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Writing New Chapters

Jim Beattie

Our first great-grandchild, George, was born in August, 2016. For whatever reason, watching him grow has intrigued me even more than when our children or grandchildren were born. Perhaps I have taken more time to observe the small changes that I had allowed to go unnoticed in earlier years. When I was younger, I did not understand how significant these changes really were. Recently George placed a set of small plastic containers one on top of the other and it dawned on me that even into a tiny one-year-old, the Lord has built the concept of organization. Man was made in the image of the God who organized the world. The image is blurred but not broken.

The Greek word, (κοσμος) *kos'-mos*, means basically "something well-arranged" (*Freiberg Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*). And the concept of organization still resides in a little child - a child in the image of God! Naturally, there had been earlier developments in George, but this last one, a few days ago, amazed me.

As I played and replayed the short video clip, I thought of spiritual growth. Growth is the normal experience in the physical realm; it is also normal in the spiritual. God Himself longs for growth in His children; it brings joy to His heart when He sees it. The apostle Paul expressed what must be the reflection of God's heart when he wrote: "We are bound to thank God always for

you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly" (2 Thessalonians 1:3). The apostle Peter also mirrored God's desire for our growth, when he exhorted: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

The Lord has marked the growth of various persons in Scripture history. One example is Abraham. The Spirit of God has laid down markers dividing his life into four distinct chapters. The expression, "after these things" is the marker occurring three times. It is found in Genesis 15:1, 22:1 and 22:20. This small phrase might appear so insignificant that we could easily bypass it and read on. But taking a closer look we will see that the events following this phrase deal with an new issue different from the previous one. One chapter of Abraham's life closes and he starts writing a new one.

Genesis 15:1 (the first time the phrase is used) closes the history of chapters 12-14. These chapters emphasize clearly Abram's attitude toward possessions. In chapter 12, Abram goes down into Egypt to preserve his possessions: "And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land" (Genesis 12:10).

Unquestionably, it would be the logical course to take. He had livestock and could have sustained great loss by staying where he was. Furthermore, by necessity, his was a nomadic life. Moving to various grazing regions was within the normal course of his life. No one would have expected him to do otherwise. It would have been more surprising had he not moved on. It would have appeared to be irresponsible to stay where he was and cause suffering to his flocks and herds. And even his servants would have been affected. So he moved south to Egypt, the breadbasket of the Middle East.

While he did face difficulties in Egypt, the move resulted in the preservation of his possessions and the well-being of his family and servants. To the natural mind, it would have

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been considered a wise move. The divine record is that when he came out of Egypt "... he was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (Genesis 13:2).

But there was one vital missing element: There is no record of any direction from the Lord to encourage Abram to move. In Mesopotamia, the Lord had said: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee" (Acts 7:3). Furthermore, in the next chapter, Abram does not so much as lift up his eyes until being instructed by the Lord. Moreover, in his requesting that Sarai say she is Abram's sister, we see a deception and sense a lack of faith in order to go the direction he did. Had the Lord instructed him to go, we would have expected a confidence in the Lord to take care of whatever danger he might have faced.

Thus, instead of trusting the Lord in the famine and not moving until he received divine instruction, his first priority appears to be on his well-being and material prosperity.

Coming to Genesis 13, we see a change in his outlook. When there is conflict between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's, they recognize that they need more space for their herds and so they need to separate.

Abram offers Lot the choice. When Lot picked the best grazing land, there is no recorded resentment on the part of Abram. In fact there are two significant statements at this point. Concerning Lot, it is recorded that "And Lot lifted up his eyes" (Genesis 13:10). He looked to see what was best for him. In contrast, regarding Abram, he did not lift up his eyes until the Lord told him to: "And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes" (Genesis 13:14). We see Abram waiting now for instruction from God before he looks and before he moves.

Thus from acting in self-preservation in Genesis 12, we see him acting in selflessness in chapter 13. He still is going to have possessions, but he is willing to let Lot have first choice.

And now Abram moves, but he does it only with the Lord's permission: "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him...Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will

give it unto thee. Then [and only then] Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord" (Genesis 13:14, 17-18).

In Genesis 14, Abram takes a further step. This chapter gives an account of a battle fought between four confederate kings on one side, and five on the other. "Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Genesis 13:12). In that vulnerable place his goods were taken and he was carried off with those of Sodom. Abram hears of it, arms his men, pursued them, overcame them, and rescued Lot and his goods, with others, and returned.

