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## "Christ, Our . . ."

*Joel Portman*

Holy Scripture presents Christ in His infinite sufficiency to supply all that His people require. The Holy Spirit is thus fulfilling the purpose for which He was sent, as in John 16:14, the Lord says to His disciples, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Let us notice some relevant expressions where He is presented as the One in whom all our blessings reside and in whom all our needs are met.

### "Christ, our Passover" 1 Corinthians 5:7 Sanctity Required

In this section of the first epistle to Corinth, Paul deals with the sad issue of sin arising in a local assembly. Even more sadly, the attitude of that assembly was to ignore and tolerate it without judging the offender. Toleration of sin may be the attitude of the unbelieving world, but it can never be that of believers individually nor of an assembly gathered to the Lord's name. Godly order maintained righteously must be the norm in God's assembly. This toleration of sin was possibly the result of their failure to separate themselves from the idol's temple (ch. 10), for continual involvement, however slight, in an activity and association that tolerates such behavior, will inevitably affect believers as well. What was true in their lives is also true in ours. Idol's temples, per se, may not exist in our society, but there are many environments and activities that a believer might become involved in that will cause deterioration in one's sensitivity to sin that is offensive to God. Such toleration of this kind of sin among them indicated a lower spiritual and moral state than should ever exist among a company of believers.

Paul, in his apostolic authority, has already judged the sin (v. 3) and now calls on the assembly to judge that sin as well (v. 4-5) in their fellowship with him in this matter. He then reminds them that the small amount of leaven in a mass of dough would eventually cause all of it to be leavened; sin that is tolerated and not acknowledged among believers will also eventually cause all to be contaminated by it and to fall under

God's judgment. What one person may practice, if allowed to continue, will cause others to follow the same example and also fall into sin. Leaven, speaking of evil in its spreading contamination, has the potential to affect a large congregation of believers in Christ.

We should note that the requirement to put away such a person is not optional; it is required in order to serve as a means of bringing about the complete, genuine restoration of the erring saints, as an assertion that the assembly is not itself implicated in the sin of the individual, and in order to serve as a deterrent to other believers. Some have taught that if the offender is repentant, then there is no need to carry out this discipline, but that ignores some of the reasons for it and concentrates solely on the matter of restoration to fellowship.

The basis of his analogy goes back to the Passover in Exodus 12. The deliverance of Israel from the house of bondage by the Passover lamb was not only intended to bring them out as God's people who were redeemed from Egypt's power, but it was also associated with their eating unleavened bread along with the roast lamb and the bitter herbs. The combination of the two would remind and teach us that only by occupation with Christ in His suffering death for us, linked with contemplation of His life of purity and holiness, that a believer can truly be delivered from any association with an evil Egyptian world. F. B. Hole says, "The Apostle uses a figure, of course, in speaking thus of leaven. But it is a most appropriate figure. Israel's passover feast had to be eaten without leaven, and was followed by the feast of unleavened bread. Now the passover pointed forward to the death of Christ as its fulfillment, and the church during the whole time of its sojourn here is to fulfill the type of the feast of unleavened bread by eschewing all evil, and walking in sincerity and truth."

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Along with that, we note that “keep the feast, not with old leaven, etc.,” is not the Lord’s Supper, but rather it refers to the character of the assembly and of each believer that corresponds with all that the Feast of Unleavened Bread symbolized. It involved the activity of removing every form of leaven from their houses, from the food, and from every aspect of their lives, which means that there must be judgment of evil in every form that might exist, so that we might be marked by the “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (v. 8).

### **“Christ our Peace” Ephesians 1:12**

#### **Separation Removed**

This exalted epistle give spiritually high truth that emphasizes what the church, the body of Christ, is to the Head, which is Christ himself. As we move into chapter 2, we are reminded first of all, of what we, both Jew and Gentile believers, were by nature prior to God’s salvation (2:1-3). There was really no difference in our moral state or need for salvation. It was because “God. . . is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith he loved us,” (2:4) that we both are saved “by grace” (2:8) and we have both been reconciled “unto God in one body by the cross (2:16). We notice that with regard to position, the Gentiles were spiritually the ones who were far off and excluded under the conditions of the past, “but now,” they are made nigh, (2:12), and are now united with all believers in one body.

But the wondrous teaching goes on to emphasize that now BOTH (note the many times that this word is used in vs. 14-18) are enjoying a peace that has been made through Christ (v. 15) by means of the removal of the enmity that the commandments contained. That peace is embodied in and centered upon Christ, “who is our peace,” (v. 14), through His work and it is established in His person. It is a peace, first of all, with God who was offended because of the sins of both Jew and Gentile, but it is also a peace between Jew and Gentile, accomplished in the complete removal of the barrier that existed between the two.

Christ spoke in Matthew 16:18, that “on this rock, I will build my church,” not several churches, not two churches, one of the Jews and the other of Gentiles. His purpose is to bring together in ONE, both Jew and Gentile, having removed the enmity between them by accomplishing for them what neither one could, through His sacrificial work at Calvary. That wall, or partition (which was symbolized, in part, by the wall of demarcation between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Jews in the temple), has been broken down so that the two have been made “one new man,” (v. 15), and both now have equal “access by one Spirit unto the Father,” (v. 18).

