eph. 4:26). I have often heard it said, "Doing something while you are angry is like putting out to sea in a

storm.” Also “Anger is an acid which does more damage to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.” I have heard my dad say, “It may seem difficult to pray while angry, but it is even more difficult to remain angry while praying.”

“*When sore trials came upon you, Did you think to pray?*” When we sing this stanza of the song, I am reminded of Paul and Silas as they sat in that dark damp jail in Philippi. “*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them*” [Acts 16:25]. There is no trouble or trial that God will not be with us if we will be faithful to Him, and we cannot be shut up in a place where our prayers will not be heard and answered.

“*O how praying rest the weary! Prayer will change the night to day; So when life seems dark and dreary, Don't forget to pray.*” Why should we, in all of situations, not forget to pray?

Because God Hears And Answers Prayer

God speaks to us through His revealed Word, but He has also appointed a means whereby we can speak to Him — the avenue or channel of prayer. This avenue of communication with our Heavenly Father is one of the great blessings and privileges we enjoy as members of His divine household. He has given us many assurances in His word that He will hear our prayers if we pray in faith, walking in righteousness, and ask those things which are in accordance with His will. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3:10-12,

¹⁰For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: ¹¹Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. ¹²For the eyes of the

Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

James said in James 5:16, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Again in 1 John 5:14-15, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: ¹⁵And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

We need daily wisdom and strength which only God can supply. James writes,

⁵If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. ⁷For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord (James 1:5-7).

Our Saviour and great High Priest, Christ Jesus, serves as our intercessor at the throne of grace to plead our case (Heb. 4:14-16). We can overcome the world, temptation, and self-will only if we keep our hearts attuned to God's will through prayer. But, if we fail to cultivate and maintain a daily prayer life, we are almost sure to fail in the Christian life.

There are many things we need to **learn** and **know** about prayer, and there is no better teacher, or authority, on the subject than Jesus. Even though He was the divine Son God and had unlimited miraculous power at His command, He was still much given to prayer. His disciples knew this; they remembered the many times He had gone aside to pray. Because of His example, they asked: "Lord, teach us to pray."

What Jesus Taught Concerning Prayer

In His sermon on the Mount, He devoted two main sections of the monumental message to prayer — both how to pray and how not to pray.

⁵And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. ⁶But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. ⁷But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. ⁸Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. ⁹After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. ¹⁴For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matt. 6:5-15).

Notice that Jesus' emphasis is upon private prayer. The religious leaders of that day had abused

prayer, making it a display of vain piety and public show. They were praying to be seen and heard of men, and Jesus says, "Verily, they have their reward." Notice also the brevity of the model prayer. You can repeat it in about 30 seconds. It contains no "vain repetitions," no long, drawn-out phrases. Primarily, it acknowledges man's dependencies upon God as the sustainer of life — as "The giver of every good and perfect gift." It expresses the desire that God's will be done in all things. It requests forgiveness, and asks for divine aid in meeting and overcoming the temptations of evils of this world. It shows we must have a forgiving spirit toward others if we expect God to forgive us. And, it ascribes all glory, honor and power to Him who reigns above in majesty supreme.

Jesus' second reference to prayer in the Sermon on the Mount is in Matthew 7:7-11,

7Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

The promise here is very definite and emphatic: **God hears and answers prayer!**

But, we are not only told to ask; we are also told to seek and knock. This implies patience, persistence, and activity on our part. If one truly seeks to know God's will, if he "seeks first the kingdom of

God, and his righteousness" (Matt. 6:33), he is assured of finding it. God will see to it that every earnest and diligent seeker of truth finds it.

Many prayers go unanswered, or, perhaps we should say that their answer is "no" — because they are selfish, self-centered, and self-willed. Remember John said, *"That, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us"* (1 John 5:14). Again in 1 John 3:22, *"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."* Prayer, if it would avail, must be coupled with wholehearted obedience and surrender of lives to God's will. James says, *"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts"* (James 4:3).

When the hour of the Cross drew near, Jesus went to the sea's coast of Caesarea Philippi and explained to His disciples that the days ahead would be rugged and trying. He was weary, His face reflected the tension and dread of the ordeal to come. Then He went apart in the shadow of Mt. Herman, and there He prayed. Luke says, *"And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening"* (Luke 9:29). For our Savior, prayer was not so much seeking to change God's will as a matter of "being near God," so that he might more fully grasp the vision of God's grand purpose and eternal plan. He wanted the strength necessary to faithfully and perfectly carry out His part in that plan.

Later, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed in intense agony. He asked specifically that the cup of death might be taken from him; that the cross might be avoided if possible. Yet, He closed by saying, *"Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."* He went to the Garden, not to change God's will, but for strength.

Someone might ask, "But doesn't God already know what we need even before we ask Him?" Yes, for Jesus even tells us that he does (Matt. 6:8); but, we still need to ask! God longs for our expression of trust, our expression of dependence upon Him, and our daily acknowledgment of Him as our Savior and sustainer. He desires our fellowship. He wants our friendship. He wants us to love and obey His Son, Jesus Christ, who set for us a perfect example of obedience.

We need to realize more than anything else, that prayer is basically "communion with God." The man whose life is prayerless is not merely missing out on a little conversation with the Lord. He is not merely failing to be thankful, or failing to be praiseful, or failing to be penitent — although any one of these, in itself, is terribly bad. But, he is failing to be religious! He is serving notice, by his prayerlessness, that his life lacks communion with God, that he is not seeking to know and be conformed to the will of the heavenly Father. Someone once said, "A man's spiritual life can be no greater than his prayer life. His habits in prayer are an index into his spiritual resources. A sinful man will soon quit praying, and a prayerful man will soon quit sinning." Yes, God knows what things we have need of, even before we ask; but we still need to ask! Listen to the apostle Paul,

¹⁴For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length,

and depth, and height; ¹⁹And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, ²¹Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end (Eph. 3:14-21).

In prayer, we not only commune with God, but we affirm our faith in Him. We need to affirm, and reaffirm, our faith in God continually. You only have to take a look at the great prayers of the ages to see such affirmations. “*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*” (Psalm 23:4).

¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. ³Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. ... ¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge (Psalm 46:1-3,11).

¹Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. ²Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. ³Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. ⁴Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. ⁵For the LORD is good;

his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations (Psalm 100).

Listen to the apostle Paul's affirmation of faith, "*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Romans 8:38-39). Again Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:12, "*For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" Now that is prayer — the affirmation of our trust in Him whose promises shall never fail and who will ultimately cause all things to work out for the eternal good of those who love and trust and faithfully serve Him. May God help us to realize that He does hear and answer our every prayer, spoken or unspoken, which is offered in trusting faith in the spirit of "Not my will, but thine be done."

Many things are wrought by prayer that could never be accomplished in any other way. May God help us, therefore, to see what wonderful changes that diligent trusting prayer and daily communion with our heavenly Father can work in our individual lives.

Chapter 16

Swiftly We're Turning

Danny Butler

Introductory Matters

"Swiftly We're Turning" is a most sobering thought. The words of this old hymn ought to stir the heart of the lukewarm Christian and bring comfort to the aged and wounded soldier of the cross. In either case, it teaches a profound truth that we cannot deny. To one, it is a message of warning, an admonition to gird up the loins of service, for time is passing. To the other, it resounds the bugle call that the battle is about over, many have heard the precious message. Those of age realize the certainty of its truth fully. It is because of age that one can fully realize and appreciate the statement in the first verse: "*Swiftly we're turning life's daily pages. Swiftly the hours are changing to years.*"

Only yesterday did we begin our lives for Jesus. O' where has the time gone? O' if we could only recall! What about lost opportunities? Lost souls that should have been won! Time waits on no man, it marches on. It is with this thought in mind that we want to approach this study – the importance of doing all we can to bring souls to Jesus while there is time and opportunity. In this hymn there are three major points to consider that emphasize the brevity of time and the importance of the task before us, these are: 1) The Urgency of Preaching, 2) The

Necessity of Preaching and 3) The Responsibility of Preaching.

The Urgency of Preaching

"The hours are changing to years." How true this phrase is when we consider the reality of death and the vacuum caused by it. We seem to forget this important truth until we are staring at the body of a loved one through grieving eyes filled with tears. How quickly the hours with family and friends become years. When we view old photographs or home movies and see the graying of hair and frail bodies, it is then we realize the passing of time. Job said his life was swifter than a weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6). James likens life to a vapor (James 4:14). The sad part is, we cannot recall time to correct mistakes or to do what we left undone. It is gone forever. The old adage, "tomorrow never comes" is true. Today is all that we have.

We do not have a lease on life. What we see and enjoy today could be gone tomorrow. Therefore, the urgency of preaching is now. Inspiration said it this way. *"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (2 Cor. 6:2). Jesus stressed it in His words: *"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look unto the fields; for they are white already to harvest"* (John 4:35). The emphatic point is **today**. Now is all that we have! Whatever we do, must be done now. We cannot return to yesterday and preach the gospel to dying souls. Neither can we preach it tomorrow. It must be done now, today with all that we have (Eccl. 9:10). Redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16).

The Necessity of Preaching

Paul expresses this to the Corinthian brethren in these words:

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me (1 Cor. 9:16,17).

The gospel is to be proclaimed to every creature without fear or favor. The apostle Paul is the epitome of one who carries out that mission. Paul had a zeal that would take him from the hedges to the palace chambers of the Roman empire! Because of him, even those in the courts of Caesar would hear the gospel message. How are we faring in relation to Paul's example? The words of the hymn teaches us of the awful sin of procrastination. Millions will slip into eternity without the gospel.

The word "groping" means, "to feel about blindly or uncertainly in search of something." They are searching for the precious light of the gospel. While these feel about as one looks for the light switch in a dark room, we overlook the opportunity to proclaim, "here it is" and point to the precious book Divine! How terrible it will be to be in judgment, and in the words of another soul searching hymn, hear one say "You never mentioned him to me, you helped me not the light to see; you met me day by day and knew I was astray, yet never mentioned Him to me." Our Lord stated the motivating force of our taking the gospel to a lost world. "And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice

together" (John 4:36). Daniel spoke of the reward for spreading God's message when he wrote: "*And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever*" (Daniel 12:3).

To impress on our minds the stupendous task of world evangelism and the import of the hymn we are studying, I submit the following. It is a quote from the Christian Service Corps in their question and answer booklet, as given by Bill Nicks in his book; "*Missions And The Message of the Master,*" pp.41-42. The book was printed in 1987, so the numbers may have changed in the last decade. The quote reads:

The clock is ticking. Every two seconds, five babies are born; 135 per minute; 8100 per hour; 194,000 per day. The highest rate in population growth is in predominately non-Christians areas. But the church throughout the world is growing only one-tenth as rapidly as the overall population. As a result, statistically speaking, Christianity, is becoming more of a minority faith. In 1900, Christianity constituted about 35% of the world's population. By 1960 the Christian population had declined to 30%. By the end of this century, Christians will make up only 20% of mankind.

This may sound like a fulfillment of Matthew 7:13,14, but really it is a reflection on our efforts and the sin of procrastination. The questions before us then are, "*How are we using God's golden moments? Shall we reap glory? Shall we reap tears? Shall we sit idly as they rush onward?*" Taking these questions in their order, just what are we doing, as a congregation and as individuals? Bulletins and other articles that cross my desk give some idea as to

congregational involvement. Many churches never mention, or at least very briefly, any effort in local or foreign mission work. We read of building projects, social events, etc, but not much on mission work. This is not to imply there are no great efforts put forth by others of which I am not aware.

Statistically, the church of Christ is far behind in its evangelism efforts. In speaking with a sound and aggressive missionary on this matter, he related the following. He emphasized the need to weigh the figures with caution and prudence, not as definite fact.

Really there is no authoritative list of missionaries. Facts are hard to document. Some count husband and wife, others do not. Some count anyone with American support, including both American born and native preachers. A conservative estimate would be 350-400 preachers supported by American churches in the field. There are about three million members of the church of Christ in the world. This figure would put about one and one-half million in the continental United States and about one and one-half million in other parts of the world. There are about three thousand congregations in the United States, and about that many over seas. There are two-hundred nations in the world. Seventeen of these have no presence of the Lord's church! In fifty of these nations the Lord's church is so small it is hardly alive. We must keep in mind that there are those Moslem countries where Christianity is forbidden. Most of the Lord's people live in an area, one hundred miles either side of Knoxville, Tennessee stretching in an East-West direction to Lubbock, Texas. The facts show that many conservative congregations have withdrawn from foreign mission work and are combating digression at home.

Roger Dickson in his book, *"The Call to World Evangelism"* copywrite 1982, states on page 8:

There are over 4.5 billion people in the world today. About 87% of that 4:5 billion have heard the name "Coca Cola" but only about 50% have ever heard the name "Jesus." Does that stir your soul? Does that affect the way you think in any way? What are you doing now, right now, to change that picture? Instead of only 50% having heard the name "Jesus," should it not be 100%?

The disturbing thought is that these statistics were in 1982. The population of the world is now six billion. A increase of three billion since the 1930s. In sixty years the world's population has doubled. Every second three souls slip into eternity. Ninety-nine percent of these do not know the truth as revealed in the New Testament. What does this tell us?

Tell us how we are using God's precious moments? It is obvious that efforts should be increased. Why? Millions are passing into eternity, never having had an opportunity to obey Jesus Christ. What do these efforts mean in view of our salvation? Will we reap glory or will we reap tears? Let us look soberly at the facts as the Bible reveals them.

First, the Great Commission given on that day our Lord returned to heaven, has not been rescinded! We are under divine command to proclaim the gospel to the world (Matt. 28:18-20) and to every creature in the world (Mark 16:15-20). Notice, there are no areas or peoples to be omitted. Secondly, it is to be done by each of us. Must we be reminded that "Go Ye" means "Go me!" Ask Jonah if he understood the command to go!

The Greek Word "*πορεύομαι*" *poreuomai* translated "go" is a participle aorist first verb denoting action contemporary with the "action of the leading verb." This does not eliminate the thought that Christians should specifically go and teach, but it does include

the fact that as Christians are going they should teach. "AS YOU GO," therefore make disciples.

Everyday, we meet people from all walks of life. Our trips to the post office, grocery store, bank and a hundred other places, bring us in contact with a multitude of people that need to know our Lord Jesus Christ. How we use these golden moments is the thought expressed in the hymn of our study. Whether we reap glory or tears is determined by how we proclaim the gospel to the lost world.

Thirdly, the gospel is the only means of salvation for those lost (Rom. 1:16). There is none other name under heaven whereby a man can be saved [Acts 4:12]. The fact that Jesus commands his followers to go teach, implies that Christianity is a taught religion. While it is true that one seeking salvation might read God's Word and discover the Gospel Plan of Salvation, it still remains our responsibility to teach. The necessity of preaching cannot be denied.

Fourthly, souls are precious. "*What would a man give in exchange for his soul*" [Matt. 16:26]? The human soul created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) is more valuable than anything on earth. The soul will live for eternity. He who would teach one the gospel and convert him saves the soul from death and covers a multitude of sin [James 5:20]. There is no more important work than that of winning souls! Inspiration tells us, "*He that winneth souls is wise*" [Prov. 11:30].

Holding up Christ the true light is synonymous with preaching the gospel, yet Christians can hold Christ up to the world and never mount a pulpit. Christ, the true light is manifest to the world through preaching and influence. We have discussed the preaching aspect, now lets examine the influence aspect. In Matthew 5:16, we read, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"

Our lives are to be a beacon focused upon the Savior of the world. When lives are what they ought to be, men are drawn to Jesus as an insect is drawn to the bulb by the ray of light it sends forth. Dear friend, understand, that every word you speak, every act you commit, will either draw men to Christ, or drive them away. While millions grope for the answers to life's most urgent needs, pray your influence may not hinder their search. Watch and listen for opportunities to let Christ be seen in you. Paul reminded the Corinthian brethren that they were his epistles written in his heart, known and read of all men. The world watches, hold up the true light in your speech, and actions.