He is met firstly by Melchizedek and then by the king of Sodom. They congratulated him on his victory and the king of Sodom makes Abram an offer. He says: "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself" (verse 21). Without hesitation, "Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich" (Genesis 14:21-23). And here the Spirit of God closes this chapter of Abram's life, saying: "After these things..." (chapter 15:1).

Summarizing chapters, 12, 13, and 14, we see in chapter 12, Abram takes action to keep his possessions; in chapter 13, he gives Lot first choice; and in chapter 14, he takes nothing.

(As a side note, we notice that Abram does not legislate for others with him. They can make their own choices: Genesis 14:24. But Abram has made his.)

From this point forward, material possessions are not an issue; these are settled in this phase of Abram's life and he moves on to other challenges. Thus the Spirit of God brings this chapter in Abram's history to a close and begins a new chapter with the words: "After these things."

So what about our lives? What chapters have we written and brought to a close so that the Lord has laid down a marker and has said: "After these things"?

If there has been genuine spiritual progress in our experience, there ought to be some markers laid down with the words: "after these things." If not, it suggests we have put down our pens and stopped writing new episodes. We have stalled at periods in our lives and growth has not taken place.

Undoubtedly, the Lord's interest in subdividing Abraham's life is an indication of His interest in the subdividing ours. And we should be equally concerned that we are making progress and marking chapters in the story of our Christian life.

The Psalmist records the blessedness of believers who move forward, saying, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee. . .they go from strength to strength" (Psalm 84:5, 7).

Furthermore, the apostle Paul records "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18). And Solomon observes that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).

But what gave Abram the strength to refuse the offer of the king of Sodom and to make spiritual advances? Clearly it was the revelation of the character of God that came through Melchizedek. He speaks to Abram of "...of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth" (Genesis 14:19). And only fellowship with God will empower us to pick up our spiritual pen and write new chapters.

At this juncture in Abram's life, two attributes of God are underscored. Firstly, He is the most High God; No one was greater; nothing could hinder Him from anything He desired to do. He was the Almighty; He was above all. Secondly He possessed everything. Anything that anyone needed, He could supply. Accordingly, Abram could trust God for anything He ever needed because had both the power to give and the resources to give. Thus, he learned that he did not need to try to hold on to what He had (chapter 12); and he could give advantage to others because he could never lose what God had planned to give him (chapter 13); and he did not need to take from an ungodly king who might boast that he had made Abram rich (chapter 14).

Thus Abram was rewarded for his trust. The Lord instructed Abram to "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Genesis 13:14-15).

From the beginning of time, history has always confirmed that:

"He knows, He loves, He cares,
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives His very best to those,
Who leave the choice with Him."

The apostle Paul rejoiced over the progress of the Christians in Thessalonica, writing "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other abounded" (2 Thessalonians 1:3). He also desired that the Ephesian believers would ". . .grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: (Ephesians 4:15). Likewise the apostle Peter exhorted the believers to ". . .grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." In the measure that we do, as it was in the life of Abraham, for God there will be ". . .glory both now and for ever" (2 Peter 3:18) .

In the coming day of reward when we are dispossessed of every earthly thing, nothing will matter except to hear the Lord say: "Well done, good and faithful servant. . .enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:23).

After Lot moved eastward and "chose" the well-watered plains of Jordan, he picked what seemed "the best" to natural sight. And lost everything! Abram chose nothing. And? God gave him everything! How life ends matters! Solomon wrote: "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning. . ." (Eccl. 7:8).

So what will be the result of the choices we are making at the present time? It is a true saying: "The last chapter has not been written."

But when it is written, will our book be worth reading?

The Lord's Supper, pt 2

Joel Portman

We believe that the Lord's Supper as our blessed Lord instituted it for His disciples in the night in which He was being betrayed (1 Cor. 11:23) is distinct from the Passover which He had celebrated with the same disciples. The Passover was a yearly celebration of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage and the beginning of Israel as a nation, whereas the Lord's Supper is a weekly observance to remember our Lord Jesus and His sacrificial work on our behalf. We should be careful not to fall into the trap of some, who think that Christians should engage in the Passover celebration, as if it had application to us or as if we had any relation to it. The Lord's Supper is distinct, and it has entirely replaced the Jewish yearly remembrance.