That mystery of the one body was revealed to Paul distinctly, but not exclusively (3:4-8), a truth not revealed previously but now being brought into a reality through the work of the Holy Spirit (2:22). It was a work that began

with the preaching of the gospel in its early days by Peter and gradually expanded to the Samaritans, the household of Cornelius, and ultimately to the entire Gentile world. But the basis of that entire work is Christ, what He has done and the fact that in Himself, He has included both Jew and Gentile, so that BOTH are seen equally as found in Him with a perfect standing and unhindered access to one Father.

Those who believe in “Messianic Judaism” err in failing to understand that the traditions and religious practices of the nation under the law of Moses have been done away with, and there is now no distinction in Christ. They claim to accept and believe in Jesus as Messiah, but in their adherence to these rituals and ceremonies, they introduce a division into the one body that was never envisioned or intended for believers in this present dispensation. They are seeking to maintain the “shadow” at the same time as claiming the reality, which, it seems, causes a confused condition among such individuals.

### **“Jesus Christ our Lord” 1 Corinthians 1:9**

#### **Submission Rendered**

We encounter the expression “Christ Jesus our Lord” or “Jesus Christ our Lord” about 16 times in the New Testament. This expression signifies His position of authority in His people’s lives personally as well as in all assembly activities. It denotes active seeking to know His will and willing submission to His will that would direct every activity of our lives so that we might practically express the position that God has given Him. “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord (rule over, exercise lordship over [verb, active subjunctive]) both of the dead and living.” (Romans 14:9).

Since He is Lord (kurios, the one with all authority, the one to whom all appertains), it follows that anything less than submission to His will in everything is a denial of what one might profess. He said himself, “And why call ye me ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not the things that I say. (Luke 6:46). Partial disobedience is disobedience, and this was exhibited in Saul’s failure to obey the command of the Lord in 1 Samuel 15, so that to call Him Lord is a travesty and a dishonor to His Person if there is not corresponding obedience to His will. He has bought us with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20), and the only proper response is to “glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” He is “the Lord” of all, but in a personal sense, He is “our Lord” and that is displayed when we live to please and honor His Name.

His being our Lord implies that each believer is responsible to seek to know His will and to do it. That would touch every aspect of our lives in a very practical way. It would involve more than saying words to the effect that He is Lord (as do many charismatics). It touches more than what we do in assembly capacity or what one might do on a Sunday. It

is an everyday, complete involvement of acting and living with the conviction that I do not belong to myself, but rather, am responsible to Christ, to do His will in every aspect of daily living. Only as we do this will we have a conscience that is clear before God in view of giving account in His presence.

*(continued)*

**It is one thing to be blameless before men, and another to be aiming at that perfect obedience which Christ rendered to the Father: "I do always those things that please Him."**  
R. C. Chapman

## **"Me First. . ." Pt. 2**

*Robert Surgenor*

Let us come now to the third man. "And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee; but let ME FIRST go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:61–62). Like Lot's wife, this man was looking back, he was wavering. He was reluctant to break with his old ties. One can't plow a straight furrow looking back. His eye must be intent on the furrow to be made. There is a railroad song called "Life is but a mountain railroad," and that song tells the engineer to "keep his hand upon the throttle and his eye upon the rail." Paul exclaimed, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13).

In contrast to this man we are reminded of Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John. As the Lord walked by the sea of Galilee "He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. And when He had gone a little farther thence, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway He called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him" (Mark 1: 16–20). They were industrious and busy men. Simon and Andrew were casting a net into the sea. They were washing it after catching fish. James and John, after a good catch of fish, were mending their nets for effective fishing in the future. However, one word from the Son of God changed their whole life, and immediately they forsook all and followed Him. They were inexperienced as far as fishing for men was concerned, but being with the

divine teacher, they would soon become effective fishers of men. Later Peter said to the Lord, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29–30).

Years ago, among God's assemblies, when men were called of God to forsake their secular employment for the great harvest field, there were tremendous sacrifices made on their part. If married, the wife also made a great sacrifice. Normal married life was broken. No longer would a husband and father be present in the home. The wife would be called upon to manage the home alone. The children wouldn't have a father to nurture them on a daily basis. There was no such thing as e-Mail and cell-phones, and the telephones that were available were too expensive to use. The pioneer and his wife communicated daily by letter. Leaving one's employment, wife, children, and comfortable home to launch out into the deep could be a traumatic experience. Often pioneer evangelists would be alone weeks on end. There were no credit cards, but God always, somehow, supplied their need. Can you picture a young husband/father sitting alone in a dimly lighted rented room with nothing to eat because the only eating place in the little village had closed for the holidays? He entered the little town with the gospel, renting an unused church-building, but only a handful of old people attended. Truly such men could say, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee."

In 1897, when J. J. Rouse was 28 years of age, he went out on his own "footmobile" (as he called it), walking in the Canadian Prairies, during the winter, distances up to 30 miles, to reach a handful of folks. Once he reported, "Carrying my Bible, tracts and some clothing, having meetings in homes, schoolhouses, as door were open, although suffering physical privation, yet happy in the Lord, and conscious of the fact I was not building on another man's foundation." During his pioneering days, he learned the art of snaring prairie rabbits, so that he could roast them over a little fire and eat them for survival.