"Did he not also die for these lost ones?" The answer of course is an emphatic yes! *"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). The Hebrew writer records this sacrifice in these words: *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man"* (Heb. 2:9). Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, but if they are not made aware of it, it will not benefit them. Our rejoicing that our sins are forgiven while millions are swept into eternity, is in reality hypocritical. Consider the sacrifice made for all men, the manifold blessings in Christ Jesus, in this life and the life beyond. Are not these thoughts enough to bring us to tears? The precious Savior gave all for us. Let us sacrifice time, talent, and material resources to bring as many as possible to Him.

The Responsibility Of Preaching

The chorus of the hymn teaches the responsibility of preaching. *"Into our hands the gospel is given, into our hands is given the light."* Christians, as the Bible defines them, have been given the truth. The people of God have always had the responsibility of proclaiming God to the lost. Even the Israelites were to make proselytes. Jesus chided the Jews about their practice in Matthew 23:15. The fact is that they were expected to win converts to the one God. It has already been stated that carrying out the Great Commission is expected of all Christians. With this in mind, consider what this entails as to our responsibility.

Souls are lost without knowledge and obedience to the truth. We have the truth, that is an understanding of God's plan of salvation. The gospel has been put into our hands. Therefore, it befalls us to make every effort to assure that a lost and dying world has a chance to hear the message at least once before they die. We will give an account of how we have handled God's precious message! *"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods"* (Matt. 25:14-30).

Dear reader, you know the parable of the talents! Notice the import of this discourse. First, the man who went into a far country was, of course, Jesus. Second, the man called unto him his servants. Who else would he call? We are those servants, Christians, bought with the precious blood of the master. Third, he delivered unto them his goods. The talents are not ours, something we acquired some way. They are my Lord's goods. We are only stewards. Fourth, he gave them according to their several ability. He does not expect us to do more than we are capable of doing. For this reason it is understandable that all of us are

not preachers. All are not Bible school teachers. **BUT ALL OF US HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SOMETHING!**

One of the talents given was the gospel message. What are we doing with it? Are we using it properly and gaining usury or have we buried it on the coffee table or in a box for safe keeping? The statistics imply that we have buried it! We will face the same fate that the man who received one talent if we do not wake up to the need before us. If we do our best in warning the wicked, their blood will not be on our hands, neither will God require our souls (Ezek. 3:17-21).

Reaching the masses will not be accomplished unless we adopt the determination of Paul and go win the lost at any cost. To do this we must realize the majority of the people on earth are in a lost condition, and it is up to us to tell them! Roger Dickson on page 112 of *"The Call to World Evangelism"* said it this way:

Until every church of Christ throughout the entire world realizes that every member is a minister of the word, we'll only scratch our responsibility to tell the world of the *Great Love Story* in the Bible. If you are a Christian you are a person with a mission. And that makes you a missionary. And all the time you thought you could hire someone to do your mission work for you!

You cannot hire someone to do what God has commanded you to do. If you could hire someone to teach for you, you could hire someone to attend for you, or take the communion on the Lord's day! The hymn reads *"Into our hands the gospel is given, into our hands is given the light."*

The responsibility is ours! We will answer for how we use the precious message. Someone said, "We are saved to save others." Yes, we have the light, the answer to the world's problems. We proudly display the bumper sticker, "Jesus is the answer," while we sit inside our snug houses and let dust accumulate on our fine leather bound Bibles! Did he not also die for these lost ones? Can we comprehend the profound import of this statement? The answer is, of course, an emphatic yes! But what does this mean to us? If Jesus died for all men, then to withhold the message from them is to cheat them out of a chance to have eternal life. It is to withhold from them the instructions on how to live a full, happy and productive life while here on earth (John 10:10; 2 Peter 1:3). It will cause us to lose our own soul (Matt. 25:29-30; Ezek. 3:18).

Conclusion

Friends, we are swiftly turning life's daily pages. The hours are turning to years. How are you using God's precious moments? Will you reap glory, or will you reap tears? The answer lies in what you do now. If you are not a Christian, do not risk another day without becoming one. I beg you, **believe** that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God (John 8:24). **Repent** of your sins (Luke 13:3,5). **Confess** His name before men (Matt. 10:32). Be **baptized** for the remission of your sins (Acts 2:38). Strive to **remain faithful** until death (Rev. 2:10). Seek out some Christian and discuss with him the things you have just read and obey your Lord today.

If you are already a Christian, determine to share what you have just learned with a lost soul today. A faithful soul winner once told this writer... "Winning souls is like eating Lays potato chips; you cannot stop at one." Time is moving on while you were reading

this discourse. Hundreds have slipped into eternity not knowing Jesus. Every baptized believer is a missionary in the sense that he or she is to pass on the message to those who are lost. When we sing hymns like "*Swiftly We're Turning*" or "*You Never Mentioned Him To Me*," Let us take seriously the message we sing. When we sing hymns like "*A Soul Winner for Jesus*" or "*Rescue the Perishing*," let's be careful that we are not singing a lie!

Tomorrow may never come. When we meet God in judgment, the record will be opened and we will be judged accordingly (Rev. 20:12). We are either a missionary or a mission field! May God bless you in your efforts to win the lost.

Chapter 17

Just A Closer Walk With Thee

Holger Neubauer

As we review the song **“Just a Closer Walk With Thee,”** we do so with the hope that the words of this great hymn might be appreciated even more and that each child of God would better *“sing with the understanding also”* (1 Cor. 14:15).

Singing is a vital part of our worship unto God and Christians do well to emphasize the importance of the messages we sing as we praise God while edifying one another. Paul told the Colossians to *“let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Col. 3:16). This verse could not be obeyed without congregational singing. The reflexive, reciprocal pronoun “one another” denotes an interchange of action of at least two parties. So, whether a congregation of two or two thousand, the pronoun demands everyone to participate in the teaching and admonishing which is to be carried out by or through singing. Too, since everyone must fulfill this divine admonition, choirs and special singing groups which utilize only a few of the assembly in song are necessarily excluded.

I Am Weak

The first words of this wonderful hymn remind us of our true condition before God. Man needs God,

God does not need man. We as frail humans must depend upon God for spiritual survival. The haughty and indifferent Laodiceans had so filled their lives with worldly accommodations that they said collectively, *"I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."* So filled were they with worldly goods, the Laodiceans had failed to see that they were really, *"wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked"* (Rev. 3:17). Ancient Laodicea was a rich and opulent society. Their preoccupation with worldly goods had blinded them to their true spiritual condition. The Laodiceans failed to recognize their true need for God. This same sentiment and worldly affection has kept many modern-day members of the church from realizing their true spiritual need as well. Man is weak without God and no day should pass without the keen recognition that every child of God must have God in their lives in order to be strong. It is by no accident that the beatitudes of Matthew chapter five began with *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 5:3). Poverty of spirit is the recognition of one's dependance and need for God.

In 2 Chronicles 26, Uzziah, king of Judah began his reign in meekness and humility. Uzziah's youth and insecurity motivated him to "seek the Lord." God answered the prayers of Uzziah and as long as Uzziah sought God, God made the king to prosper. Uzziah built towers and engines of war and the text tells us that Uzziah was "marvelously helped, till he was strong." Yet at the very point of life where Uzziah should have been the most humble and the most grateful, he lifted his heart up against God and transgressed against the Lord taking upon himself the duties of a priest. This self-willed defiant act was met by the opposition of Azariah the priest and eighty valiant men that opposed Uzziah saying to him, *"It appertaineth not unto thee Uzziah to burn incense*

unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense" (2 Chron. 26:18). Uzziah acted without divine authority and became the recipient of God's displeasure by being smitten with leprosy. This account ought to stir our minds to continually remember our weakness and dependance upon God lest we venture out into a lifestyle or worshipful act without divine approval. Those individuals today who leave the pattern of living laid out in the New Testament are guilty of forgetting about their need for God. The same is true with regard to those venturing into unauthorized acts of worship. Hand-clapping in the assembly, choirs and special praise teams in worship, women leading in worship, instrumental music in worship are all very much like the sin of Uzziah. Let us make sure we always acknowledge our need and dependance upon our God.

But Thou Art Strong

God surely is strong. Psalm 24:8 says, "*The Lord is strong and mighty, the Lord is mighty in battle.*" Psalm 89:8 proclaims, "*O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee?*" In Revelation 18:8 the power of God is manifest where it is revealed, "*...for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her.*" God's strength ought to be recognized by all of His children. God's strength reminds us of our own human weaknesses and gives us hope in this life and the life to come. God's strength is manifest in several ways.

First, **God's strength is manifest in that He still rules in the kingdom of men.** Daniel 4:17 says,

*This matter is by the decree of the watchers,
and the demand by the word of the holy
ones: to the intent that the living may know*

that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men.

The Savior told Pilate "*Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above*" (John 19:11). The toppling of kingdoms by the Powerful hand of God is seen in the dethroning of wicked Ahab. Elijah prophesied that Ahab would have his blood licked by the dogs in the city of Jezreel for putting Naboth to death (1 Kings 21:19). Later, Micaiah predicted the demise of Ahab in the battle at Ramoth Gilead (1 Kings 22:17). Ahab perhaps felt safe that both prophesies could not be true, however, a Syrian soldier shot an arrow by chance and it penetrated Ahab's armor in its most vulnerable place which left Ahab bleeding in his chariot. Ahab then commanded the chariot driver back to Jezreel, but by the time Ahab's chariot arrived he had died and the dogs licked his blood just as Elijah predicted. Ahab had met his demise in Ramoth Gilead as Micaiah had also stated. God's word was fulfilled. Still, God is on His heavenly throne ruling in the kingdoms of men.

Second, God is strong because it is His word that is the final standard of authority for every accountable individual on the face of the earth. The revelation of God is complete and final (John 12:48; Rev. 3:9; Acts 20:26, 27). God plays no favorites nor will He change His mind (Acts 10:34, 35; Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2). Since sin has the same price for all of mankind (Rom. 6:23), all of mankind is amenable to the gospel and needs the grace of God in order to be saved (Rom. 10:13-17; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). King and/or plowboy, rich and poor, elite and common, male and female, Jew and Gentile are all subject to the Word of God which is the final court of appeal on every matter that pertains to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).

Third, **God is strong because He changes men's lives through His powerful word.** The explosive power of God resides within the saving message of the gospel (Rom. 1:16). The gospel has the power to change the lives of homosexuals. The gospel can make a drunken whore-monger change his life and live soberly, righteously and godly. The gospel can open the hearts of the covetous, can close the mouths of the false accusers, can make the vicious gentle, can make the hateful lovers of mankind, and can make the child of the devil become the child of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Col. 1:13). God is still revealing His might and power through the pages of His word which is able to make His children strong (Eph. 6:10-12).

Jesus Keep Me From All Wrong

It certainly is the will of Jesus that His own are kept from all wrong. In Luke 21:31,32, Jesus spoke to Peter and said, *"Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."* Though Jesus was fully aware that Peter would deny Him three times in the course of just a few hours, the Lord also knew that Peter would be converted and consequently be a strengthening force in the church. Today our Lord wills all to accept the gospel plan and come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). This same Lord is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24). However, it is through His divine teaching and obedience to His will that this is accomplished (2 Peter 1:5-10).

Scripture places a divine guarantee that no trial should overwhelm God's children with difficulty (1 Cor. 10:13). Therefore, every trial faced by a child of God will be a stepping-stone to greater service

(James 1:2-4; Rom. 5:3-5). Abraham *"staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God"* (Rom. 4:20). Abraham was kept from falling through his strong faith as Hebrews 11:17 declares, *"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac."* Still, the Savior wills to keep us from all wrong through planting God's word deeply in our hearts which will ultimately save our souls (James 1:21).

God's children will be kept from all wrong through submitting to each truth of the gospel. Galatians 5:19-21 lists a host of sins that keep one from being saved, and so to refrain from sin and follow the positive commands of Jesus will keep us from all wrong. One sin committed regularly by members of the church and purported gospel preachers is the sin of fellowshiping evil. Lectureships abound today where faithful brethren participate with and promote programs which utilize false teachers and those espousing damnable heresies. Jesus would have these to keep from all wrong but Ephesians 5:11; 2 John 9-11 and Romans 16:17-18 are, many times, simply not obeyed. One can peruse any University Lectureship among us today and many false teachers will be found. These false teachers promote instrumental music in worship, false views on marriage-divorce and remarriage, women taking leadership roles including translating in the assembly, social drinking of alcoholic beverages, the use of unreliable translations of the Bible, children's church, Realized Eschatology and a host of other false doctrines. It's time for the faithful of God to unsheathe the Sword of the Spirit and do battle with the compromising brethren of our day.

I'll Be Satisfied As Long As I Walk Close To Thee

The next phrase of our song reminds us of the attitude every faithful child of God is to possess in his heart. Satisfaction that comes as a result of an approved relationship with the Lord is a Cardinal Christian doctrine. In Philippians 4:13 a statement that points to the heart of satisfaction is generally taken out of its context. In Philippians 4:4, the text says, "*Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say rejoice.*" This admonition to rejoice is directly tied to 4:9 where Paul said, "*Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me do: and the God of peace shall be with you.*" As Paul urged happiness to be a part of the believer's lives, his own personal example of a Christian life, and following that example, was the way that happiness was to be obtained. Then Paul stated another key to happiness and satisfaction when he said,

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need

(Phil. 4:11,12). Paul had learned to be content when he did not have enough and when he had more than enough. The great apostle had learned how to "rejoice always" by learning to be content with the Lord in whatever condition he found himself in. It is in this context that the statement is made, "*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13). Paul was speaking about happiness and

contentment! Every Christian can achieve this great contentment and satisfaction through Christ.

In another context, Paul said, "*But godliness with contentment is great gain*" (1 Tim. 6:6). Paul argued his case for contentment and satisfaction by pointing out that just as we brought nothing into the world when we entered it, it is also certain that none of us will carry anything out (1 Tim. 6:7).

Therefore every Christian needs to learn to be content having food and clothing (1 Tim. 6:8). Materialism, in this context, is called a "snare" which Satan sets for the unsuspecting of this world. Just as a ravenous animal lunges for a piece of dangling meat without noticing the cunning trap set by a skillful hunter, so sometimes God's children lunge after the materialism this world has to offer. However, the trap of the Devil is far more consequential than any physical trap laid by men (1 John 2:15, 17).

Just A Closer Walk With Thee

So then every child of God ought to have this prayer on his or her lips. Our desire ought to be a closer walk with God. There are only two Bible characters that were said to have "walked with God." One was Enoch, the other was Noah.

Enoch walked with God, after he begat his son Methuselah, 300 years (Gen. 5:22).

Enoch may have been especially motivated by his first child. Walking with God will not only ensure our relationship with God, but will give an example for our children to follow (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 6:1,2).

Noah walked with God being faithful in every detail of God's instructions. Genesis 6:22 says, "*This did Noah: according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*" Our walking with God is likewise dependant upon our keeping God's commandments. 1 John 1:7 admonishes, "*But if we walk in the light,*

as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.”

Let us be increasingly more sensitive to the revealed will of God and ensure a closer walk with God as we continue to live as sojourners on this earth.

Chapter 18

Oh The Depths And The Riches

Dean Buchanan

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Commonly known as the “golden text” of the Bible, this passage expresses the central thought in the song we have under consideration. If there is any one thing that measures the size and the value of the love of God, it has to be the terrible death of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross. To convey this central truth, the author uses five key words — **grace, mercy, love, blood, and sin.**

The word **“grace”** is defined as, “That which bestows pleasure or favorable regard.” Suffice it to say that grace provides for us that which we cannot provide for ourselves.