However, though they are distinct, we can find some similarities between the two. It seems clear that the LORD always wanted His earthly people to be reminded of His power to deliver them, lest they should forget that they hadn't accomplished their own deliverance by personal power and because of personal merit. In their utter helplessness, God had intervened in His own miraculous and marvelous manner to take them out and to bring them unto Himself, with the purpose of bringing them into the land of promise. But cannot we say that in the Lord's Supper, we have a reminder to our hearts that it was His work, and His alone, that has redeemed us and brought us, liberated from sin's penalty, power and participation, unto Himself, so that we now enjoy fellowship with Him who accomplished so great a work for us? In both of these we recognize that the only power to accomplish man's deliverance, physically or spiritually, lies in a great Redeemer with whom there is none to compare. It is for His glory and to honor His Name that He has accomplished this great work, and our remembrance of Him gives such honor to Him that He is surely worthy to receive.

So, let us look at some of the similarities between the two, yet keeping in mind the distinctions in the work finished, the people involved and the purpose anticipated.

Wherever God places you, His grace is sufficient. He will also make a escape from whatever temptations the Devil may set before you.

We see that both were a remembrance of deliverance, whether personal or corporate. God brought Israel out of Egypt by a mighty display of power (Deut. 4:34, 5:15, 26:8, Acts 13:17). In like manner, we remember that it was "when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly," (Rom. 5:6). God moves for the salvation of people when they are completely unable to deliver themselves, and thus it is all for His glory and the honor of His Name. He received the praise from redeemed hearts and the resultant devoted service of their lives. Our hearts are renewed in appreciation for our glorious Savior, as we gather to remember Him and His accomplished work for us.

Both the Passover and the Lord's Supper are commands given by the Lord. Israel was commanded to keep the Passover on the 14th day of the first month each year, so it was a regular, God-determined expression of their obedience to Him and submission to His will (Ex. 12:24, Num. 9:5). As they gathered for the different feasts of Jehovah, they were expressing their common submission to His will and recognizing that they were not their own, having been bought with a price. We gather on the first day of each week as He instituted, not as an option or by His request, but because He has commanded us to do so ("this do" in 1 Cor. 11:24, 25 is imperative, not optional). Thus it is an act of submission to His will, recognition of His lordship and authority over us. We also have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20) and that price demands our obedience to His will and personal recognition of His rightful claims.

Both the Passover and the Lord's Supper involve the use of simple memorials. Israel remembered their deliverance with the roast lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. How faithfully they maintained the original practice depended on their exercise and devotion, but the instructions were very simple. It wasn't a ritualistic ceremony that it may have devolved into, nor a complicated event that may have been the case later. The institution was absolutely simple, but every part was significant in what it represented. In like manner, the Lord's Supper of our dispensation is a very simple use of bread and a cup of the fruit of the vine, both speaking to us of profound spiritual truth that makes deep impressions on our hearts. What

God has instituted for us is simple, yet intended to be full of deep spiritual meaning, and if we fail to see its significance, we can lapse into a mere rote practice. As C. H. Spurgeon wrote,

"If now with eyes defiled and dim,
We see the signs, but see not Him;
Oh, may His love the scales displace,
And bid us see Him face to face."

Neither the Passover nor the Lord's Supper is a repetition of the original event. In both of these, a sacrifice is represented and a work accomplished. As Israel celebrated the Passover, it may have been regularly or irregularly as their spiritual condition may have been, it was only a remembrance of that momentous night when the blood applied had delivered them from God's judgment. The celebrations of the Passover never involved application of the blood again, nor the reality of Divine judgment taking place. We gather to remember our Lamb, slain once for all at dark Calvary, but it is not a repetition of that event, but rather a calling to mind of the Person and His work for us. This is one of the fallacies of the Roman Catholic religion, that the mass that the priest celebrates daily is considered an unbloody repetition of the sacrificial work of Christ. In the ritual of the mass, the priest actually is considered to be offering Christ once again on the altar, though without blood being shed. This is a blasphemy and is completely contrary to the teaching of the Lord's Supper. We do not carry out His sacrificial work repeatedly, but we rather remember Him as He has appointed us.