In September 1853, a little three-masted clipper slipped quietly out of Liverpool harbor with Hudson Taylor, a gaunt and wild-eyed 21-year-old missionary, aboard. At seventeen, after reading a gospel tract, he professed faith in Christ, and in December 1849, he was convinced of God that he should go to China as a missionary. Taylor was convinced that the Gospel would only take root in Chinese soil if the man bringing the good news was willing to affirm the culture of the people they were seeking to reach. He argued, from the example of the Apostle Paul, "Let us in everything not sinful become like the Chinese, that by all

means we may save some.” Consequently Taylor wore Chinese clothing and even grew a pigtail as that was the custom among Chinese men. He, like Paul, could say, “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22). He also remarked; “China is not to be won for Christ by quiet, ease-loving men and women ... The stamp of men and women we need is such as will put Jesus, China, [and] souls first and foremost in everything and at every time—even life itself must be secondary.”

On one occasion Taylor reported; “In Shansi I found Chinese Christians who were accustomed to spend time in fasting and prayer. They recognized that this fasting, which so many dislike, which requires faith in God, since it makes one feel weak and poorly, is really a Divinely appointed means of grace. Perhaps the greatest hindrance to our work is our own imagined strength; and in fasting we learn what poor, weak creatures we are—dependent on a meal of meat for the little strength which we are so apt to lean upon.”

This man of God has left behind some precious thoughts. Here are some of them;

- “Christ is either Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all.”
- “Perhaps if there were more of that intense distress for souls that leads to tears, we should more frequently see the results we desire. Sometimes it may be that while we are complaining of the hardness of the hearts of those we are seeking to benefit, the hardness of our own hearts and our feeble apprehension of the solemn reality of eternal things may be the true cause of our want of success.”
- “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supplies.”
- “The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.”
- “Since the days of Pentecost, has the whole church ever put aside every other work and waited upon Him for ten days, that the Spirit’s power might be manifested? We give too much attention to method and machinery and resources, and too little to the source of power.”

Taylor labored in China for 51 years, and during that time was responsible for bringing over 800 missionaries to the country who began 125 schools and directly resulted in 18,000 Christian conversions, as well as the establishment of more than 300 stations of work with more than 500 local helpers in all eighteen provinces. At his death in 1905, there were 125,000 Chinese Christians in the China Inland Mission, which he founded. Multitudes of converted Chinese will rise up in Heaven and call him blessed. Hudson Taylor heard the call of God, and put his hand to the plow, and never looked back.

At this writing (2011) the call of God has not changed, but I am afraid that the attitude on the part of the called ones, in many cases, has. Consider the fact that in the

United States there are approximately 19 states where there is no “Gospel Hall” testimony. Namely: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee, Delaware, Indiana, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oklahoma, Nevada, South Dakota, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. These states involve 1,149,000 square miles and over 41,000,000 souls. We don’t even have one assembly per 2,400 square miles, nor one assembly per 2,100,000 people! At least 13 states have only one assembly.

There are men who have heard the call and have gone forth, but forth to where? The assemblies, of course. Oh yes, perhaps at first, one or two “new places” are tried, but invitations come from assemblies to come for gospel meetings. “A new broom always sweeps clean,” and a new voice is always attractive, so, the called one begins his evangelistic service for God traveling from one assembly to another as a result of assembly invitations. Wonderful! What a comfortable and important occupation. No sleeping-room rent, no food bill to pay, no preaching room to prepare and rent, and no loneliness. Surrounded by considerate brethren and caring sisters all is taken care of. The best of meals are spread before them, their laundry is taken care of, their audience is readymade and everything to promote their gospel service is abundantly provided. Whatever monetary needs they have are fully met. The assembly has paid for the invitations, and all that is expected of the invited evangelist is that he leave the invitations on doors during the day and preach every night. Our modern day has more or less abandoned the concept of long-series-meetings. A few years back, one month was considered enough. However, the two-week series has now come into vogue. If any unsaved are attending, the pressure comes upon them to profess during the middle of the second week. One is almost made to believe that once the preacher leaves, that all hope of salvation is lost.

I certainly am not discounting the fact that assemblies need an occasional series of gospel meetings. Christians have children growing up that need to be saved. But wait a minute. Are there not any able men in local assemblies that can carry on this work, leaving the “full-time” worker to go to the regions beyond? Wasn’t that why God called them? Are we to simply sweep 19 states and over 41 million people aside as not worthy to hear the gospel as we preach it? Why is it that at our conferences we no longer hear brethren pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into the great harvest field? Have we lost our vision? Have we become so intellectual and mechanical that we see no need? Could it be that our assemblies are becoming weaker and weaker because we have lost our pioneering spirit? So burdened was the assembly at Antioch regarding the spread of the gospel that they ministered unto the Lord, fasting and praying. The result was that their answer came, and as a result they released Barnabas and Saul from the



## The Second Advent of Christ

*H. A. Mattier*

assembly's responsibility for the work that the Holy Spirit had designated for them (Acts 13). The work of pioneering! When have you heard of an assembly holding a meeting of that nature in your day? In fact, how many evangelists do you know that are laboring so far from an assembly that they cannot break bread? How many assemblies have you seen planted in the last ten years? I am not talking about assemblies cropping up as a result of gathered out believers already living in that area, and forming for convenience sake. No, no, not that at all. I mean assemblies that contain 100% converts that were not saved until the evangelist brought the gospel to them.