There are two Greek words that are translated by our word **“love”** in the Bible. *Philanthropia* is defined as “love for man” and *agape* is defined as an “exercise in divine will.” The first involves the emotions of man, and the second appeals only to the will of man, to a choice one may make. Thus, Christ could command us to “love our enemies.”

“Mercy” is defined as an “outward manifestation of pity; assumes need on the part of him who receives it, and resources adequate to meet the need on the part of the one who shows it.” When justice demands, mercy intercedes as an advocate and pleads for leniency.

“Sin” is the transgression of God’s law. *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law”* (1 John 3:4). Along this same line, the same apostle said, *“all unrighteousness is sin...”* (1 John 5:17). It is clear that sin is any act of disobedience to God on the part of man.

The other key word in the song is **“blood”** and clearly refers to the blood of Christ that was shed on the cross and became the sacrifice which cleanses us of our sins, and so needs no further defining.

These “key” words in this song are found hundreds of times in the Bible. The reason brother Teddlie used these words was to demonstrate and convey a little bit of that which is beyond our comprehension – the love of God for man. In the process of doing this, he sets forth at least five great truths in three beautiful verses.

First, we are in bondage to sin. God created Adam and Eve, placed them in the garden of Eden with access to all the fruits of the garden, even the tree of knowledge of good and evil which God told them not to eat. By this action in His creation, God granted to man freedom of will. He did not place a physical barrier around the forbidden tree to keep Adam and Eve out. Only their choice to eat, or not eat, would determine their destiny. They ate and brought sin into the world, therefore, making all people suffer the consequences of that sin. In setting forth the limitations of the Law of Moses and the importance of faith in Christ, Paul said: *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: ²³For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:22,23).

Modern man does not like to consider the concept of sin. This is evidenced by the absence of the word

in conversation, lack of preaching on sin in contrast to years gone by, the prevalence of subjectivism in our educational and social systems, and corruption from the lowest to the highest levels of governments. Conduct resulting from this kind of attitude is excused by such phrases as, "everyone lies at times," "it really doesn't make any difference," "everything is relative anyway," "who's to say what is right and what is wrong?" "There is no such thing as absolute truth," "everyone has a different set of values," and on and on, ad nauseam.

Immorality, fraud, homosexuality, and sexual perversion of every kind, pornographic movies, books, magazines and videos, cheating, stealing, cursing, laziness, and every other kind of sin imaginable are excused as "normal" behavior by sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other "professionals" of the world today.

Well, God says those things are sin. The underlying cause of every problem of every person or government in this country and everywhere is sin, pure and simple. And, the cause of sin is leaving God out of the picture, for sin separates mankind from God.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; ²But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear [Isa. 59:1,2].

Whether man admits to the existence of God or not does not mean God is not there. Whether man admits to the law of God or not does not mean there is no law. Whether man believes that disobedience to God is sin or not does not cause sin to disappear. And, whether or not men believe the Bible is the ruling authority in the lives of all men, does not lessen nor

mitigate against this great book as being God's revelation to man.

So the "Depth and the Riches" of God's grace and his love rings true regarding the needs of men to be saved from sin. Before a man can embrace that salvation, he must recognize and admit the reality and power of sin. Only then will he make a move to partake of the "depth of the love of God flowing boundless and full and free."

Second, man cannot save himself. Surely if man could save himself, then God sent Christ to die on the cross for nothing and all the centuries of planning and working to bring Christ into the world at the right time were all in vain, to say nothing of the suffering of our Saviour. *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved"* (John 3:17). *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). *"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission"* (Heb. 9:22).

The Israelites of the Bible were trying to save themselves by the keeping of the law. Christ, and the apostles under the direction of Christ, tried to convince them that salvation could not be had by keeping the law of Moses, for only if one kept it perfectly could he be saved and that was an impossibility for any human. Paul goes to great length in the books of Romans and Galatians to explain this truth to the Jews and so does the writer of the book of Hebrews. Christ said to the Jews, *"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham"* (Matt. 3:9). They cannot depend on the fact they are a Jew and the keeping of the Law of Moses to save them.

There are some today who believe that being a good moral person will save them. This belief is nothing more than believing one can save oneself by moral goodness. It is ironic that this belief relies on the moral principles set forth in the Bible as being the criteria by which one can be saved. They forget that Cornelius was not just a good moral man, but also a devout religious man and still he was lost (Acts 10:1–11:18). Moral goodness will save no one, for the very idea of such belief condemns God for sending his Son to die when he really didn't need to. For if one person could save themselves by moral purity, then certainly everyone else could do the same thing if they wanted to.

The very fact that Christ came and died on the cross for the sins of man implies that man cannot save himself. Only the response of man to His death, by obeying the gospel which He preached, will put one in a saved relationship with God. So the song we are looking at sets forth this great truth, that man cannot save himself, with the words, *"By His stripes I am freed from the bondage of sin, Thru His suffering on CALVARY."*

Third, only through the blood of Christ can we be free. Years ago, most of us probably heard or read about some "intellects" who, posing as "Christians," were trying to remove all references to blood from hymnals, sermons, Bible study books, and, if I recall correctly, the Bible itself because blood was too unpleasant to think about. Isn't it ironic that man would be so presumptuous as to try to eliminate the one thing that is the very heart of the sacrifice Jesus Christ made, his blood that he shed on the cross.

Any person can take advantage of the blood of Christ by being baptized in water for the remission of past sins. Concerning this very thing, Paul wrote to the Romans,

¹What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? ²God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ³Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; ⁶Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin [Rom. 6:1-6].

This passage clearly teaches that the only way we can “contact” the blood of Christ to cleanse our sins is by being “buried with him in baptism.” Obviously, this is symbolic, as it must be, for it is impossible for anyone to be baptized in the literal blood of the Son of God. Jesus himself described this process in His revelation to John. “*And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*” (Rev. 1:5). Paul states that the church was purchased with the blood of Christ. To the elders of the church in Ephesus he said, “*Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*” (Acts 20:28).

Now we all know the church is the saved. Speaking of the beginning days in Jerusalem following Pentecost when the apostles delivered the first com-

plete gospel message and baptized thousands, Luke writes, "*Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those that were saved*" (Acts 2:47). Putting these passages together we come up with these facts. People are saved by the blood of Christ. People are washed from their sins by the blood of Christ. The church was purchased by the blood of Christ. The church is the saved. Even as the Hebrew writer put it, "*Without the shedding of blood is no remission*" (Heb. 9:22).

So our soul searching hymn has this line. "*By His blood I am cleansed; I am happy and free thru His suffering on CALVARY!*" We should sing it without shame and a heart full of love for our Saviour who was willing to shed His blood that we could be saved!

Fourth, Love produces grace. "*O the depth and riches of God's saving grace,*" says the first words of the first verse. Look again at the golden text of the Bible, "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (John 3:16). No wonder John described God as love. "*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love*" (1 John 4:8). Our Father in heaven is the embodiment of love and He loves us, His creatures, so much He was willing to give His Son to die for us.

We are saved by grace.

⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; ⁹Not of works that no man should glory, ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).

Now, this passage does not teach there is nothing for a person to do to be saved. In fact, it mentions we are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” Salvation is by grace, it is a gift, and we have to accept it as a gift and use it as a gift. If we do not use it (works involved in the acceptance thereof), then it is of no value to us whatsoever. And, even though God has extended that grace in order for us to be saved, we are lost.

A lot of men have received ugly ties for birthdays and other occasions when the customs demand that gifts be given. There are two possibilities in this case.

First, the gift could be refused and not accepted at all by the intended recipient. This would be the equivalent of the person who does not accept Christ as God’s Son at all. That person may even believe He is the Messiah but does not act on that belief. A Biblical example is King Agrippa when Paul stood before him as recorded by Luke in the book of Acts. After Paul told the King what had happened, Agrippa said, “*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*” (Acts 26:28). Secular history tells us Agrippa never was baptized into Christ, hence he rejected the gift all together.

Second, the gift (tie) could be accepted, taken home and hidden away in a drawer somewhere and never worn. This would be represented by the person who is willing to be baptized, may even have accepted the fact of Christ’s Sonship, but then is not faithful to Him by producing the works of faith described by James in his letter (James 2:26).

We have this grace because the love of God produced it. Justice demanded the human race be punished for sin. God’s grace displaced that demand by extending his mercy and making it possible for us to be forgiven. As the song repeats in the chorus, “*And the debt for my sins was all paid in His suffering on CALVARY!*”

Fifth, Salvation cannot be earned. The entire tenor of the song affirms we cannot earn our way to heaven. It speaks of both the size and value of God's love and of His grace. It also speaks of the debt for our sins being paid by the suffering of Christ on CALVARY. To repeat again the core fact of Christianity, Christ died for our sins because they could not be forgiven any other way. We can do all the good works possible for a human being, and we still cannot earn our salvation. Jesus said, *"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do"* (Luke 17:10).

There is a vast difference in meritorious works and works of faith. Works do not precede faith, rather faith precedes works. We do not work to be saved, we work because we are saved. Faith produces works of faith and these are the kind of works James wrote about in his epistle when he said, *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only ... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"* (James 2:24, 26).

This should not be a strange concept to any of us who are a part of a family. A father and mother work for their children because they love them, they do not love them because they work for them. For example, a mother does not love her two-year old daughter because she sits with her for two or three days with little or no sleep while the child suffers near death from some disease wracking the tiny body. That mother sits with the child because she loves her. Thus, we do not love Christ because we feed the hungry and preach the gospel to the world; rather we preach the gospel and feed the hungry because we love Christ.

There are many Biblical examples of "the depth and the riches" of God's love and grace. David speaks

of the place in the universe God gave unto man and wonders why God would be “mindful of man” and make him *“a little lower than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor”* (Psalm 8:5). God placed man at the very top of his creation above all other creatures, in fact He placed him in charge of the universe. Surely, this demonstrates the love God has for us.

After the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, justice would have required their extinction; but God, through his mercy saw fit to allow them to realize the consequences of their sin in a very real way. He drove them from the garden, and made it impossible for them to ever enter it again. However, he made it possible for them to be reconciled to Him spiritually; and when He did that, He made it possible for all people of all time, in all generations to be saved, all by the blood of Christ. For, you see, the blood of the cross reaches backward to the beginning of time and forward to the end of time.

Our song speaks of, *“God’s saving grace flowing down from the cross for me...boundless and full and free.”* All of us this side of the cross are cleansed by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22). All of those folks on the other side of the cross were cleansed by the blood of Christ. *“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance”* (Heb. 9:15). Sins committed by those people beyond the cross were remembered by God once each year when the high priest went into the most holy place with the annual sin offering. *“But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year”* (Heb. 10:3).

The depth and riches of God’s love are found in His dealing with the nation of Israel over the centu-

ries. He created the nation from the loins of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He raised them up in the land of Egypt, and He looked over them throughout their history. Over and over again His people would forsake Him, and He would raise up a prophet or leader to bring them back to Him. After He had given them the land of Canaan, they demanded a king that they might be like the nations around them. God gave them a king. Ultimately, the nation was divided and both kingdoms were eventually taken into captivity because of their sin. God still loved them.

The depth and riches of God's love are demonstrated in the life of David of old. He was a "*man after God's own heart*" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). As king, David broke many of the ten commandments, adultery with Bathsheba, having her husband murdered, and dishonoring the nation as their king. Yet, God forgave him when he confessed his sin. King Saul sinned grievously. King David sinned grievously. David was accepted by God and Saul was rejected. The difference lay in the fact that David loved God and never ceased to talk to Him and worship Him. Saul ceased communication with God and obviously felt he could handle things himself. Both men committed grievous sins. The love and grace of God was available to both, but only David took advantage of it.

Surely the depth and riches of God's love and grace are evident in the life of the apostle Peter who was the impetuous apostle and who kept stumbling and falling again and again. We mention only one — his denial of Christ (Matt. 26:69-75). He even cursed and swore when he denied his Savior the third time. Then as Christ was brought out, according to Luke's account of the incident, He looked at Peter; and Peter went out and wept bitterly. Yet, it was the apostle Peter who was given the privilege of preaching the gospel on Pentecost for the first time and wrote two

letters that are included in the New Testament. It was Peter who was given the honor of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius as recorded in Acts Chapters 10 and 11. Yet, Peter had denied Christ at the most crucial time in the life of our Lord.

Christ looked down from the cross and asked God to forgive those who had nailed him there. Surely, this sets forth the depth and riches of the love and grace of God. He has forgiven disobedience, murder, lying, robbery, and every kind of sin imaginable, and will continue to do so.

In the early seventies, I preached for the church at Spring Hill, Tennessee, where the building was located across the road from the Tennessee Children's Home. The children and staff there attended services where I preached, and we were with the children at the home many times. One of the matrons told us of an incident that happened involving one of the 8 to 11 year old boys that lived in her dorm. As was the case of most of the children there, this child came from a broken home and had experienced a pretty rough life. The matron said she had tried and tried to get through to this boy, but he had rejected all approaches. He was sullen and resentful of anything he was told to do. Over and over she had assured him that she loved him and wanted to do everything she could to help him. Finally, one day when she was assuring him of her love, he responded, "Why should I believe you love me any more than anyone else. Everybody in my life that has said they loved me has left, and I never see them again. Why should I believe you are any different?"

The love of the dorm mom was there for the boy, he just did not want to accept it for fear that he would only be hurt again. We human beings have a way of disappointing one another and failing one another, but God will never fail nor disappoint us. When we

sing this song about the depth and the riches of God's love and grace, we can rest assured that he will not disappoint nor fail us for He has given the greatest sacrifice of all — His only begotten Son.

When trying to discuss the central thought of this song, the greatest challenge is to find the words and illustrations that would even come close to doing it justice. Perhaps we should not be as concerned about explaining as we are about appreciating what He has done for us. Only when a person begins to realize how helpless they are without Christ, can they begin to appreciate His love and grace. With the apostle Paul we should be willing to see ourselves and say, "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin*" (Rom. 7:24,25).

Chapter 19

Will Jesus Find Us Watching?

Virgil L. Hale

I am happy the Lectureship this year has to do with songs we sing in worship. I am afraid that far too often we do not give enough thought to the songs we sing. We are more careful about getting every note just right than in thinking about the words we are singing. We must always be aware of the fact that we are to sing like we are to pray — with the spirit and with the understanding. This simply means that our singing must be from the heart, but we must understand and mean what we are singing as well. We are to sing praises to our Heavenly Father, but at the same time, we are to teach and admonish one another as we sing.

I want us to also notice that singing is to be a reciprocal action, one to another, and not solo or group singing. Some, even in the Lord's church, have either never understood this; or they have forgotten. With these thoughts before us, let us now study the song that has been assigned for this study.

As to the question "*WILL JESUS FIND US WATCHING?*" — we must answer individually. After all, no one can stand in judgment for us. As the old saying goes, we will have to stand on our own two feet. We will not be judged collectively, but individually. Will Jesus find you watching? Will He find me watching? If not, we will have an eternity to regret it. With these few comments about the title of the song, let us look at the words themselves.

The song begins, "*when Jesus comes.*" About His coming there can be no doubt. The song does not begin, "If Jesus comes" — but with the certainty "When." The coming of the Lord is not something that might happen, but something that is **certain** to happen. We read, "*Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him....*" (Rev. 1:7). "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory*" (Matt. 25:31). Jesus said, "*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*" (John 14:3). John wrote, "*And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming*" (1 John 2:28). Paul wrote, "*But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*" (1 Cor. 15:23). James wrote, "*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord*" (James 5:7). To the brethren at Thessalonica, Paul wrote about "*...our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming*" (1 Thess. 2:19); "*...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints*" (3:13); "*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (5:23). With all of this evidence, how can anyone doubt the second coming of our Lord?