One thing more is that the Passover was very closely associated with the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Deut. 16:1-8), so that one seems to blend in and result in the other. It indicates that the people who God had redeemed from bondage and had brought to enjoy fellowship with Himself must be those who readily judge and purge sin out from their lives. Passover gave them a position before God in which they were accepted as His people, but repeatedly He reminds them that since He is holy, they also must be holy (Lev. 11:44, 19:2). Sadly, they failed in this requisite, and God had to judge them for it. Do we not see the same with regard to the Lord's Supper? Paul teaches the Corinthian believers (1 Cor. 5:7-8) that their toleration of sin in their midst would

eventually affect the entire company of believers, and he links it with the feast of unleavened bread. The feast in this passage is not the Lord's Supper (never called a feast), but in ch. 11, we observe that he calls upon each believer to examine himself (v. 28) in view of coming to participate in the supper that expresses our fellowship with the saints and with the Lord, so that they may not be judged by the Lord and receive condemnation (v. 29-32). For a believer to take of the precious memorials of the body and blood of our blessed Savior while in a tolerated condition of sin in the life exposes that one to His disciplining judgment so that such sin might, and will, be removed and the believer cleansed. This had been the result of their lax attitude toward sin (v. 30).

Many other similarities could be noticed, but lastly, we see that only the ones who had been redeemed had the privilege of participating. It was an expression of fellowship that existed on the basis of the blood shed, the sacrifice offered, and the deliverance that was accomplished for them. There is no place for an unsaved person to participate at the Lord's Supper. It was after Judas had gone out that the Lord, with the eleven disciples, instituted this remembrance. How could an unsaved person, not redeemed by His work for them, remember a Person and a work that they have never trusted? Like for those who, though not saved, may even have been baptized, it only becomes a religious rite that has no spiritual value to them. This also had been the result of degeneration in the nation of Israel. By the time of the Lord Jesus, the sacred feast of Passover had become "a feast of the Jews" (John 2:13, 6:4).

(continued)

The Doctrine of Christ

H. C. G. Moule

From "The Cross and the Spirit". Brief book on Galatians. (Verses quoted are the author's own translation)

What does the Epistle (Galatians) say to us about the blessed Name of our Lord Jesus Christ?

We notice first the general fact that the Name appears everywhere. The Epistle contains 149 verses. In these there are at least 45 explicit mentions of our Lord Jesus; that is, one for every three or four verses on an average. And these figures give an imperfect impression; for many of the mentions are such that they not only mark points but cover surfaces, running out into statements about the Lord which can again be subdivided into others. This alone is nobly significant, this ubiquity of Christ in the texture of the Epistle. And I hardly need remind you how characteristic it is not of the Epistle to the Galatians only but of the New Testament Scriptures generally. As we read them with that suggestion in our minds, we shall indeed receive an ever-deepening impression that Christianity is in fact Jesus Christ; the Lord is His own Gospel; Subject matter even more than Teacher.

Coming to details, we find some hints here, and we find such hints more fully in many other places of the Epistles, of the human biography of the Lord. We find Him (4:4), "when the fullness of time was come"—when the ideal occasion had arrived, foretold and prepared, and He was "sent forth" by the Father, evidently from a pre-existent glory—we find Him "becoming, born, of woman." Here is an allusion which certainly does not of itself inform us of the virginity of His sacred mother, but equally certainly falls in with it. And the next phrase there, "come to be under law," indicates not only His human but His Israelite parentage; as, of course, does also 3:16, where the Christ is the "seed of Abraham"; so, too, in 3:29, "if ye belong to Christ, ye are Abraham's seed." This, however, is a point almost superfluous, as it is already obviously implied in the term "Christ" itself. Then we have repeated allusions to the fact of His Death; that

The present is the believer's winter. The frost may be sharp, the winds rough, the roads bad, and the toil hard; but summer is before us, and then all will be pleasant, peaceful, pure and prosperous forever. Let us then look forward and hope to the end.

word so familiar to us that we, and our hearers, only too often fail to realize its abiding mystery and glory. Assuredly no a priori and imagined Gospel, conceiving, if it could do so, of a holy incarnation, would have gone on to make the grand sequel of that incarnation to be—not a life of splendid and omnipotent achievement, but a death of violence, shame, and indescribable distress. Yet this is just what the true Gospel does. It utterly denies us leave to contemplate the incarnation out of spiritual reference, in its first regard, to the Cross and Passion. So here we have the incarnate Lord dying (2:21), "If by law is righteousness, Christ died for nothing." And His death is crucifixion: 2:20. "I have been nailed to the Cross with Christ"; 5:11, "the stumbling-block of the Cross"; 6:12, "persecution with reference to the Cross of Christ"; 6:14, "exultation in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by means of which (or, of whom) to me the world has been crucified, and I have been crucified to the world." Then, consequent on the Death, is the Resurrection; 1:1, "God the Father raised Him from the dead": 2:20, "Christ in me liveth."