So, there it is! Rather blunt, but absolutely true. Preachers! The professional men that hold most of their meetings in assemblies and attend many conferences. The pioneering men, that rarely are able to attend a conference and that are off in the "backwoods," faithfully plodding along according to our Lord's commission (Mark 16:15), not building upon another man's foundation (Romans 15:20). The pioneering evangelist has his hand upon the plow, not looking back, but "looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2).

Jesus said unto him, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." This can be applied to sinner and to saint. The sinner must come to the crossroads and weigh carefully the situation. If he is not willing to forsake all for Christ, he is not fit for the kingdom of God. Let the sinner covet one sin and tenaciously embrace it, and he will miss the great salvation of God. He must repent and abandon all his sinful attractions.

Coming to one already saved we find the same principle. If a saint is called of God to a particular work and there is but one thing that he covets above that work, he is not fit, nor will he be able to put his hand to the plow. Beloved, has the Spirit imparted to you the gift of an evangelist? Has He brought before you the great need of taking the glad message beyond the confines of the Gospel Halls? Yet you consider the possible hardships involved with such work and you are not willing to put your hand to the gospel plow? If so, well may you be ashamed, for you are a "ME FIRST" Christian. Are you not willing to forsake all for Him who died for you? If so, you are not fit. You are a "ME FIRST" person. It would seem scriptural that men, who in their youth, bore the heat and burden of the day, when aged, have a perfect right to visit and encourage the assemblies that ministered unto them in their pioneering days.

The days of Laodicea are upon us (Revelation 3:14). We are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. The claims of Christ mean little. Material things have gripped our hearts. Temporal things occupy our mind, and the Lord is standing outside many a Christian's heart door, seeking admission, but sad to say, "ME FIRST" prevails.

There are 27 books in the New Testament, and no less than 25 of these bear testimony to the truth of the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. The exceptions are found in the Epistle to Philemon, a personal letter from Paul to secure the reception of a runaway slave; the other is the brief third Epistle of John, addressed to Gaius, who had shown hospitality to the apostle.

The second Epistle of John in the Revised Version reads, "Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh," v. 7. In the Epistle to the Galatians the reference to the coming of our Lord is confined to one verse, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith" (5:5). The reason for this is very evident. Judaizing teachers had come among them, persuading them of the necessity of law-keeping, etc., so that the fundamental truths of the Gospel, as to justification by faith, etc., were being given up, the keeping of the law and circumcision being urged as of vital necessity, so the apostle has, so to speak, to lay the foundation again, and cannot occupy them with the blessed hope of the Gospel. In Ephesians, for a very different reason, the mention of the Advent of Christ is given in a few words in chapter 4, verse 4, "Ye are called in one hope of your calling." In this epistle the believer is looked at as already seated in heavenly places in Christ, and accordingly in this aspect we are prepared to find but little allusion to the hope. The Bible is so full of references to the second coming of the Lord that it should hardly require proof to be submitted. The Old Testament prophets foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (1 Peter 1:11). The sufferings are past, and the day of His glory is still future, while the day of His grace lies between.

A century ago almost total ignorance prevailed amongst Christians as to the manner and object of the Lord's second coming. Today this precious truth has been carried to almost every nook and corner of the earth. No thoughtful person but can recognize in this the sounding forth of the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him" (Matthew 25:5-6). Nothing is more certain than that He will come again, nothing more uncertain than *when* He will come. The early Christians were taught to wait for it (1 Thessalonians 1:10). There are two stages noted in Scripture, not two Comings, but one. The first is termed The Rapture and the second The Appearing. These aspects are in Titus 2:13. In 1 Thessalonians 4 the order of events is indicated. The dead saints are first raised, then those who shall be alive at His coming, and all shall be for ever with the Lord.

There are ten words in the New Testament, all of which have the prefix "Re," and all of which refer to the Coming of the Lord. We shall endeavor to set them forth in the hope

that a brief consideration of each may help to fasten them on our minds, and be an encouragement to us.

The first is found in Luke 19:12. His **RETURN**. The Son of God came into this world and was refused (John 1:11); a world which His own hand had created. After a sojourn of 3 ½ years He was driven from it, an outcast, but He will return. "In His time He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). At His return He will subdue this world, not by mercy, but by might. He will assuredly take vengeance on His enemies (Luke 19, 27).

**RESURRECTION**. Revelation 20:6. When He comes the holy dead are not forgotten. Their spirits are now with Christ, but their bodies are in the dust. Mark, those who are not Christ's will not be raised then. The first resurrection is not found in the Old Testament. The first teaching of it is from the Lord Himself in Mark 9:9. Then "He charged them to tell no man till the Son of Man was risen *from* the dead."