Not only is the Lord's coming certain, it will be **personal**. He will not send someone else; He is coming Himself. Jesus said, "*I will come again*" (John 14:3). Jesus said to Peter, concerning John, "*...If I will that he tarry till I come what is that to thee*" (John 21:22)? Jesus said, "*...Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth*" (Luke 18:8)? Again we read, "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto*

them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

The coming of the Lord will also be **visible**. He will not come in secret as some would have us believe. Some have even contended that He has already come, but He was only seen by the eye of faith. In other words, only those who were among the faithful were able to see Him. The Bible says, "*Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him...*" (Rev. 1:7). This verse does not indicate that only the saved will see Him, because it specifies that "*...they also which pierced him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him....*" When our Lord left this earth, his ascension was visible to the Apostles. The angel of the Lord said to them, "*...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:11).

The coming of the Lord will be **unexpected**. Regarding His coming the song says, "*Whether it be noon or night.*" When He comes it will be "*as a thief in the night*" (2 Peter 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:2); "*...as a thief*" (Rev. 16:15). A thief does not let his intended victim know when he is coming. He comes when he is least expected. The coming of the Lord will be the same way. Jesus said, "*Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour ye think not*" (Luke 12:40). Again He said, "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only*" (Matt. 24:36).

The angels are coming with the Lord when He comes (Matt. 25:31), but they do not know when it will be. It amazes me that men, through the years, have set the very time of the coming of Christ, and have been able to fool people into believing they knew what they were talking about. A Mr. Whisenant wrote a book several years ago in which he gave

eighty-eight reasons why the Lord would come in 1988; but, like all of the other time setters, he was wrong.

If the above passages are not sufficient to prove that no one knows when the Lord is going to come, this should settle the matter once and for all time. Remember, Jesus said the angels do not know when He is coming, but only the Father. We read, "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*" (Mark 13:32). When our Lord was on this earth, He did not know when the end of time would be. If He knows now, it is because the Father has revealed it to Him after He went back to heaven. Up until that time it is certain that only the Father had such knowledge. How anyone could be so gullible as to accept some uninspired man's calculations is beyond my comprehension.

Some would have us believe there are signs that point to the second coming. Let me just say here: **THERE IS NOT ONE SINGLE SOLITARY SIGN THAT POINTS TO THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.** Some would question this statement by saying, "Aren't you familiar with Matthew Chapter 24?" Yes, I am familiar with Matthew Chapter 24, but that does not change the above statement. There are no signs, period. Every sign in Matthew 24 has to do with the destruction of Jerusalem, and they were fulfilled in A.D. 70. Jesus plainly said, "*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled*" (Matt. 24:34). The "things" under consideration were the signs that He had given them. All of them were to be fulfilled in that generation. A generation was something like forty years; thus, A.D. 70 would fit the time frame that our Lord specified. In verse 35 Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*" Then referring to the time when the heaven and earth

would pass away He said, *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only”* (Matt. 24:36). From this verse on throughout the rest of this chapter and throughout chapter 25, the end of time is under consideration. Rest assured, there are no signs at all to let us know when this will be. It can come on any day and at any hour!

The song next says, *“to reward his servants.”* The second coming of our Lord will serve a double purpose. He is coming **to reward the faithful and to punish the wicked**. Jesus made this clear in John 5:28:29 when He said, *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”*

Matthew 25:31-46 also gives a vivid description of the judgment: the reward of the faithful and punishment of the wicked. From these and other passages we learn the reward will be individual in nature. In other words, we will not be rewarded as the church universal nor the church on the local level. Judgment and reward will be individual. We read, *“For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works”* (Matt. 16:27). Paul wrote, *“...and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour”* (1 Cor. 3:8). Solomon wrote, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”* (Ecc. 12:13-14).

Since the Lord is coming and we don't know when; we must be ready at all times. If we are not

ready, there will be no time to get ready. As we die, or as we are when the Lord comes, that is how we will go into judgment, and our eternal destiny will thus be decided. Some religious groups teach there will be a second chance, but God's Word knows nothing about such a doctrine. Jesus, in warning about His coming said, *"Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh"* [Matt. 24:44]. From Matthew 25:10, we learn that *"they that were ready went in."* Preparation must be made ahead of time if heaven is to be our eternal home.

Today, Jesus wants to be our Savior — but then, He will be our **Judge**. We read, *"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son"* [John 5:22]. Speaking later in the same chapter concerning what the Father has given unto His Son, we read, *"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man"* [John 5:27]. Paul wrote, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* [2 Cor. 5:10].

Let us observe a few other passages that teach the same thing — that Jesus will be our Judge. *"And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead"* [Acts 10:41]. *"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom"* [2 Tim. 4:1]. *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"* [2 Tim. 4:8]. Peter wrote, *"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead"* [1 Pet. 4:5].

Not only do we know who the Judge will be, we know what the **standard** is He will use. Jesus said, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). Some would have us believe the judgment is not really coming — that it is only a myth. In fact, they would have us believe it is just an idea that preachers dreamed up to scare people so they could have a job. Let me assure you that the judgment is sure and certain.

There are three arguments that I have used through the years to prove the day of judgment is certain. These are arguments that no one can successfully deny.

Argument number one: The judgment is as certain as death. Surely everyone knows that death is a certainty. This being the case, so is the judgment. Listen to the writer of the Hebrew letter, *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Heb. 9:27). How certain is the judgment? as certain as death.

Argument number two: The judgment is as certain as the resurrection of Christ. Surely no religious person is willing to affirm that our Lord was not raised from the dead. If Jesus was not raised from the dead, why should they (or ourselves for that matter) be religious? On Mars' hill in Athens, Greece, Paul made the following statement:

³⁰And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: ³¹Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he

hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

According to Paul, our assurance of the resurrection is the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Argument number three: The judgment is as certain as Jesus now lives. In writing to the brethren at Rome, Paul said, "...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. 14:11). How certain is the judgment then? as certain as death, as certain as the resurrection of Christ, and as certain as Jesus now lives. If these arguments are not enough to convince anyone of the certainty of the judgment, I confess to you, I don't know how they could ever be convinced.

With all of these thoughts in mind, should we not give careful consideration to making sure and certain that we are ready and prepared for the day of judgment? Over and over again we are told to "watch." The word watch carries with it the idea of being alert, being on guard. It is the very opposite of going through life in a haphazard manner — living as though we are never going to die, and having no fear of the hereafter.

Let us observe a few passages where the word "watch" can be found. Jesus said, "*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come*" (Matt. 24:42). We should heed the admonition that our Lord gave to His apostles when He said, "*Watch and pray...*" (Matt. 26:41). Paul admonished, "*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong*" (1 Cor. 16:13). Again we read, "*Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober*" (1 Thess. 5:6). To Timothy Paul wrote, "*But watch thou in all things...*" (2 Tim. 4:5). Through John the Lord said, "*Behold, I come as a thief.*"

Blessed is he that watcheth...” (Rev. 16:15). The church at Sardis was told to *“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain...”* (Rev. 3:2). When our Lord was on the earth He said, *“Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them”* (Luke 12:37). Paul wrote, *“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints...”* (Eph. 6:18).

From all we have studied thus far, it is evident that we must be prepared at all times. We must be **ready** — we must **watching** — we must be **prepared**. A lack of proper preparation will cause us to lose our soul. Our soul is the most valuable possession we have. Jesus asked the question, *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul”* (Matt. 16:26)? If the soul is worth more than all the world, what about the person who trades his soul for just a small portion of this world? Please note that Jesus said *“...his own soul...”* Our soul is really the only thing we really own — it is ours! Where it will be in eternity depends on us (individually) and on no other. Others can help us along the way, but ultimately, we are personally responsible for our soul and its eternal welfare.

As the chorus of song says, *“O can we say we are ready, brother? Ready for the soul’s bright home? Say, will He find you and me still watching, Waiting, waiting when the Lord shall come?”*

Can we say we are ready? Can you say you are ready? Jesus said, *“be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh”* (Matt. 24:44). In teaching a great lesson on who would be saved — be in heaven, Jesus said, *“...they that were*

ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut" (Matt. 25:10). While we live on this earth, we must be "ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1), and we must be "...ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

In the mean time, we must patiently be waiting for the coming of the Lord. Paul wrote, *"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24). Again Paul wrote, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. 5:5). Again he wrote, "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10). James wrote, "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 latter rain" (James 5:7). To the church at Corinth, Paul spoke of their "...waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:7). To the Thessalonians he wrote, "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Thess. 3:5).*

It is evident from our study that the day of judgment is coming, that we will be there, and that we must make preparation for it. If we are ready, we can look forward to that day and to an eternity in heaven with God and Christ and with the redeemed of all the ages. However, if we are unprepared an eternity in hell awaits US.

In looking over the list of songs to be discussed in the Lectureship, I notice that **THERE'S A GREAT DAY COMING** is not on the list. The "great day"

under consideration is the day of judgment. This song says, “There’s a great day coming” — “There’s a bright day coming” — “There’s a sad day coming.” Strange as it may seem, each verse is talking about the same day. It will be the greatest and brightest of all days for those who have made preparation for it, but it will be the saddest of all days for the unprepared. As the song says, “*When the sinner shall hear his doom, Depart, I know ye not.*” The chorus reads: “*Are you ready? Are you ready? Are you ready for the judgment day? Are you ready? Are you ready for the judgment day?*”

My friend, if you are not ready for the judgment day, you need to get ready, and you need to get ready today — now.

To go to heaven you must have **faith in Jesus the Christ** (John 8:24). That faith must be strong enough to cause you to **repent** (turn from sin) (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30); to be willing to **confess** (with your lips) the faith that you have in your heart that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God (Rom. 10:10); and then to be **baptized** into Christ for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). The Lord will add you to His church (Acts 2:47); and if you are **faithful in life and in worship**, you will receive the “crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). If you are an unfaithful child of God, you need to, like the prodigal son of Luke 15, come back home to the Father through repentance, confession, and prayer. It is my prayer that when Jesus comes in judgment He will truly find all of us watching and waiting for His coming.

Chapter 20

There Is A Sea

Charles W. Leonard

This song was published in **Great Songs of the Church**. The first two stanzas were anonymous, but Irene Jorgenson attributed the first two stanzas to E. L. Jorgenson. Perhaps he revised them, but he never claimed them in any printing of **Great Songs of the Church**. The third stanza was by Lula Klingman Zahn. This song uses two different seas to describe two different classes of humanity. The water supply for both seas came largely from the Jordan River. We will deal with specific things that are mentioned in the song.

All Are Blessed With Manifold Blessings From God

Among the many blessings received from God is physical life itself. It did not come through the process of evolution, but came about because of the creative act of God. Moses revealed that God created man in his own image. *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”* (Gen. 1:27). The Psalmist indicated that man was fearfully and wonderfully made in Psalm 139:14, *“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”* Man is also described by Paul as the offspring of God in Acts 17:29, *“Forasmuch then as we are the*

offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." Since physical life is one of the great blessings from God, we should have a greater respect for it and use it to glorify God.

Blessings to preserve physical life are also a blessing from God. God gave plant and animal life to man to preserve the physical life of the human family. *"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things"* (Gen. 9:3). The different seasons that we have are provided by God to enable man to produce the necessary food for his well being. Moses reveals that the seasons will continue as long as the earth remains. *"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"* (Gen. 8:22). God is the only one who provides the rain from heaven and the fruitful seasons. *"Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness"* (Acts 14:17).

Through his providence, God has blessed man by providing for his social needs as well as his physical needs. God reveals that it is not good for man to be alone in Genesis 2:18, *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."* The wisdom of God's provisions in this area is revealed by the wise man in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12,

⁹Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. ¹⁰For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. ¹¹Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but

how can one be warm alone? ¹²And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

The greatest blessings from God are spiritual blessings. The first prophecy concerning Christ was given when man first sinned in the garden of Eden. *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* The fulfillment of this prophecy is mentioned in Matthew 1:21, *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."*

Material blessings may be enjoyed by all regardless of how they live. *"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust"* [Matt. 5:45]. All of the spiritual blessings can **only** be enjoyed by those who are in Christ. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"* [Eph. 1:3].

God, through his providence, has provided both physical and spiritual blessings in abundance for man. The Psalmist speaks of God loading man with benefits in Psalm 68:19, *"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation."* Paul reveals that God is able to make all grace abound toward man so he could have sufficiency in all things. *"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work"* [2 Cor. 9:8]. God has always richly supplied all of the needs of man. *"But my God shall supply all*

your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

The Sea That Receives And Gives

The Sea of Galilee freely receives water from the Jordan River and other tributaries, but from its outlets it gives water that flows on to lower land. Spiritually minded people are like the Sea of Galilee; they receive God's blessings and then they give with an unsparing hand.

God is the motivation for spiritually minded people to give. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16). Paul reveals that God showed his love for man while men were sinners in Romans 5:8, *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Christians love and give because of the love that God has shown toward them. *"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* It was God who loved first and also gave in order to save man. *"We love him, because he first loved us"* (1 John 4:19).

Christ is our greatest example of giving. He described himself in John 10:11 as the good shepherd that gives his life for the sheep, *"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."* He also stated *"...I lay down my life for the sheep"* (John 10:15). Christ literally laid down his life for lost humanity. *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father"* (John 10:18). Christ was rich while in Heaven and became poor so humanity could become rich through his poverty. *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). The greatest demonstration of love and giving was seen when Christ laid down his life. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Spiritually minded Christians are receivers and givers. The greatest evidence of real giving is when people are willing to give themselves to the Lord. "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:5). Those who give themselves to the Lord give of their time, talents, bodies, and money. This kind of giving is sacrificial giving as described by Paul in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." There is a law of sowing and reaping connected with giving as revealed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:6, "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." God promises to bless the givers in both the Old and New Testaments. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). Christ taught there was a greater blessing in giving than receiving in Acts 20:35, "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord

Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

The Sea That Receives, But Never Gives

The Dead Sea receives water from the Sea of Galilee and other tributaries, but does not give from what it receives. This may be an accurate description of what is happening in America with many who are on the welfare system. The Dead Sea describes people who constantly receive blessings from God, but are spiritually dead. There are a number of classes of people who receive great blessings from God, but give nothing in return.

Alien sinners are people who have been greatly blessed in many different ways, but are spiritually dead. They love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”* [John 3:19]. Paul gives a vivid description of alien sinners in Ephesians 2:2, *“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”* Paul reveals what will happen to those who do not know God and do not obey him in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9,

7And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

People in religious error have been blessed physically and with opportunities to know the truth, but they are spiritually dead. Their worship is vain because they are teaching the doctrines and commandments of men. *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* [Matt. 15:9]. People in religious error are like the Athenians; they are worshipping in ignorance. *"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, to the unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you"* [Acts 17:23]. All in religious error are refusing to hear Christ and will be destroyed.

²²For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. ²³And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people [Acts 3:22-23].

Christians Can Also Be Receivers Only

Christians who have been greatly blessed both physically and spiritually can also become receivers only. There are many things which influence Christians to become like the Dead Sea, just receivers. If Christians are aware of some of the dangers we face, hopefully we can avoid some of the pitfalls of sin.

Love for the world has influenced many Christians to become only receivers. The Bible teaches that Christians are not to love the world in 1 John 2:15, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* Christians who are in love

with the world also love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”* [John 3:19].

Christians in love with the world are generally pleasure seekers and receivers only. Paul said those who live in pleasure are dead while they live. *“But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth”* [1 Tim. 5:6]. Paul speaks of some who were in love with pleasure in 2 Timothy 3:4, *“Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”* Before people become Christians, they may have served pleasures. *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another”* [Titus 3:3]. Moses understood there are some things more important than pleasure. *“Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”* [Heb. 11:25].