One detail of His biography seems slight in itself, but it has manifold importance as we consider it. Quite incidentally, in a purely narrative statement of his own action, St. Paul mentions his having seen (1:19), "James, the brother of the Lord." It is as simple and natural a mention as if he had said, "I saw Timothy," or "I saw Sergius Paulus." But think for a moment what it suggests; the recency, and the absolute reality of the human biography of the Christ. Not now to discuss the question of what the "brotherhood" was between James and the Lord, it was some purely human relationship, whether of blood or of convention, which might just as well have subsisted between other two Palestinian men. As such, the allusion carries us far up beyond the natural range of myth and legend; it places us at once where we can hold intercourse with people who were not only contemporaries of Jesus, but shared a home with Him, and were classed and ranked with Him in human life. Placed immediately beside allusions to the eternal and divine side of His existence, how striking this is! As we shall see immediately, St. Paul pours out, all over the Epistle, allusions to this same Person which

assign, to say the least of it, a superhuman character and power to Him. Quite passingly and naturally he speaks of Him as, concurrently with the Eternal Father, sending down "grace and peace" upon the human soul; as being the ultimate and inmost secret of all spiritual life for the world. Yet also he was just James' brother. May we not say with reasonable confidence, with a faith which feels fact beneath its steps, that this astonishing collocation, so calm, so unexcited, so unforced, one limb of it stated in just the same fact-like tone as the other, can be explained only by fact? Is not this entirely unlike the manner of invention, conscious or unconscious? Written down within thirty years of the Crucifixion (and how luminous a retrospect is thirty years to a man in middle life!) this reference to the family of Nazareth, made without an effort, in the same breath with adoring references to the divine operations and prerogatives of a Member of that family, makes material for much thankful and reassuring thought.

But we turn now more directly to the assertions of the superhuman, the divine, aspect of Jesus Christ and His work. We find Him first, then, to be more than man: for (1:1) Paul is "an Apostle not by means of men, but by means of Jesus Christ." Again (1:12), Paul received and was taught "his Gospel" not as "transmitted by man, but by Jesus Christ's unveiling," i.e., as the context assures us, by means of an unveiling of truth effected by Jesus Christ. More explicitly still, we find Him "the Son of God," and so designated in connections which fully justify us in saying that the phrase implies a filiation which means part and lot in the eternal Nature: 1:15, "It pleased God to unveil His Son in me," as a mystery needing the Infinite Hand to lift its veil, and let it shine into the depths of the human soul for its salvation. Again, 2:20, "What I live in the flesh, I live in, under the condition and surroundings of, my faith in, my reliance on, the Son of God." Again, 4:4, "God sent out" (as from the recess of the eternal Presence) "His Son, made of a woman." So before us shines that fair and wonderful light of the Gospel, the eternal Sonship of Him who is also born of woman. It is not only (if "only" may be reverently said in such a connection) that GOD

becomes man; it is the SON of God. And the words carry with them, let us note, not only an announcement of wonder and glory, but an insight into the very heart of divine love. I know not if it is with others commonly as it is with me; but I must confess for myself, with humble thankfulness, a peculiar power upon faith and love in just this word, "the Son of God," when I ponder it in connection with the question of personal salvation. It carries with it, to the believing sinner, a supreme guarantee of welcome to the heart of the FATHER. It reveals to me something of the internal love of God for God, and then it carries down to me, in the Christ, incarnate, sacrificed and glorified, nothing less than that very love. I am in the Son; what must I not be to the Father?