In John 5:28-29 the Lord distinguishes between the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment. In Luke 14:14 He speaks of the resurrection of the just. No such term occurs in Scripture as a general resurrection, or a general judgment.

**RECEPTION**. John 14:3. The Lord had gathered His own around Himself ere He went to Calvary. The traitor Judas was gone. He assured them that if He went away He would come back for them and in the Father's house they would be with Himself. One of the most wonderful sides of the Gospel is that the believer has title to pass into glory without death, because the One on whom death had no claim went into death for us.

**REWARD**. Revelation 22:12. Much is said in Scripture about rewards. Life and Salvation are not rewards. From Romans 6:23 we learn that eternal life is the gift of God, and from Ephesians 2:8 the testimony is that we are saved by grace. The greatest diligence can never earn, nor the highest excellence ever merit Salvation. Reward is according to the labor and service of one already saved. We frequently sing :

Deeds of merit as we thought them  
He will show us were but sin.  
Little acts we had forgotten  
He will tell us were for Him.

Even a cup of water shall not lose its reward, and from Hebrew 6:10 we know that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed towards His name in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

**REVELATION**. This we find in 2 Thessalonians 1:7. Christ is now hidden and unknown to the world. He will answer all questions Himself. God now endures with much long-suffering those that oppose Him, but soon He will deal

with Russellism, Mormonism, Atheism, Spiritism, Eddyism, Seventh Day Adventism, etc., consigning the propagators of these false cults to the outer darkness.

**REFRESHING**. Acts 3:19. From the Revised Version we glean a more distinct view. It reads, "That so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." This was contingent on Israel's repentance. God had said in Hosea 5:15, "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." There lies ahead for Israel the great tribulation (Matthew 24:21) resulting in a remnant seeking His face. Then He will no longer hide Himself but shall appear in manifested glory. Such was the testimony of Peter in Acts 3. The Lord's last word in public was when He left the temple (Matthew 23:38-39). Their house would be left desolate till they would say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

**RESTORATION**. Acts 1:6. This was the inquiry of the assembled disciples ere the Lord ascended. The expectation was a just one but the time had not then come for it. Now the moment of restoration draws nigh. The world's blessing awaits Israel's restoration to God and to Canaan. From Romans 11:2 we learn that "God hath not cast away His people whom he foreknew." When He speaks in His Word of judgment upon Israel He invariably limits with an "until" (Romans 11:25). In the headings of some chapters in Isaiah the blessings are said to be for the church, while the judgments are reserved for the Jews. These headings are of course not inspired.

Isaiah 61 portrays the future of Israel as the head of the nations. The throne of David will be set up in Jerusalem, the temple will rebuilt, for which see Ezekiel 40-44.

**RESTITUTION**. Acts 3:21. A word caution is here necessary as misuse has been made by Universalists and others to apply the term to persons. Be it noted that what we have here is "the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." The first thing that will be done will be the binding of Satan, the arch enemy of God and man, for a thousand years. Then man will be contented and happy; labor will be light and pleasant. There will be no necessity or scope for Trade Unions to regulate wages and hours of work. Then will be accomplished what the League of Nations was instituted for, but has failed to achieve; what politicians, philanthropists, diplomats and statesmen have sought hitherto, but in vain. Even in the beasts of the field there will be a wondrous change in their habits and disposition (Isaiah 11:7). The earth shall yield her increase (Psalm 67). Then will be the verification of the prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come" (Matthew 6:10).

**REDEMPTION**. This occurs 11 times in Scripture. In five instances it refers to the future when the Lord shall come. In Romans 8:23 we are said to be waiting for it. In 1

Corinthians 1:30 Christ is made unto us redemption. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise until the redemption of the purchased possession (Ephesians 1:14), and by the same Holy Spirit we have been sealed until the day of redemption. The redemption price has already been paid in precious blood. Let every Christian remember, that except with respect to his body, he is fully redeemed now. We are therefore to be separate from the lawless world over which the enemy of God presides. Some one may ask, How will the redemption of the body take place? For the answer see 1 Corinthians 15:51-54. Redemption is never a question of human faithfulness but of the power and grace of God.

**REGENERATION.** Matthew 19:28. This word is only found twice in the Scripture, here and in Titus 3:5. Here it refers to the future Kingdom of the Son of Man, when He shall sit on the throne of His glory and the apostles shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But there is a present application, and an individual one concerning one who has forsaken relatives or lands ; such shall receive a hundredfold. Thus the Lord would reward the solitary path embraced for His name's sake, while for the future there is everlasting life. May we be thus encouraged by the prospects before us and ever keep in view the blessed hope of His return.

**The Son of God is gone to war,  
A kingly crown to gain,  
His blood-red banner streams afar,  
Who follows in His train ?  
Who best can drink His cup of woe,  
Triumphant over pain ?  
Who boldest bears His cross below?  
He follows in His train.**

**The Martyr first, whose eagle eye  
Could pierce beyond the grave,  
Who saw his Master in the sky,  
And called on Him to save;  
Like Him, with pardon on his tongue  
In midst of mortal pain,  
He prayed for them that did the wrong.  
Who follows in his train ?**

Reginald Heber

## Accommodation

(From "Words in Season" August 1942)

Rhetoricians treat of a "law of accommodation" in accordance with which the orator is to descend and condescend to his audience—to get down to their level in order to lift them up to his.