Gospel Preachers And Elders Can Also Be Only Receivers

Gospel preachers and elders, above others, have been richly blessed spiritually to know and teach the truth to others. When the truth is not taught, the people go into apostasy. Jesus warned of false prophets in Matthew 7:15, *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”* Paul warned the elders of Ephesus of wolves that would draw away disciples after them. *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”* [Acts 20:29-30]. Paul warned

Timothy of those who would depart from the faith in
1 Timothy 4:1-3,

¹Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ²Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

Peter also sounded a warning of apostasy in 2 Peter 2:1, "*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*"

Both elders and preachers share in common the responsibility to teach and warn those who are lost as Ezekiel was charged to do in Ezekiel 3:17-19,

¹⁷Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. ¹⁸When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. ¹⁹Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Thousands of elders and preachers have bloody hands and lost souls because they refuse to sound the warning to those in sin.

Failure on the part of elders and preachers to warn those in sin makes one wonder about their motivation. Are they serving because of their desire to give or receive? It appears that many are more interested in being politically correct in order to receive the praise of men and a lucrative salary.

Self Examination Is Crucial

All Christians should examine themselves to determine which sea accurately describes them. Those who are only receivers, have not fully embraced the faith. Paul urged the Corinthians to examine themselves to see whether they were in the faith in 2 Corinthians 13:5, *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”*

The proper examination will mean the difference between Heaven and Hell.

Chapter 21

Make He A Channel Of Blessing Today

Jack Phillips

The wise man, Solomon wrote, “and now let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring into judgement every work and every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil” (Ecc. 12:13-14). With these words in mind, there can be no greater appreciation for the accomplishments of human worth and life than for one to lay down his life in service to God for fulfilling this divine objective. God did not put us here simply to meander our way through life. He left no question as to the purpose of our existence.

In far too many instances, man does not live up to the high calling of God’s purpose for us. Far removed from most people is to even think and contemplate that life is to be lived for God and not for himself. That road which is straight and narrow is so because the masses of mankind differ in their purpose for existence from that for which God designed them. While God seeks for man to go one way, man chooses to go another. To live in the here and the now; to be gratified by the pleasures this world offers in the living present is to forfeit the certain future. It is evident from the writer of the Hebrew letter that some, “choose the pleasure of sin for a season.”

In the song assigned for this study, "*Make He A Channel Of Blessing*," is the unfolding of the process sanctioned, approved, and planned of God before the foundation of the world. That plan is to bring God and man together in a saving relationship that accomplishes both the will of God and the purpose of man. In Ephesians 3:10-11 we are informed, "*to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began.*" That relationship with God, which we have because of our saved condition, not only enables us to be blessed of God, but in essence to become that channel of blessing in being used as instruments of service unto God and for others. Let us examine the words to the song as we enter into the study of its content:

*Is your life a channel of blessing,
Is the love of God flowing through you?
Are you telling the lost of the Savior,
Are you ready His service to do?*

*Is your life a channel of blessing,
Are you burdened for those that are lost?
Have you urged upon those that are straying,
The Savior who died on the cross?*

*Is your life a channel of blessing,
Is it daily telling of Him?
Have you spoken the word of salvation,
To those who are dying in sin?*

*We cannot be channels of blessing,
If our lives are not free from all sin.
We will barriers be and a hinderance,
To those we are trying to win.*

CHORUS:

*Make me a channel of blessing today,
Make me a channel of blessing, I pray;
My life possessing, My service blessing,
Make me a channel of blessing today.*

Message in song is among one of the most effective and therapeutic ways through which messages may be communicated. Songs can make us happy when we're sad; lift us up when we're down; give us answers when we question; make us thankful when we need to be appreciative; and, offer praise when we are to exalt. Every faithful congregation should expect of their songs what they expect of their preaching, ACCURACY! It would appear that more and more of us are becoming more acutely aware that the songs in our hymnals cannot be placed upon an equality with Holy Writ. Many are products of denominational origin and writing to carry with them misinformation, teachings, which in and of themselves, are diametrically opposed to the Bible, and various innuendo and implications which may appear innocent on the surface but are blatantly false. Everything from Calvinism to Pentecostalism to premillennialism is laced throughout even those hymnals which are considered the most circumspect from our brotherhood. Brethren, we should no more tolerate error being lead in song from our pulpits any more than preaching error from them! The songs we sing in praise unto God should be taken from the Gospel, to be sung by people saved by the Gospel, possibly heard by those who need to obey the Gospel, and, therefore, should be as accurate as the Gospel.

There are four points which surface from the content of this beautiful hymn, "*Make Me A Channel Of Blessing.*" My perception of what the author is

attempting to say is divided into these four major divisions:

1. God is love.
2. Man is lost.
3. I Must Go.
4. My Greatest Hindrance!

I. GOD IS LOVE.

When falling prey to a character analysis of man, there has none taken more criticism than that of our God. Through the ages man has always seemingly wanted to worship someone or something, and in the process has made a departure from worshipping the one true God. From the practice of pantheism, to the erection of paganism, to the elimination of God through atheism, God continues to be misunderstood. His nature, character, purpose, and function has often risen the eyebrows of the cynic and skeptic. But those who have espoused a belief in the one true God of the Bible have pursued manners of life, doctrinal inconsistencies, and spiritual tangents which are far removed from the true will of the God which they claim to serve.

GOD'S LOVE IS PERSONAL. It is truly amazing that in a world so riddled with varieties of persons, that we can say, "God is a lover of all men." We see the toll of sin upon humanity at large; man's inhumanity to man; the sin that reaks and controls the lives of so many, but God still loves. He loved a world so full of sin that His Son, Jesus Christ, was sent as a blood sacrifice to give mankind another chance. It is hard to imagine that King Jesus, in order to save mankind, must for a time, forfeit the rights and benefits of heaven in order to give Himself unselfishly for us all. *"For God so loved the world that he gave*

his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17). This may be the favorite scripture of all Christendom, but it is none-the-less still just as true and still just as powerful.

There is no reason for anyone to get to the point in life where they feel unloved. Granted, our lives may at times become complicated. But in most cases those complications are self imposed. People often feel they become so entangled and engrossed with the depth and proportion of their own sinfulness that no one could love them — not even God! We are often left with feelings of loneliness, emptiness, and abandonment that make us feel that Satan is wining not just the battles of life we go through, but he is close to wining the war! Satan will take us farther than we want to go, make us pay more than we are willing to pay and keeps us longer than we want to stay. He leaves us feeling weak, inadequate, unwanted, and unloved. But the love of God unfolded in the scheme of redemption tells us another story: *"For when we were without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:6-8).

LOVE IS PREDICTABLE. We may all be assured that whenever the needs of man are placed before God, He acts responsibly, deliberately, and intentionally. Whatever God tells us we must do in order to do His will and to avoid sin is always in our best interest. What He tells us we must not do or to leave alone is in our own self interest and for our preservation. It would appear that our own worst enemy usually ends

up being ourselves. But God, even from eternity itself, predicted with absolute accuracy the needs of humankind and planned with absolute precision what man would need in order for God's love to be manifested and for man's needs to be met.

God has thrown us no spiritual curves. There was not an alternative game plan just in case the one He had didn't work. He did not base our salvation on chance and happenstance. Throughout the corridors of time as God's plan began to unfold, everything He planned was carried to fruition with such accuracy that times, dates, places, persons, and yes, even circumstance came into being just as He said it would. God's predictability is seen in His dependability.

GOD'S LOVE IS POWERFUL. The power of God's love is seen in transformed lives. Changes are made: some quickly, and others progressively, but none-the-less, the change does come. It is a tragedy to see those who have given up on themselves. The stereotype, "I'm just this way;" or "I'm red headed and Irish;" "People just have to accept me the way I am," are all statements made by persons who have actually convinced themselves that change is not possible. The religion of the Bible, the church, and New Testament Christianity say otherwise. The very premise of God's love is to give to sinful man another chance.

What is it that causes the man who has walked the broad and wide way to now walk that straight and narrow way? It's the power of God's love. What has transformed the lives of those who have plunged to the depths of human depravation through the use of alcohol and drugs? It's the power of God's love. What will take people out of denominationalism with all of its fragmented teachings to unite them in that singular body which bears the name of Him who purchased

it with His own blood? Is it not the power of God's love? What has turned around life after life from immoral practices such as fornication, adultery and homosexuality? Is it not the power of God's love? In Romans 8:35 it is indicated that the power of God's love is inseparable from the human element. *"Who shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword?"* Although man may reach the depths of sinful depravity, regardless of who he is, where he is, or what he may have done, the recognition that there is a God in heaven who loves has the power to transform lives.

GOD'S LOVE IS ALSO PERPETUAL. In the afore mentioned point, we concluded that regardless of man's spiritual condition, God goes on loving. For years, we have advocated, taught, and preached to our audiences that even though what we may have done disappoints and even sometimes insults the very integrity of God, He still loves us. We have used the cliché that, "God hates the sin while loving the sinner." There is no doubt this on-going, perpetual love of God has been the turning point for many a seeking, struggling life. John Newton, who wrote, "AMAZING GRACE" reviewed a sinful past of fornicating, adultery, drunkenness, and even slave trading and selling. After his supposed conversion, he and one of his contemporaries walked down a street to see a drunk in the gutter passed out and wallowing in his own vomit, and Newton was heard to say, "If not for the grace of God, that could have been me!"

How many of us have often thought of where we have been and now of where we are because of God's on-going love? It would be horrid to think that this love is limited and so confined that we may have used it all up. But again and again, we see such scriptural evidences as the prodigal son of Luke 15 that gives us

hope and reassurance. While the boy was away; while he was at play; and while he went to the pigs to stay; even though he was away; we have to believe that in his absence he had a Father who continued to pray. All of the time the son was away the father still loved. While the son was in rebellion and revelry, the Father still loved. While the son sought to come to himself, the Father still loved. And, when the Father saw that lone figure so far away, dirty, ashamed, hungry, possibly even naked, the Father still loved. How many times could this story be repeated in congregation after congregation of our brotherhood in people leaving and coming back over and over again, because of a God who refuses to stop loving?

II. MAN IS LOST!

SIN IS TRANSGRESSION. There is no more obvious truth in all of holy writ than man's departure in doing the will of God. The evidences are overwhelming! Satan, as the great deceiver, has done his job well in this department. The words of Peter hit the bull's eye squarely when he admonishes us, "*be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Peter 5:8). Throughout the ages, man has not changed in the basic weaknesses he has. Satan has not changed in the three basic methods he uses in enticing man to sin. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17) still do their work just as effectively as ever! The only difference is that in our modern times the devil has obviously widened his scope in their uses. But the Bible still gives only three possibilities of sin being committed.

The sin of commission comes when one is involved in the act of doing. 1 John 3:4 states that, "*whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the*

law, for sin is the transgression of the law." We have often rightfully heard that transgression means, from its literal form, "to miss the mark," to "step across," or to "go beyond." All of these involve activity upon the part of man. All of these involve man's free moral agency and the ability to choose to do right or wrong. It was necessary for man to have a standard to live by that protects him as well as others. God gave laws, commandments, or ordinances to be performed by the righteous and to protect the innocent. But with law comes responsibility and the recognition of the difference between right and wrong. Paul wrote that "*by the law is the knowledge of sin*" [Rom. 3:20].

What kind of law would it be that has no penalty or punishment for the transgressor? What would be our thoughts in serving a God who neither gives reward for the right doer, nor punishment for the wrong doer? For both the "goodness and severity of God" [Rom. 11:22] to be kept in balance, both must of necessity be enforced. There is a principle of divine justice that demands retribution whenever sin is committed. Whether immediate or delayed, no one gets by in violating God's will without penalty! Some have the misconceived idea that because God doesn't respond immediately, they have "gotten away free." There is nothing further from the truth. Listen to the following excerpt from Psalm 50:21. "*These things hast thou done and I kept silent; thou thoughtest that I wast altogether as thou art, but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes.*" Also, there is the principle of divine mercy. This is the portion regarding the penalty against sin that we all like to think about: God withholding what we rightfully deserve as its penalty. When man knows that he is lost because of sin, he must also know of God's plan for rescue.

The sin of omission is probably more widely discussed than any other sin. Its mention in James 4:17 reads, *“therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”* Think of the sermons we have heard preached, the articles which have been written, and the discussions which have been made regarding the “sin of omission.” Most of us who preach or fill the roles of the eldership have a greater concern for our members over this on-going problem than any other. People who know how to live right but who don’t. People who know what they OUGHT to do but don’t. People of good intentions who make vain promises and commitments and say they will do better, but don’t. People, who in some instances, know God’s Word as well as you and me; people who sometimes give us the answers we come seeking for before we even ask the question, who make vain promises to straighten up and live right, but don’t. But also people who obviously either don’t know or don’t care that the graveyards are full of people with good intentions who obviously “just don’t!”

Sins of procrastination, putting off, pushing back of knowing to do good, but doeth it not has in many areas throughout our brotherhood paralyzed the work of the church. Leaders spending more and more time dealing with church problems, delinquent members, and inactivity but using less and less time in their focus to saving a lost world. Satan is placing our people in spiritual wheelchairs with handcuffs. But while we work to help these confused people to finally make up their minds if they’re going to take seriously this business of living for Christ, our time is consumed in helping these while an entire lost world never even gets the first chance for salvation!

All unrighteousness is also sin (1 John 5:17). There is no word in the entire English vocabulary that carries with it an uglier connotation than the word “sin.” In some circles of society there are those

who attempt to water it down or white wash it in an effort for us not to take it so seriously. All of a sudden, fornication is called cohabitation or free expressions of love. Adultery may be identified as having an affair or a mid-life crisis. Homosexuality is referred to as either being gay or lesbian. Pornography is now free expressions of art. Thievery is merely a necessity for existence. And murder, even though it may be premeditated acts of abortion to the taking of existing life is nothing but the elimination of a unnecessary nuisance. In our day we can address the sexual revolution in our schools openly and graphically, but we can't read our Bibles or pray. We are letting the dog in at night and letting the children out. We are living in a world of guided missiles, and misguided men. We are living in a world where the monkey has taken over the zoo. We are living in a world where everything in the American home is controlled by a switch except the children. But we also live in a world where the proclamation of God's Word is a matter of life and death. Any way you want to slice this pie, sin is still sin!

SIN CAUSES SEPARATION. *"Behold the Lord's hand is not short that he will not save, nor his ears dull that he cannot hear. But your sins have separated you from your God and your iniquities have hid his face from you that he cannot hear you"* (Isa. 59:1,2). There is no more despicable plight to man's life than loneliness and abandonment. It is easy to blame God, someone, or something for what we have done. But be assured, the distance between man and God is not because God is the one who moved. To the contrary, we cannot ultimately blame anyone but ourselves for the separation between God and us which may have occurred.

¹³Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts he any man. For every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin; and when sin is finished, it bringeth forth death [James 1:13-16].

One man wrote a letter to a preacher, which in substance said, "my yesterdays are paralyzing my todays." A picture in the newspaper showed a woman caught bringing in illegal jewels into the country. Her eyes were filled with tears, not because she was sorry for what she had done, but because she was caught!

It is truly sad to see the distance that man has travelled in his journey from God. Is man so gullible that he thinks this separation from God comes all at once? In most instances where people are distancing themselves farther and farther away from God, it is so progressively slow that they don't even detect what's happened. The progress seems to go as follows: sow a thought and reap an action; sow an action and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap a character; sow a character and reap a destiny.

SIN DEMANDS SALVATION. Divine justice demands a pay back for sin. With God's knowledge of man's departure came with it the obligation of a divine restitution. It is somewhat like the story of a little boy that had captured a cage of birds. As he walked along the street, a preacher noticed the boy and the birds. The preacher replied, "What are you going to do with the birds, son?" The boy replied, "I guess I'll play with them awhile." The preacher asked, "After you get through playing with them, what will you do then, son?" The boy said, "I guess I'll feed them to my cat." The preacher asked, "what

would you take for the birds, son?" The boy said, "but they're just field birds, preacher." The preacher asked again, "what would you take for the birds?" the boy said, "I guess \$2 would do." The preacher reached in his pocket, took out two \$1 bills and gave them to the boy. The preacher took the birds in the cage to a nearby field, opened the door, and set them free. It should sort of remind us of a battle going on between Satan for your soul and mine. The story continues that God asked Satan one day as God saw man captured in sin, "What are you doing with those people, Satan?" Satan replied, "I'm tempting them; teasing them; and torturing them" God asked, "What would it take to buy those people, Satan?" Satan responded, "Why, Lord, they're just people. They're not worth anything. They've sinned against you. They have disappointed you. And they have even blasphemed your name. They're not worth saving." God asked again, "What would you take for the people, Satan?" To which Satan replied, "Your Son. Your only Son. I'll take His life and His blood." And so God sent His only begotten Son into the world to give man a chance to be set free.

There was no easy way for God to make this sacrifice. Since the way of the transgressor is hard (Prov. 15:13), so also the way of the cross is hard. In Romans 8:31 are words of Paul that should put to rest any question, doubt, or reservation that anyone should have respecting what was done through the offering of Christ. *"He that spared not his son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not by him freely give us all things?"* God did not spare Jesus when he was born. Jesus was not born in the lap of luxury, but in a manger. He did not live, nor was educated in one of the large university cities of His time, but was brought up in an obscure village named Nazareth. He was not dressed in the finery of his time, but so far as we know may have possessed only

one garment to His name. He did not own property, have assets, invest in stocks and bonds, or have a savings account, but his ministry was financed by others. He was not spared physical hunger and thirst, nor spared of the pain and agony of Calvary. But through it all, there is one undeniable truth: if God had spared Jesus, He could not have saved us! It took Jesus dying for our sins that through this sacrifice, salvation is made possible in Him. Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:10, "*for the which cause I endure affliction for the elect's sake that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ unto eternal glory.*" There is no doubt about it. Putting it quite simply, our salvation, all of it, is dependent upon our being in Christ. OUTSIDE OF CHRIST, THERE CAN BE NO SALVATION!

III. I MUST GO!

There is no doubt that every one of us, without exception, can attribute our salvation to the training and teaching of someone else. It may have been a relative, a friend, a casual acquaintance, or an absolute stranger. It may have come from our homes, on our jobs, from our schools, or even from a favorite past time. But someone, somewhere, at some time had to be interested enough in us to teach us the truth! Paul instructed Timothy: "*the things which ye have heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men who shall be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim. 2:2). This is the way. The divine equation of the New Testament dispensation is God using His men with a saving Gospel to properly instruct the men of the world in returning to God. From the beginning of the church on Pentecost until now, it has been, and it is that way. God having the message, and God using men saved by that very message to instruct the lost as to how to find God.

The question is asked, "*and how shall they hear without a preacher*" (Rom. 10:15)? The answer, **THEY WON'T!** The question is asked, "*how can I understand except that some man should guide me*" [Acts 8:31]? The answer: **THEY WON'T!**

The church is the instrument through which God makes His wisdom known (Eph. 3:10-11). To once again reestablish that it is not merely the preacher's job, the elder's job, nor a minute few in the church's job to do the evangelizing and the soul winning. "**I**" **MUST GO**. It must return to a personal obligation of each and every member to do their part in the soul reaching and soul winning process. Most definitely, we must use every means possible in order to get the job done. Only heaven itself can possibly know the good that has been done and the souls that have been saved through the many channels the church has employed through the years. The Gospel by radio, television, film strip, video, and now, even on the World Wide Web, are all good and effective tools in this process. But, brethren, no matter how technical the world may become; no matter how advanced the technology may be; and no matter how overwhelmed we may be with our own ingenuity, there is still no more effective way to get the Gospel to the world than a faithful Christian sitting down with his Bible across from a lost person to communicate unto him God's will for their life.

We need to be asking in the church, how long has it been? How long has it been since **YOU** studied with someone who was lost? How long has it been since because of **YOU** someone was won to the Lord? How long has it been since **YOU** cared enough to overcome your fears and frustrations to learn how to do something you have never done before? How long has it been since **YOU** have visited with an erring brother or sister in an effort to restore them to faithful service? How long has it been since **YOU** called on anyone

deliberately in order to show concern and care for their condition — no matter what that condition might be? If there is anything that I am sure of, it is this: If the lost are to be won, and if the church is to grow, we must, all of us, work together, share the load, include once again the individual nature of Christianity that I MUST GO!

There is a poem that describes the very nature of the sinner seeking salvation and of our responsibilities as Christians in fulfilling God's plan in insuring that the message is delivered. The words are as follows:

Friends around me are seeking to find
 What the heart yearns for with sin under
 mind.
I know the secret; I know where this found,
 Only in pleasures of Jesus abound.
Jesus is all this world needs today
 As blindly they strive as sin darkens the way.
Oh, to pull back the dim curtain of night
 One look at Jesus and all will be light.

IV. MY GREATEST HINDRANCE

...is me! There is not a preacher, eldership, or membership among our brotherhood that's worth its salt that does not have a sincere concern over the on-going problem of inactivity within our own fellowship. It has been said that, "the church is made up of members: 10% who are willing to do all of the work and 90% who are willing to let them." The question, "what are we going to do?" reflects not only an apathy to deal with the problem but a lack of know how. It is somewhat like the man attempting to explain the problem in the church saying to another, "the problem we have is apathy and ignorance" to which is responded, "I don't know and I don't care!"

There is a statement that remarks, "the only thing that is to be done to allow the world to be lost is for good men to do nothing." How true. The hardest fear to overcome is my fear. The hardest problems to cope with in life are my problems. The most ineffective inabilities that one may encounter are my inabilities. And the most difficult door for me to pass through is my door. Once we are able to get past these barriers, isn't it amazing as to how many doors of opportunities God will open for us? We must continue to remind our people that in order for our lives to be made channels of blessing, "*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of love, and of power, and of a ready mind*" (2 Tim. 1:7). The doors of opportunity will open our way when we resolve that God is not so much seeking for people of ability as He is people of availability.

Conclusion:

There is no greater channel of blessing than to know the love of God; to experience the benefits of a transformed life; to be then used as stewards in God's service to communicate to others that same message which will save them as it did us; but also to overcome those barriers which hinder us. The wonder of how God has used man as an example, a messenger, and an instrument to accomplish God's divine will and objective is certainly a wonder. I would think that each of us should consider it the greatest compliment to our human existence for Almighty God to use us in some small way to do His will.

We are without excuse. Our attitude is somewhat like that of Moses in stepping out and assuming the God-given responsibilities which have been bestowed upon us. In Exodus chapters 3 and 4, God is calling Moses for the greatest work he would ever do. But the excuses Moses gives, some four in number, are

exactly those that people have used perpetually in not doing what God wants done. First, Moses asked the question, "Who am I?" which indicates a feeling of inadequacy and low self esteem. Second, "What shall I say?" which indicates that most people would prefer to say nothing rather than to say something. Third, "They will not believe me," which tells of our judgmental nature in really hoping that others are just not interested. (I am reminded of a statement made by Bro. Benny Stephens in a recent Fishers of Men Course: "We are not to be soil inspectors but seed sowers.") And fourth, "I am not eloquent of speech," which again lends itself to the notion that if I cannot speak with the tongue of an angel, I am excused.

There is one serious matter we have grossly overlooked. **GOD DOES NOT ACCEPT OUR EXCUSES!** As with Moses, so with us, He will not take no for an answer. As with Moses, so also with us, God's anger is kindled when we make our excuses, back off from our assignments, and hedge on our responsibilities. Let us rise to the occasion before us of allowing God to use us in whatever way He deems necessary to accomplish His will for our lives. It is only when our lives are used as channels of blessing for both God and our fellow man that the true purpose for which we are designed has been fulfilled!

Chapter 22

I Am The Vine

Glenn I. Hitchcock

Teaching by figures of speech was one of the Lord's favorite methods. By these narratives, true to natural life, he made his lessons understandable and because they were plain "*the common people heard him gladly*" (Mark 12:37). On the eve of his betrayal, Jesus taught about the vine and the branches in John 15:1-8. Countless millions have echoed the beautiful lines of this inspired teaching in song. Let us examine the truths contained in this majestic hymn.

*"I am the vine and ye are the branches:"
Bear precious fruit for Jesus Today;
Branches in Him no fruit ever bearing,
Jesus hath said, "He taketh away."*

*Now ye are clean thro' words I have spoken:
Living in Me, much fruit ye shall bear
Dwelling in you, My promise unbroken,
Glory in heaven with Me ye shall share*

*Yes, by your fruits the world is to know you,
Walking in love as children of day
Follow your Guide, He passeth before you,
Leading to realms of glorious day.*

Chorus

*I am the vine ye are the branches
I am the vine, be faithful and true;*

*Ask what ye will your prayer shall be granted,
The Father loved Me, so I have love you.*

Each stanza line of this song contains significant and sobering truths. Let us discover them:

“I Am The Vine And Ye Are The Branches” (Relationship)

Found in John 15:5, this great truth teaches the value of our rich relationship with our Savior. Christians (branches) are sustained through abiding in the Vine (Jesus). The Vine wonderfully abounds with sap bearing and nourishing many branches, which spread exceedingly. All of the saved partake of His root and fatness. This relationship is so spiritually vital that without the Vine (who bears in His shoots abundant life John 10:10; Romans 5:13-21; Hebrews 7:22-25; 2 Peter 1:11), the branch simply could not survive! Here is the most essential and blessed relationship of man — the True Vine.

It is of particular note that Jesus identifies himself as the Vine. This leaves absolutely no tolerance or room for substitutes! Our Lord never hinted nor intended that His identity as the *Vine* be circumvented! Jesus reminds us of His unmistakable identity in bringing life and access to the Father earlier in John 14:6. *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* When one seeks the wrong vine, he has truly missed a eternal opportunity to live forever.

It should be further noted that Jesus identifies God is the owner of the Vine. Jesus said, *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.”* The Father planted Christ Jesus in the world as the source of life and He is the only stem by which branches can be vitally united to God and through which they draw

their life. Here is the intimacy of the closest of relationships: between the Father (Husbandman), His Son (Vine), His saints (branches).

"Bear Precious Fruit For Jesus Today" (Responsibility)

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15:5b). This teaches an undeniable lesson in responsibility. Fruit never grows on the vine itself, but on the branches; neither do the branches produce fruit independently of the Vine. The Vine cannot bear fruit without the branches. The branches cannot live without the Vine. This responsibility to produce precious fruit for Jesus is conditioned. There must be the mutual abiding of the Vine and branches. No less than six times in our text Jesus used the expression *"in me."* If one is not in Christ he can never produce for God! Jesus added, *"for without me, ye can do nothing."* The relationship bears a responsibility. This abiding is accomplished through the power of the Word (Hebrews 4:12). Our Lord comments, *"Now ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3)* and a few verse later, in John 15:7. *"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."*

The Husbandman is the vinedresser or the One who owns, cultivates, prunes, and tends the Vine. As the proprietor and cultivator, God wills that the branches (because of their connection to the True Vine) bring forth fruit abundantly. By using the "Sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17), the Husbandman is able to cut off unfruitful branches and purges, or cleanses, the fruitful branch in order that it may bear more fruit.

When the obedient Christian sows the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11) in honest hearts, the seed will

produce only Christians (precious fruit). It is significant that this responsibility to produce fruit is styled as “precious.” This writer is fully aware that fruit-bearing includes more than soul-winning, but soul-winning must be viewed as a vital part of the fruit bearing process. More about fruit-bearing will be discussed later under “Living in Me Much Fruit Ye Shall Bear.”

Our view of souls must be as God’s — they are precious! The inspired words of the Holy Spirit are still very true (Matt. 16:26). *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* The very heart of God’s love for the souls of mankind is acknowledged in John 3:16: *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

What is our view of bearing fruit for Jesus? Do we view it as a responsibility of the preacher, elders, or visitation committee? What about personal responsibility? Of a truth, the preacher, the elders and/or committee can abide in Jesus for us! The Bible contains no doctrine of any vicarious abiding in Jesus! Every Christian has a personal responsibility to bring forth precious fruit (which includes soul-winning) for the Vine (Christ).

“Branches In Him No Fruit Ever Bearing” [Renegé]

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit...” The very worse thing to happen to any Christian (branch) is to simply quit or renege on their responsibility to be productive. Jesus locates the unproductive branch “in me” that is in Christ (John 15:2). So the branch (Christian) that reneges in his responsibility in production was actually in the Vine (Christ). This is

not a branch which was superficially attached, but was a Christian.

The tragedy of unproductive Christians is very real. These are they who have:

1. **Renounced their relationship to the Vine** (1 John 2:19). *"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."*
2. **They have reneged their responsibility to the Vine** (Heb. 6:4-6). *"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."*

But what is the consequence of the man who has reneged in the very face of the Vine? Let us consider the next point of the song.

Jesus Hath Said, "He Taketh Away" [Reckoning And Removal]

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away..." (John 15:2a). *"If a man abideth not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"* (John 15:6). The purpose of the branch is twofold: to abide in the Vine and to bear fruit. The faithless and fruitless person in Christ is to be cut off (severed) from the True Vine. They will be cast forth, and withered. Of course, only the branch that has first been alive can become withered. Hence, the faithless and fruitless Christian (branch) will be

cut off finally and cast into hell. Paul, in his figure of the body and its members, indicates this severing in Galatians 5:4; *“Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace.”* The reckoning and the removal will take place at the end of time when Christ *“...shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; ⁴²and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”* (Matt. 13:41-42).

This reckoning and removal is individual and personal in scope. Each Christian and every man shall be present to give an account of their production or lack of production in this life (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). Truly, the relationship we have to the Christ (Vine) is vital and the responsibility to be productive for the Master is a charge that the Christian (branch) must regard with the greatest of care.

“Now Ye Are Clean Thro’ Words I Have Spoken” [Regeneration]

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). Here is regeneration. The Christians were “cleansed” from past sins, yet need continuous “cleansing” to keep them justified. Christians require regular pruning in order to keep their fruit-bearing at the highest efficiency, and yet, by being faithful followers of the Lord, we can enjoy His approval as well as the Father’s.

This cleansing is effected through the teaching of and obedience to the inspired Word (Romans 10:17; John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9-10; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21). This same Word of the Lord is God’s prescription to insure our justification (past), sanctification (present), and our glorification (future). James tells of the ability of the Word to save,

both now and in the future. *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls"* (James 1:21). The continual cleansing of regeneration occurs, not from just the audible hearing of the Word, but the active heeding and obeying of truth. *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves"* (James 1:22).

"Living In Me, Much Fruit Ye Shall Bear" [Robust]

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). Christians who sing "I am the Vine" must understand how they are to glorify God by bearing fruit. Every owner of a vineyard is delighted when his ripe and robust vines produce good fruit abundantly. Likewise, God is honored when He sees Christians bearing spiritual fruit in abundance. Only by bearing fruit can we become true branches to the Vine. The Lord said, *"...so shall ye be my disciples."*

The late and lamented brother Guy N. Woods states;

Fruit-bearing is proof of faithful discipleship; hence, when the disciples of the Lord bear fruit, they reflect honor not only on their Saviour but upon him who sent him into the world. Moreover, they demonstrate that they are indeed faithful disciples when they thus earnestly and effectively carry out his will. Fruit-bearing includes every activity of the Christian; it includes, but is not limited to acts of love and Christian charity; it embraces every act which Jesus endorses and which he

would, if present do, but not being present, must depend on his followers to do for him.¹

What constitutes a robust Christian (branch) today? The answer: His connection to the Vine “in me.” He must possess the right relationship to the Vine (John 15:5). He must assume his responsibility in view of the blessings received through the Vine (John 15:5b). He must receive and obey the oracles of the Lord in order to receive continual regeneration (cleansing) (John 15:3). He must have the disposition of the apostle Paul who wrote the inspired words of 1 Corinthians 15:58: *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”* Dear reader, are you a robust Christian?