This may do in rhetoric but it involves risk in the things of God. During the whole history of God's ancient Israel and of the Church of Christ, the subtlest of all snares has been this plausible law of accommodation. Adopting worldly maxims, catering to worldly tastes, corrupted by worldly leaven, there has been a gradual letting down of the severe standard of New Testament piety, and a constant effort to robe the Gospel in worldly charms in order to attract worldly people.

The platform has by this law of accommodation been lowered at times into a place for lectures more becoming the lyceum, or into a stage for performances more fit for the theater. The service of song, in deference to this dictation of the worldly spirit, has dropped into a display of mere artistic talent, the appeal to aesthetic taste displacing the Divine savor and flavor of worship, so that in the place where the Lord ALONE is to be exalted, "classical music" is exalted. Papists and pagans are hired to lead the praise of Protestant worshippers, and profane organists use the grandest of instruments to dissipate holy thoughts and impressions. Gorgeous Gothic structures are built, furnished with crimson and gold, garnished with the artist's pencil and chisel; as preachers, the princes of orators are procured, and for the choir, the star singers of the opera. Concerts and chorals are multiplied, fairs and festivals, entertainments and excursions; and by such allurements they hope to draw the people and evangelize the masses. But the hope is found to be delusive.

These worldly expedients have proved very successful in secularizing the so called Church, but have sadly failed in evangelizing the world. They do not even draw the people, except so far and so long as their novelty attracts curiosity seekers, or feeds the morbid appetite for excitement. It is time all such measures were abandoned as helps to the work of evangelization. They are rather hindrances; for they destroy the peculiar character of God's people as a separate people, they divert attention from eternal things, and they grieve the Spirit of God, on whose presence all power depends.

The fact is, Zion's attractions are unique; like her Lord, they are not of the world—they belong to another order of beauty, "the beauty of holiness." When the Church robes herself in the charms of worldly attire and adornment, she not only fails to draw the world to herself and to Christ, but she actually takes the infection of the "Spirit of the age," which, however disguised, is hostile to God. Instead of transforming the children of the world, she becomes conformed to them. The secular attractions with which she invests herself, so long as their power lasts, only turn the

mind from Divine things, drawing in the same direction as do the world, the flesh, and the devil; and keeping men under the power of the world as now is, rather than bringing them under the power of the world that is to come.

The Gospel has great power of attraction, but is not of the worldly sort. The good news of salvation has true and lasting charms, and so has the life of every disciple. Let a pure Gospel be preached and a pure type of piety translate and illustrate its saving truths in the language of life; and when Zion shall thus arise and shine, sinners will come to her light.

If the Church would woo and win souls, it must be by offering them attractions and satisfactions which the world does not, and cannot offer—that which is bread and satisfies spiritual hunger, instead of husks which fill but do not feed; the well of water springing up into everlasting life, instead of the broken cistern. The reason why the Gospel of God's grace never wears out is because, to every penitent believer, it gives what it promises—solid, substantial, satisfying food and drink. To draw souls, to get hold and keep hold upon them, the Church needs not to be more worldly, but more unworldly; in her separation from the world unto God there is power, for it seems to say there is something for the sheep within her fold that the world cannot give nor take away.

The Master has left us a warning to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, hating even the garment that is spotted by the flesh. This is a true law of accommodation: "I am made all things to all men that I might win some;" but even this may be perverted into an abandonment of all that is peculiar, essential and vital to Christian character. Not even the hope of saving some can justify the secularization of the Church. Lot may have hoped to do good to the wicked Sodomites when he pitched his tent toward Sodom and then went and dwelt there; but he saved nobody, and ruined his family, and got out of the fire of judgment, himself scarcely saved. He was a type of all such worldly believers as obey this worldly law of accommodation. Aaron tried it at Sinai, and the golden calf was the result; Solomon tried it in Jerusalem, and temples to Chemosh and Molech, and altars to Ashtoreth and Milcom confronted Jehovah's temple. It was this very principle that brought in all the idolatries of Jeroboam and Ahab, and compelled the multiplied captivities of Judah and Israel; and it was this, in the days of our Lord's sojourn on earth, left Israel to be like a skeleton—leaf out of which the life-sap has gone. From the days when God bade His people to come out of Egypt and forbade them to make mixed marriages and form alliances with the heathen, history has borne but one harmonious witness; namely, that conformity to the world upon the part of the Church brings decay to piety and to all evangelistic activity.

In the New Testament especially, the unworldly character of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is written in large letters as upon public tablets, that all may read at a glance. Our Lord taught it in discourse and parable, and breathed it in His intercessory prayer. Paul and Peter, James

and John and Jude echo it, and the echo grows louder rather than fainter with each new reverberation. The Apocalypse, as with mighty thunderings, warns an already imperiled Church of the subtle snares of Babylon the gilded (Revelation 17:4, margin), the apostate counterpart of Jerusalem the golden.