“Dwelling In You, My Promise Unbroken” [Reassurance]

A “promise” is a pledge, a ground for expectation. It is to suggest beforehand. Man is always making promises; sometimes he keeps them and sometimes he does not. Man cannot always keep his promises. In contrast to man, the Lord has made promises and they are said to be precious (2 Peter 1:3-4).

³*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:
⁴Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and **precious promises**: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (Emphasis GIH).*

Our Lord is not slack concerning his promises (2 Peter 3:9).

Every Christian can take comfort in the fact that the presence of the branch in the Vine is a presence that is reassuring and motivating. Deity has never broken nor failed on any promise in providing for and protecting the faithful. As long as we abide in the Vine we are assured of cleansing (John 15:3). We have the opportunity to bear fruit as a promise (John 15:4-5, 11) and we are assured that God listens to our petitions (John 15:7). Beyond this parable, the Christian enjoys all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3). In Hebrews 13:5 the faithful, fruit-producing Christian is assured: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*" (Emphasis GIH).

"Glory In Heaven With Me Ye Shall Share" [Reward]

The greatest reward of all the ages, heaven, awaits the faithful and fruitful Christian. It is a promise and reward that has been reserved (1 Peter 1:3-5).

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

God is there to personally wipe away all tears (Rev. 7:17; 21:4). Christ is there to impart peace and rest (Matt. 11:28-30; John 14:3).

A very important fact — our loved ones are there! Those little ones who died in infancy (Matt. 18:2-3). Loved ones who never breathed a painless breath, whose fevered brows we cooled, and hands held, through the interminable nights — no more pain over there! How our hearts ache with grief when we say good bye, but we shall meet them again! Eternal life is there! (1 Peter 5:10-11). Consider the following poem by James Small:

Our Heavenly Home

“There’s a home in the skies,
Where the weary will rest,
A glorious home in the ‘Land of the Blest.’
There tears will be wiped
From the sorrowful eye,
And the broken in heart will forget to sigh.
From earth—such a barren and desolate waste,
We may long to that happier home to haste.
For though this planet seems lovely and gay,
Like shadows, its pleasures are passing away.
They linger not here, but away to the skies,
Like the offering of youth in the morning they
rise.
The heart, once so light, is now burdened with
grief,
And vainly it looks to the world for relief.
It may find in the smile of a loved one a charm
That may, for a season, its sorrows disarm,
But it knows that even love must lie cold in the
grave,
And its pleasures be lost in affliction’s dark
wave.

But, O, there's a home of eternal delight,
 Where smiles on the faces of cherubims
 bright,
 Where the angel of beauty, immortally bright,
 Is floating forever on pinions of light.
 No pestilence rides on the wings of the air,
 No waves of affliction or sorrow are there;
 In darkness that region shall never be furled,
 For the smile of the Lord is the Light of that
 world."

—James Small—

**"Yes, By Your Fruits The World Is To Know You,
 Walking In Love As Children Of Day"
 [Reputation]**

Jesus said "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13: 34-35). In the sermon on the mount, Jesus affirmed a good reputation:

¹⁴Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven [Matt. 5:14-16].

The reputation and life of the Christian simply cannot be hidden! Christians have a positive reputation to uphold. In Matthew 7:16 we read, "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Paul reminds Christians of their reputation as predicated on their relationship

to the Father and the Christ: *“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; ²And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour”* (Eph. 5:1-2).

What are the ingredients of a faithful, fruit-producing reputation? Whenever Christians abide in the Vine their fruits will be evident in at least three areas:

1. Their Life is constant (Gal. 2:20).
2. Their Language is constant (Col. 4:6).
3. Their Love is constant (John 13:34-35; 1 Cor. 13:ff).

“Follow Your Guide, He Passeth Before You” [Response]

²³*“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. ²⁴For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it”* [Luke 9:23-24]. Following Jesus as our guide requires an active response. In our response to Him, we are either for Him or against Him (Matt. 12:30). *“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”* The Christian must understand that there is no neutral position with Jesus and following Him. The apostle John reminded the church of Laodicea of the consequences of attempting to assume a neutral position:

¹⁴*And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; ¹⁵I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither*

cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked [Rev. 3:14-17].

"Leading To Realms Of Glorious Day" (Rest)

In following Jesus, the Christian has an intended destination in his sight. It is that realm of glorious rest. Rest from all of our labors and pain. Here is rest that comes when man completes his work as God did [Heb. 4:10-11]. *"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. ¹¹Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."* This is the rest that will follow the faithful fruit-bearing Christian after he pillows his head in the sleep of death [Rev. 14:13]. *"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."*

The eternal rest of heaven will be dependent upon how we finish the race in following Jesus. *⁷"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"* [2 Tim 4:7-8]. May our robust lives in Him find us:

1. Still Serving (Matt. 6:24),
2. Still Shining (Matt. 5:16-17),
3. Still Sacrificing (Rom. 12:1-2).

Conclusion

As we conclude this immortal song of instruction and praise, we close with some salient reminders from the chorus. These reminders serve as a review of the stanza study:

1. "I am the vine ye are the branches," reminds Christians of our Partnership with Jesus.
2. "I am the vine, be faithful and true," reminds Christians of our Productivity for Jesus.
3. "Ask what ye will your prayer shall be granted," reminds Christians of His Providence for the faithful and fruitful.
4. "The Father loved Me, so I have love you," reminds Christians of Jesus' unfailing Promise.
May God help us to have a greater appreciation for the hymns of Zion.

END NOTES

¹Woods, Guy N., *Gospel Advocate Commentary on John*, p. 325; c. 1981; Nashville, TN. 37202

Chapter 23

Ten Thousand Angels

Kent Bailey

The importance of the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is clearly set forth in the scriptures. One cannot omit the singing of such and at the same time render acceptable worship unto the Lord [Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; John 4:23-24]. The case being that singing constitutes teaching, one thus teaches the truth when we sing the message of Christ and Salvation.

One of the great songs written about the final hours of the personal ministry of Christ is **Ten Thousand Angels**. In the singing of the words of this great song, we teach and are taught the truth with regards to Christ and the Scheme of Redemption. We note:

1. The rejection and arrest of our Lord.
2. The mockery of an alleged trial.
3. The crucifixion, suffering, the shedding of blood, and the horrible death suffered by Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten Son of God that humanity may have the opportunity to be brought back to God, being reconciled in one body the church [Eph. 2:11-18].

In the singing of this song we note the wondrous scenes of Calvary:

At Calvary

At Calvary, God, dressed in crimson garments, courted our love. There, Christ put away sin by sacrificing himself, redeeming man from death unto life, canceling man's death of judicial obligation by an equivalent which offered legal satisfaction — voluntary passing under death's dreadful shadow, though owing the law no debt.

There, with the power to smite his enemies with a thunderbolt, he elected to die on a cross. There, God's eternal attributes emptied their vials of burning wrath upon the sinless Sacrifice in agony enough to make the earth shudder, the sun in darkness hide, the spheres go wailing along their eternal circuits. There, God, the Father of the clouds [Job 38:28] permitted him to thirst who came to remove the moral thirst of mankind.

There, God, who clothes the valley with corn and feeds the young ravens [Psalm 65:13], left him naked under the darkening clouds and answered not his cry. No wonder the heavens went black and the sun withdrew its light, and the earth reeled in an unsteady course, as in astonishment that love so sweet, so vast, should meet a doom so fearful.

No wonder all the people came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, beholding the incarnate rejected, crucified, tortured; beholding the way in which men treat the embodied perfection of virtue, and then smote their breasts and returned sorrowing [Luke 23:48]. No wonder the rocks rent — rocks less hard than men's hearts that day. Earth has no darker sin, history no

blackest page, humanity no fouler spot, than that of the Savior's crucifixion.

Christ retraced the way of man's retreat, opened the way to the tree of life, sheathed the sword of justice behind the blood-drenched Mercy Seat. Then, God's perfections opened wide their arms repentant sinners to receive!

As the rays of glory emanating from Christ find focus in Calvary, so at Calvary the history of human guilt culminates, the purposes of divine love become intelligible, the mysteries of prophecy are unravelled, the majesty of the law is vindicated, the great problem of human redemption is solved.

At Calvary, Satan's armor is removed, the fires of the law extinguished, the penal claims of God against us exhausted, every righteous judgement of God perfectly met, the serpent's head bruised, the door of heaven opened, the fountain of Salvation unsealed, the world stripped of its charms, shadows of death dispelled, the darkness of eternity irradiated, the death of sin made certain, our death sentence revoked, our condemnation lifted.¹

In noting carefully the words of the song *Ten Thousand Angels* we note the great scriptural truths implicitly taught in the New Testament: "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). The term *mystery* [*moostayreeon*] in this particular context refers to that which once was hidden but now has been revealed. Such is a reference to God's Scheme of Redemption.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

⁹Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: ¹¹Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. ¹²Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into (1 Peter 1:9-12).

This scheme of redemption is referred to as the **Mystery of Godliness** in that such is a revealed mystery that is accepted and held by godliness, reverence, or respect. Such is a great mystery because:

I. Christ Was Manifest In The Flesh

The term *manifest* (*faneroo*) carries with it the thought of unveiling. Such implies the incarnation of Christ. John was inspired of God to write:

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1:1-4).

John also stated:

¹⁹And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? ²⁰And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. ²¹And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. ²²Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? ²³He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. ²⁴And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. ²⁵And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? ²⁶John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; ²⁷He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. ²⁸These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. ²⁹The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. ³⁰This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. ³¹And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. ³²And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. ³³And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and

remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. ³⁴And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God (John 1:19-34).

Concerning the incarnation of Christ, the Apostle Paul was inspired of the Holy Spirit to write:

⁵Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:5-11).

In these particular passages we note that God, the eternal Word — the second member of the Godhead, without ceasing to be God, took upon himself human flesh, i.e., he became (or was made) flesh (John 1:14). Such necessitates that Christ was and is one person possessing two natures — both divine and human (Rom. 1:3-4; 9:5; Matt. 22:41-46).

While indeed Christ had two natures, he was not and is not two persons. At his conception he did not acquire a personality, for he was already a person. Rather, he gained a new nature. He never used the terms “we” or “us” in reference to his person. He

always used "I" or "me" because of the singular nature of his being. Indeed, Christ did address the Father (which implies two separate persons within the Godhead) and the Father could reply to the Son. There is no indication at all that the divine nature of Christ ever carried on a verbal communication with his human nature. Such would have not been a result of the incarnation at all.

Christ was one person with two different kinds of consciousness. He had both a divine and a human consciousness, and he was indeed aware of it (John 10:30; 19:28). In the former he could say, "*I and my Father are one*" (John 10:30, 19:28). In the latter he could state, "*I thirst*" (John 19:28).

In consideration of the incarnation of Christ, let us remember that the two natures of Christ were not altered by the person of Christ. God the Father is immutable, i.e., he does not change in his character (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17). Also, Christ, being Deity, is immutable as well (Heb. 13:8). While certainly His incarnation placed a limitation upon the independent exercise of his Deity, he nonetheless maintained such, or else he could not be incarnate as both God and man.

But why did God the eternal Word, the second member of the Godhead, become incarnate, taking on human flesh becoming the only-begotten Son of God? Why was it necessary to experience human suffering, rejection and finally die the shameful death on the old rugged cross?

Christ came into this world incarnate as both God and humanity in order that he would be qualified to be a mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). In Christ, one sees the power of God demonstrated, not only in the miracles that confirmed his Deity; but also in the gospel that makes one free from sin. Our Lord not only told individuals who and what God was and is; but he also demonstrated to the degree of ultimate

perfection which none, except he, the incarnate God/man could accomplish. Jesus became a man that he might take away sin. Sin is the greatest curse of humanity. It ruins the lives of men and makes them unfit for heaven. Jesus was manifested to take away sin (1 John 3:5). He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He saves us from the power of sin by delivering us from the kingdom of darkness and translating us into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). He saves us from the pollution of sin by washing us in his precious blood (Rev. 1:5). He saves us from the penalty of sin by suffering that penalty in his own body and in our place. The law demanded the sinner die; the wages of sin is death, but Jesus died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3), and we are justified by his blood (Rom. 5:9). He saves us from the presence of sin when he comes for us the second time without sin unto Salvation² (Heb. 9:28).

Our Lord indeed had to become incarnate to both destroy the works of the Devil and establish his church. How could Jesus Christ have destroyed the works of Satan without the shedding of his precious blood? How could he have triumphed over death by not first partaking of such to purchase the church, redeeming those constituting such from all iniquity and purify unto himself a people for his own possession (Heb. 2:14-15; Acts 20:28; Titus 2:11-14)? In order to accomplish such, he first had to become a man while maintaining his Deity. Such was accomplished by his incarnation. This incarnation of Christ was not changed by his death, burial, resurrection and ascension, and will remain unaltered throughout all eternity.

II. Christ Was Justified In The Spirit

Not only was Christ manifest in the flesh, he was justified in the Spirit. By the term *justify* (*dikahyoo*),

we refer to declaring to be right. Not only did Jesus Christ become incarnate in human flesh, suffering and dying for sinful humanity; he also was declared or justified as the Son of God by the miracles he performed (John 20:30-31).

The ultimate proof of the Deity of Christ was his resurrection from death (Rom. 1:1-4). On the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, the Apostle Peter gave evidence that Christ conquered death by his physical bodily resurrection (Acts 2:22-32), as did also the Apostle Paul declare such to be an essential component of the facts regarding the gospel by which we are saved if we keep in memory that taught to us (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

As the incarnation of Christ, the justification — the divine proof of the Deity of Christ is an essential component in God's Scheme of Redemption! The incarnation would have been without purpose or meaning were it not for the resurrection of Christ.

III. Christ Was Seen of Angels

Not only was Christ manifest in the flesh and justified in the Spirit; he was also seen of angels. When we give careful consideration to the person and work of Christ, we will note just how closely the work of angels is related to Christ and the Scheme of Redemption. We note the mention of angels regarding the incarnation of Christ:

⁵For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? ⁶And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. ⁷And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels

spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. ⁸But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. ⁹Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (Heb. 1:5-9)

In our Lord's earthly ministry we note angels at his birth (Luke 2:8-13); following the Temptation (Matt. 4:11); and in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43). In the study of the gospel records of the life of Christ we note that angels announced our Lord's resurrection and ascension and will also accompany him at his second coming (Jude 14).

IV. Christ Was Preached Among The Nations

In addition to being seen of angels, Jesus Christ was preached among the nations. We find that such was required by the Lord himself: "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:15-16). When the Great Commission was executed upon the establishment of the church of Christ on Pentecost in Acts 2, we note that the church during the first century so obeyed this divine instruction given them:

¹³But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ¹⁵having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances;

for to make in himself of twain one man, so making peace; ¹⁶And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (Eph. 2:13-16).

Before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70, the Apostle Paul was inspired to write that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven (Col. 1:23).

There is a great need in our own day for the pure gospel of Christ to be faithfully sounded forth with clear distinction and without compromise. False teachers both within and without the church are attacking the truth as never before! Before sinners can be saved there are facts that must be believed and conditions obeyed. May God raise up men with the courage of conviction and the love of truth to preach such a message. The Salvation of the lost as well as our hope of eternal life is contingent upon such.

V. Christ Was Believed On In The World

In spite of the roaring tornado of sin, because Christ was preached among the nations, our Lord was believed on in the world. Such occurs when the gospel comes in contact with good and honest hearts (Luke 8:11-15). The type of faith that brings Salvation, however, does not stand alone (James 2:14-26). The New Testament makes such abundantly clear that the act of believing, although is essential, is not sufficient for Salvation. Such does not by itself bring Salvation, but rather gives one the authority to become a child of God (John 1:12).

When one studies the New Testament concerning passages relative to Salvation from past alien sins, God's truth demands that one's faith in Christ (John

8:24] be followed by personal repentance from sin (Acts 17:30), confession of Christ (Rom. 10:10) and baptism for the remission of sins to be added to the church (Acts 2:38-47). In the uncompromising and plain preaching of the gospel of Christ, there were those in the first century as there are those today who will not only believe that truth presented to them; but also obey the conditions of pardon as stipulated by Christ in order that they may receive divine forgiveness and be added to God's sphere of Salvation, the New Testament church.

VI. Christ Was Received Up Into Glory

Jesus Christ, having been manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, was also received up into glory. Such was essential as a component of God's Scheme of Redemption. We note such to be the case because of two important reasons:

First, Acts 2:22-32 indicates such to be a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies as inspired by the Holy Spirit and stated by David. If such did not take place, those Old Testament prophecies would have gone unfulfilled and God's plan to redeem mankind would have been thwarted.

Second, While the blood of Christ was shed to purchase the church (Acts 20:28), such was neither set up during the personal earthly ministry, nor immediately following his bodily resurrection during the intervening time prior to his ascension (Matt. 16:13-19; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:1-8). Daniel 7:13-14, in prophecy, pictures Christ our Lord returning to God the Father, and upon his return in triumph to heaven, receive the blood purchased church, his kingdom. The inspired writer of Hebrews, in chapter one verse eight, declares such prophecy to be fulfilled in picturing God the eternal Father, in view of his ascending

only-begotten Son, declaring: Thy throne! Thy scepter! Thy kingdom! In noting the inspired writings of both Luke and Paul, we ascertain the return of our Lord to glory serving as evidence that He will come again some day (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:24-26).

As we sing the great song entitled **Ten Thousand Angels** may we always remember that such a song not only declares the important work of angels in connection with Christ's earthly ministry, but also encompasses implicit teaching regarding the person of the incarnate Christ in God's Scheme of Redemption.

END NOTES

¹Allen Webster, "At Calvary," House To House/Heart To Heart (Church of Christ, Jacksonville, AL: Vol. 4 Number 1), p.6.

²Roy H. Lanier, Sr., The Timeless Trinity, (Roy H. Lanier, Sr., Denver, CO: 1974) pp. 156-253.

Chapter 24

I Know Whom I Have Believed

2 Tim. 1:7-13; 1 John 2:3-6

Gary Colley

It is an honor and pleasure to again have a part in this lectureship program and to be associated with the great membership at Garfield Heights! Our fellowship through the years has been sweet and rewarding. My sincere thanks to the elders who oversee this good work, and to brother Charles Blair, to whom has been given the responsibility of directing this lectureship, for all their continued faithful labors. We continue to see this lectureship book being used over our brotherhood. This year's theme "Sing Unto the Lord" will, no doubt, serve well to bring our steps into cadence with the teaching and desires of the Lord of Glory.

Introduction

How beautiful is the song of faith, joy, and hope, written by El Nathan and James McGranaham, "I Know Whom I Have Believed!" These song writers were no doubt closely acquainted and fell in love with the writing of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:1-2. Though Paul had at one time believed the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and walked obediently in the Jewish religion (Gal. 1:13-16), all the while disbelieving and thinking Jesus Christ to be an imposter, he was convinced on the Damascus Road of the resurrection of Christ. After being baptized into Christ (Acts

22:16], he preached Him as the prophesied Messiah and Saviour of the world. He now with unfailing and unfaltering confidence, confesses in his life and work the Almighty God in Heaven and His blessed Son, Jesus Christ.

I Know Whom I Have Believed

Faithful Christians have thrilled to sing this great song for almost a century of earthly time. Some slight changes have been made in the song to correct some errors. Its meaningful words now correctly say, in harmony with the Scriptures:

I know not why God's wondrous grace
To me He hath made known,
Nor why unworthy – Christ in love
Redeemed me for His own.

I know just how this saving faith
To me He did impart,
And how believing in His Word
Wrought peace within my heart.

I know not what of good or ill
May be reserved for me,
Of weary ways or golden days,
Before His face I see.

I know not when my Lord may come,
At night or noontide fair,
Nor will I walk the vale with Him,
But 'meet Him in the air,'

Chorus:

But 'I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able

To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day.'

In Whom Do We Believe?

Some in our world think it does not matter, whether we believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, or in one who is called "the force," or even in one or more of a multitude of idolatrous gods, known by a hundred different names! The Bible however, makes it abundantly clear that the message of Truth delivered by the Holy Spirit must be believed, as well as teaching us the necessity of believing and obeying the central subject of that Holy Message, Jesus Christ, the Son of God [1 Cor. 15:1-3]. For one to truly believe in God, he or she must believe in Jesus Who shows us the Father [John 14:6-7].

God's Wondrous Grace

We should all rejoice that we have had made known to us the wondrous grace of God! Paul implies to the Ephesian church that if one is saved from sin at all, it will be by the grace of God [Eph. 2:5,8-10]! He also says to the Hebrews, "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man*" [Heb. 2:9]. God indeed loved the lost and dying world [John 3:16-17]. His grace is His unmerited favor, His never dying love and pity toward fallen man! We will never be able to fathom the depth of God's grace, nor know why to us "He hath made known!" We may never understand the why, as the song writer says, "Nor why unworthy - Christ in love Redeemed me for His own." Paul again says, "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared*

to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). Not understanding the why, does not mean we cannot appropriate God's grace through His Son to our enjoyment and salvation (Heb. 5:8-9)!

Believing In His Word

The all-sufficient Word of God is the medium through which the Holy Spirit convicts, converts, and sanctifies the soul of man (John 16:7,13; Acts 2:36-38; Rom. 3:1-2,14). Paul said that the Word of God *"is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb. 4:12). Also he says it *"thoroughly furnishes unto all good works"* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). He further states this is the "divine power" (Rom. 1:16-17) through which God *"hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness"* (2 Peter 1:3). The Psalmist says it is *"a light unto our pathway"* (Psalm 119:105), and when opened and studied it will give man the understanding of God's blessings (Psalm 119:130). The Holy Spirit does not convict, convert, sanctify, or enable any today in a direct, immediate, mysterious manner. Obedient souls are caused to sing of *"how believing in His Word, [God] wrought peace within my heart."*

God's Providence

How wonderful is the providence of God, to protect, provide, and care for His people. These special blessings can be seen in the Old and New Testaments! Though we delight in the stated fact in the Bible that He cares for all in the world, even as He

does the birds and lilies of the field (Matt. 6:25-30), many forget about His daily blessings! Many are not aware of or even forget, that He is “*not willing that any should perish*” (2 Peter 3:9). We know in humble and faithful obedience, we can depend on Him.

The song writer says, “I know not what of good or ill may be reserved for me, Of weary ways or golden days, Before His face I see... But I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I’ve committed unto Him against that day.” All will be judged by the Word of God (John 12:48). But by trusting in His promises and providence, we know He will take care of us, even after this life! With Jesus as our Shepherd, we are assured, “*Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life; And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever*” (Psa. 23:6; John 14:1-6).

The Second Coming Of Christ

This song truthfully records, “I know not when my Lord may come, at night or noon-day fair, Nor will I walk the vale with Him, But ‘meet Him in the air’.”

Paul makes clear that the Lord will not touch the earth again, but that His saints, both living and dead, shall go to meet Him in the clouds (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Many have desired to know, and some want to make others believe that they know, when the Lord will come. They are called false prophets in the Bible! The Lord will not come when any man is expecting Him (Matt. 24:36-39,44)! No one will be expecting Him when He comes (Luke 12:40). Like a thief comes suddenly and unexpectedly, so shall Christ come (1 Thess. 5:1-3). But we are assured that “*every eye shall see him*” (Rev. 1:7). When Jesus comes is when Paul expected to receive his eternal reward (2 Tim. 4:6-8). He will call forth all the dead from their graves (John 5:28-29). Hence, we do not know whether we

“will walk the vale with him” or be living or dead when He comes to own the righteous.

Every Tongue Will Confess

It has been correctly stated that there will be no infidels in Hell! The New Testament clearly declares, that though some unbelievers will reject Him here, they will all bow their knee and confess His name before eternity begins! We may, in joy of heart, bow during our life-time here and confess Him before men unto our salvation (Matt. 20:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10). But, if we refuse to confess Him here, we will in sorrow and pain still make that confession before entering into eternal destruction (Phil. 2:9-16). Sadly, it will be too late then to affect our salvation (2 Cor. 6:2)! The Scriptures also affirm that Jesus, the King of Glory, will be known and acknowledged of all in eternity, to be *“the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords”* (1 Tim. 6:15). How much better to say with Paul while in this life, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I’ve committed unto Him against that day.”

Signs And Miracles Confirm Him

That all might come, as Paul did, to know and believe in Him as the Saviour of the world, actually was the object of all miracles of our Lord (John 3:1-2; 20:30-31). The close reading and study of the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John will bring faith to the heart of the honest and good heart (Luke 8:11-14). Jesus was and is the miracle working, wonder working, powerful, Son of God, who came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). The miracles have now been removed, having served their purpose to bring us, through the chosen apostles, the

“perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25; 1 Cor. 13:8-10). Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all who will obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9). He is able, ready, and willing to save all who will answer His invitation (Matt. 11:28-30; 28,18-20).

Jesus Now Reigns In Heaven

Jesus taught the evil scribes and Pharisees, early in His Personal ministry on earth, *“I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and whither I go, ye cannot come”* (John 8:21). Though they claimed to believe in God, their rejection of God’s Son showed they were lost in their rebellion and unbelief! They did not believe what their own prophets had said; nor in Jesus the Messiah who fulfilled every prophesy to the fullest degree (Luke 24:44). In John 8:24 He stated, *“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.”* He has reigned in Heaven since His ascension to the right hand of God, and will remain there until His second coming to judge the world (Acts 2:32-33). Unless we know Him, in whom we have believed, we too shall die in our sins (Rev. 14:13). Paul was so thoroughly convinced that Jesus was the Christ, the only Savior of the world, he preached it the rest of his earthly life. And, so must we be convinced to be saved and preach the Word of hope to others (2 Tim. 4:1-4)! Paul, in the devotion of his life to live for Christ, said, *“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”* (Phil. 1:21). And, again in the Phillipian letter he said, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Phil. 4:13).

Whom Do Men Say That I Am?

After about three years of diligent teaching, our Lord asked his own disciples whom men said they

believed He was. This was asked by Jesus because of its great importance! And they answered, "*Some say thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.*" This must have been very disappointing to our Lord! And also, He then addressed the question concerning His identity to His closest disciples, whom He had taught so diligently, and who had seen His mighty works. Simon Peter quickly answered, evidently for all the disciples, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*" (Matt. 16:13-16). Upon this confession, Jesus announced that this was the bed-rock foundation upon which He would build His church! Paul later affirmed this fact to be true in saying, "*For no other foundation can no man lay than that which is which is Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor. 3:11).

Faith, The Foundation Of Hope

In the Hebrew letter we learn that "*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (Heb. 11:1). Thus the sustaining power of faith is impressed on our minds as that basic principle upon which we will be saved. But further, in this same chapter Paul states, "*But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*" (Heb. 11:6). Every man must be sure that his faith is his faith! Since saving faith comes by hearing and obeying the Gospel, we dare not forget the foundation of our anchoring hope (Cf. Rom. 10:17; Mark 16:15-16)! This was the thought of Paul and the song writers who wrote our beautiful song of devotion, "I Know Whom I Have Believed!"

Let Our Hearts Sing

Singing about our faith has always been important to the people of God! Throughout the Bible, God's people have always sung to express their innermost faith and feelings toward their Creator. We even read of God instructing Moses to write a song and teach it to the children of Israel (Deut. 31:19-30). David, Asaph, and others wrote at least one hundred and fifty songs recorded in the book of Psalms. Likewise, Christians know it is one of the five avenues through which God has ordained and commanded in the New Testament for His children to approach the Heavenly throne. In addition to speaking one to another with our songs, we are to pray, partake of the Lord's table, and give on every first day of the week. These constitute the five acts of New Testament worship.

By the means of singing, Christians pour out their heartfelt feelings to God, while gaining edification and strength for themselves. In singing, we express love, honor, adoration, and devotion to a gracious and loving Heavenly Father. It is very rewarding when we know in whom we have believed!

With The Spirit And The Understanding

Paul gave our proper course for worship. He said, "*What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also*" (1 Cor. 14:15). We are then assured, by Jesus the Son of God and by the inspired apostle Paul, that the singing prescribed is in the proper spirit (attitude), understanding (in order to teach), and according to the Truth revealed by the Holy Spirit, will please God (John 4:24; Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16-17). Hence we must observe that just any song we

may choose will not necessarily please our God! They must be songs in which the Holy Spirit's Truth has been declared!

In Truth

Concerning the "all truth" in which acceptable worship is to be offered, the New Testament alone declares all Truth [John 16:13]. Simply, but thoroughly, it teaches what Christians are to do musically...sing! One may read for themselves every passage in the New Testament ("all truth") on the music to be offered in worship to God, and it is always vocal, never instrumental [Matt. 26:30; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; James 5:13; Heb. 13:15].

Specific Kind Of Songs

As Paul states, even our songs must consist of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19). Though folk songs, or songs of patriotism, nationalism, or localism may be appealing to us, they are not to be used in worship since we have no reason to believe they are appealing to God! God, knowing his creature, knew our need for singing to bring His church to unity and closeness of mind. Through this means, He gives the faithful worshipper peace of mind, sympathy toward the lost, and enriching fellow-feelings for all members of the body. Nothing draws our minds closer to the hope which we have in Christ more than singing!

Heaven is opened as we sing concerning our mansion in the city of God. It is a city for which we look and long for like our father Abraham, who believed in God, and "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). It stirs our faith to a high peak when we think

of ourselves walking the street of gold and drinking of the water of life eternally [Rev. 22:14].

Singing — Great Power

Yes, singing has great power in our lives, just as is every command of God faithfully obeyed! Until recently, and we are convinced even then only out of desperation for those who want to impose the instrumental music with singing unto the worship of the Lord, none have questioned that singing is a divine command. We need to be reminded often of at least five good reasons why churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16) do not use mechanical instruments in worship:

1. It violates the law of faith (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17).

2. It violates the law of worship (John 4:24; Matt. 15:9).

3. It was not commanded nor used by the apostles who revealed all truth to men (John 16:7; 13; 2 Peter 1:3).

4. It was never used by the primitive church of Christ (Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42).

5. It is not included by the word *psallo*, or else every worshiper would have had to sing and play to please God! And if so, Paul and Silas who sang praises while in prison, at midnight, committed sin [Acts 16:25]! No one should draw such an unfounded conclusion.

Conclusion

The words of this wonderful, highly expressive song, exhort all to put their trust or confidence in God! He does not forget His servants, and neither should His servants forget Him or His promises! If your faith is not as strong as it once was in God, why not resurrect that dead faith today? We must be

willing to obey Him in whom we depend and work daily in His kingdom (Matt. 6:33; 1 Cor. 15:58). Do you know the One in whom so many have believed and trusted for their salvation? Would you this day begin to follow Him? Remember His loving invitation (Matt. 11:28-30). Never forget His promise to the faithful (Rev. 22:14).

We hope and pray that all who read these words will make their preparation, through obedience, for the time when the Lord will come to own and crown His righteous people.