The array of Scripture texts on the one hand, and of historic facts on the other, is like the marshaling of the two vast hosts guarding God's people against the world's influence and power; and on their banners we read, in command and symbol: "be not conformed to this world." Believers are the temple of the Holy Ghost, and He cannot tolerate idols in His courts. If we will have the spirit of the world, we cannot have the Spirit of God; or if He comes at all it will not be as the shining Shechinah but as the consuming fire; as Lord Jesus with lashing scourge and flashing eye, not with hands outstretched in blessing.

One thing is absolutely certain: the modern secularizing of the Church, as we have said before, has thus far had no effect in furthering the work of evangelization. Manifold and costly accessories and adornments have been introduced by the so called Church. All the resources of nature, and culture, mechanical elaboration and poetic imagination have been taxed to the utmost to attract, yet the common people are not attracted and are deserving the so called churches. One has quaintly remarked that while across the sea the population is divided into "churchmen and dissenters," here it is divided into "churchmen and absenters."

The test of vitality of assembly life is this, "To the poor the Gospel is preached." A live assembly with God's Gospel in its hands, and God's Spirit in its heart, can penetrate to the lowest strata and lift even the undermost. But this has never been done, and never will be done by the wisdom of words or by the wisdom of this world. The assembly that conforms to the spirit of the age may be "swept and garnished," but will still be "empty."

Preaching must be simple in matter and manner; it must impress men as dealing directly, honestly, earnestly with their souls; adapting itself to any class of hearers with facility, to private house or street corner or riverside as readily as to stately buildings. Addresses that have scarce the salt that gives a gospel savor, that do not grapple with the conscience, or arouse the will, help to make men infidels. They are poultices applied to the cancer that demands the knife; and hearers begin to doubt whether sin is indeed a fatal disease, or whether the preacher himself believes the souls of sinners to be in peril. We must have a more unworldly atmosphere in assemblies. True winners of souls have an indefinable air of simplicity and sincerity about them that disarms indifference and even opposition. The sinless One drew near to Him the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. In order to reach the masses there must be identification with them. Paul knew this when he stated, "I am ... made all things to all men that I might by all means save some." The



cold, critical culture, the repelling, fastidious refinement, the exclusive intellectuality, the unsympathetic selfishness can turn preachers into rigid, frigid statues, and our meeting places into marble mausoleums.

**Someone has well said: "The truth" is a very comprehensive term. Ecclesiastical separation is but one small aspect of truth, though an important one. The man who buys the truth in its fulness is always careful that what he says of others is the truth.**

W. Bunting, "Spiritual Balance"

## Contrasted Ambitions

“Let us go up at once” (Numbers 13:30)

“Let us return to Egypt” (Numbers 14:4)

The narrative parts of the Bible are historically true. They are authenticated records of divine dealings with individuals or nations. Their chief importance to us, however, lies not in the proofs that they are dependable as accurate statements (these proofs have a value of their own from another viewpoint), but in the fact that they embody and illustrate moral principles which govern life in all generations. Such is the attitude that New Testament writers adopted towards the Old Testament Scriptures, declaring that whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning. It is the eternal truth enshrined in them that leads us to the conclusion that they are divinely inspired. The passage from which our meditation is taken is a mine of instruction for later pilgrims through another wilderness. It is history pregnant with allegorical teaching.

Israel had reached a dramatic point in her history. Egypt had long since been left. Weary miles of torturing desert sand lay between them and their once-loathed prison home. For months God had fed them with angels' food, and had guided them by supernatural signs. Never had people been so blessed. Forbearance and goodness had strewn their pathway in spite of their restless desire for something other than the will of God. Now the supreme moment of their lives had arrived. In the years of bondage when the iron was in their soul, and the cruel lash of the task-master's whip broke the spirit of hope, they had cried unto God, and their inarticulate groans had been heard. Deliverance came, God graciously intervened. They followed with unhesitant will the pathway of His choosing. The exuberance of a divinely-achieved victory brought an initial impetus which bore them triumphantly over their first obstacles. Soon, however, the super-natural ceased to be miraculous, the interventions of God became mere commonplace events in their experience,

and in their unthinking ingratitude they magnified their difficulties beyond all proportion. A thankless heart always provokes a disastrous reaction in its possessor's outlook on life, and, sooner or later, draws forth the displeasure of God. It did so in the case before us.

Now they are faced with another crisis. They stand on the verge of the long-promised success. The land, “flowing with milk and honey,” the land of their dreams and their hopes, lay beyond the hills, beckoning them in, for God was their Leader and their Guide. They failed, as so often men in such circumstances do fail, because they lost sight of God and abandoned faith for human caution; and when they discovered that they were unwilling to go in and possess the land about which their spies gave glowing reports, they wept all night. Intense feeling always wells up in some kind of audible expression. In Egypt the bitterness of bondage was recorded in groans and cries; beyond the Red Sea the exultation of victory found vent in rapturous song; and now the sorrow of self-discovery expressed itself in a night of senseless and useless weeping. How often tears burn their furrows down human cheeks, not because of repentance and grief, but because of reproaches we heap upon ourselves when we discover that at heart we are too cowardly to take the next step in a pathway of God's own choice!

A comparison of Numbers 13 and Deuteronomy 1 is interesting. The latter narrative indicates that the dispatch of the exploration party was the result of Moses' compliance with the expressed wish of the people, whereas Numbers 13 states that God commanded them to take that precaution. The explanation of the seeming contradiction is simple. God, knowing the perverseness of the human heart and its pride in its own wisdom, acquiesced in the wish, and, in order to disclose the faint heartedness of the people, commanded that the scheme, originating from the fear of the nation, should be put into execution. His intention evidently was that when the report had been furnished, the wisdom of the flesh might be put to naught. Prudence, as in this instance, always walks with caution, deliberates itself into disguised compromise, and treads an unexplored path with hesitant step and trembling heart. Faith goes as far as it can see, then sees how far it can go. “Great occasions,” writes another, “do not make heroes or cowards, they simply reveal them. Silently and imperceptibly, as we wake or sleep, we grow and wax strong, we grow and wax weak; and at last some crisis shows us what we have become.”

The reports of the spies agreed in all details, but the deductions of the ten were false. The nature of a man's conclusions about matters where God is concerned is revealed in the reservations he makes when he is faced with a decision full of danger. The “nevertheless” (Numbers 13:28) is a disclosure of the vacillation of the majority's mind in the face of the hardships associated with the consummation of their hopes. They had not learned in all their wilderness experiences that

'Tis better not to be at all  
Than not to be noble.

Our attitude to life depends upon the direction in which we look. Some people see circumstances, that is, things mutable and material, and mistake them for facts. In this case the majority professed their fear because of what they had seen to counterbalance the inducements of the land offered for immediate entrance. The truth is that their trepidation and inaction were traceable to their lack of vision. Their physical eyes saw difficulties—walled cities, giants, the sons of Anak—and they felt like grasshoppers. Spiritual sight was blinded. They did not see God, the one unchanging Fact. That feature of their report differentiates them from Caleb and Joshua, and sums up the nature of the contrasted ambitions. Caleb's heartening counsel was, "Let us go up at once"; the protesting demand of the people was, "Let us return to Egypt." Is the juxtaposition of such glaringly opposite desires from members of the same community not a painful reminder that neutrality is impossible in a spiritual warfare? Our mind is set either for progress or for a policy of drift towards a former state of ignoble servitude. "Back to Egypt" is the alternative to immediate advance.

From Caleb's declaration a necessary lesson emerges. Promptitude in action is the cure for heart failure. Retreat brings its own reward. Spiritual debacle supervenes, for rearguard actions in warfare against foes that are merciless rears no permanent opposition. Fear always, and purposely, exaggerates difficulties. We tremble on the brink of new claims upon our loyalty to God's demands. Faith, on the other hand, steps out, reckoning with the difficulty, estimates it at its true value, and, advancing in confidence on divine resources against all foes, triumphs magnificently.

The alternative is startling in its disastrous implications:

(a) Faith failed because it temporized with difficulties. The people disregarded the courage of their true leaders. They dismissed the guidance of an unquestionable Providence, and displayed a disappointing spirit of incompetence despite the records of their past. Disguised fear masqueraded as prudence which suggested the mission of the spies to report as to the possibilities of success in an invasion of the land. Distrust brought disaster, and imperiled the whole nation. Israel's history would have been less ignoble if the wilderness march had ended in a glorious occupation of Canaan. And many a Christian man, confronted in the same way with a similar problem in the spiritual realm, has taken the course of inaction which was tantamount to declaring, "Let us go back to Egypt." Shame and confusion of face belong to us all as we review the disastrous choices we have made as alternatives to immediate advancement to victory over deadly enemies in the moral sphere.

(b) Fear triumphed because it over-estimated its foes.

An unsuspected bogey raised itself in their pathway—not the giants. These were but an occasion for the discovery of the people's greatest adversary. The modern theory of relativity operated in this incident in a more than physical realm. Enemies are great when we ourselves feel small, and we do feel small when our confidence is in the arm of flesh. "Inferiority complex" may be a pet phrase of modern psychologists, but the experience for which the words have been coined is of very ancient standing. Here it is seen operating in the heart of almost an entire nation, and leading it to an ignominious retreat.

(c) Forgetfulness is often due to careless thinking. How revealing is the cry, "Back to Egypt"! It was the demand of a people that loved slavery more than the exhilaration of advance to certain conquest. Had the people forgotten the way back—through an arid desert? Had they no recollection of the bitter experiences of servitude in the land of the Pharaohs? Surely they had forgotten to think! A moment's meditation would have terminated their base proposal abruptly. They did not really mean what they demanded. Nor do we in moments of wrong decision when chagrined over some thwarting of our cherished ambitions; but the set of the mind discloses the trend of the desire. The best way to escape from a love for "Egypt" is to remember the cruel spiritual impositions endured there. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," advises John.

**Day by day, we all experience the many hindrances to communion with God with which this world assails us. "The cares of life" affect some, and the "deceitfulness of riches" affect others, even amongst the true saints of God. They clog our steps, they dim our eyes, they weigh down our spirits and keep us on a low spiritual plane if we allow them to do so. But faith does well to spread its wings and soar above all surrounding influences, so that its delight in the unseen Christ may be full and complete. When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, he was abstracted so much that he affirms twice that he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of the body at the time.**