This great Son of God appears in the Epistle in the exercise of many functions. He is the autocratic Master of His follower; Paul is "Christ's bondman" (1:10); he "bears in his body the servile brand of the Lord Jesus"; he is shown by the scars of persecution to be not a self-reliant hero but the bought property of his Redeemer (6:17). Christ's disciples are "His," belonging to Him: "If ye are Christ's" (3:29): "They that are Christ's" (5:24). On the other hand, He is such to them that, as we have seen, being His bondmen they are also, equally, wonderfully, sons of God in Him the Son: 3:26, "You are all God's sons by means of your faith in Christ Jesus": 4:4, 5, "God sent forth His Son that we might get (as our intended portion), our filial adoption." And 4:7, "So thou art no more a bondman but a son, and if a son, an heir." Such again is this wonderful Christ that His redeemed are not only in His possession, or under His protection; they are "in Him"; words significant of a union profound and vital, illustrated elsewhere by the imagery of the Head and Limbs, which is here only implied. The Churches in Judea are "in Christ," 1:22. All believers are "one" as it were one compound personality, because their Head is one (3:28). "In Him" is the sphere where faith works by means of love (v. 6). Those who are baptized in His name are "clothed with Him," involved in Him (3:27). "In Him" resides our justification (2:17), as much as to say, we must be in Him to get the acceptance which He has won for us. "In Him" His servants have a sacred liberty (2: 4).

And all this blessing for us has been dearly won for us by Him in whom we are so richly to enjoy it. All through the Epistle, as we have already seen in part, runs this red line of atoning and redeeming Passion (1:4), "He gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins that He might take us out of this present age so evil." He lifts us, as it were, above its grasp, so that we are in it and not in it, kept from its evil while enabled in face of it to walk with God; free in the profound peace of the pardon He has won, and in the inward power of the Spirit which also is ours because He died in order to pour the gift of Pentecost upon us. Would we enjoy that life of emancipation, and live "in the flesh" (2:20) yet as "taken out of the world so evil"? It must be by faith in Him, not as He appears in any of His characteristics but specially in this, that "He loved me, and gave Himself over on my behalf" (2:20). Would we estimate the awfulness and the love of His dying work aright? We are to remember that when He died (3:13), Christ bought us out from the curse, the death from one great side it not only can, it must, be imaged by the transactions of the market-place; the paying down by Him of infinitely valuable consideration that we, altogether on that account, may be released. And the party to whom here the consideration is paid down is surely the Law, violated by us, satisfied by Him for us. In other words, the mystery of His Passion and Death had reference to the awful claims of eternal Holiness with its categorical commands. It dealt so with them that we, because of that Passion, and because of it alone in the sphere of legal righteousness, find the grasp of the Law's arrest and bondage upon us relaxed, and walk out free.

Let us not forget further that the imagery points on its other side to that sacred bondage which alone is perfect freedom. For what does it say? Not, "He delivered us" (as indeed He did), but, "He bought us out." Our release is so effected that by the very act we are acquired, appropriated, possessed. "Not your own, for you were bought for value." "Whether we live therefore or die, we belong to the Lord."

This process of our deliverance by the Son of God is put before us, again, in this Epistle as our Justification. See 2:16, "Knowing

that man does not get justification in consequence of works of law, but only by means of faith in Jesus Christ, we too believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified in consequence of faith in Christ . . . But if, seeking to be justified in Christ, etc." And again, (3:11), "That in law no one gets justification before God, is evident; because 'The just in consequence of faith shall live.'" And again, 3:24: "The law was our pedagogue up to Christ, that we might be justified in consequence of faith." And again, 3:4: "You disconnected yourselves from Christ, such of you as are getting justification in law; from grace you fell. For we by the Spirit, in consequence of faith, are looking out for the hope of righteousness." If I at all understand these last pregnant words, they mean that we are looking out, with an expectation sure and certain, for future glory, as the issue of "righteousness," namely, of our acceptance for Christ's sake, our justification in Him. Of course I have regard in this interpretation to the large context of St. Paul's language elsewhere, especially in the Roman Epistle (see e.g., Rom. 3:21-24). But I think this is amply enough to secure the interpretation, in view of the context of Galatians 5:5. He is thinking here not of our condition, but of our position; the Lord's winning for His people this wonderful "extradition" to Him, from under the curse of the Law, into the smile and sunshine of reconciliation with the Lawgiver. There they stand, His purchased property, His much more than amnestied, His welcomed and acclaimed, members and brethren; embraced for His sake, and in union with His person (see 2:17). And standing there, on the ground where penitent reliance is their foothold, they look up from thence, and, in the same reliance, see the Gate Beautiful from the Hills Delectable, rejoicing, as the justified, in "hope" of glory. For "whom He justified, them He also glorified."

It is almost needless to point out that, as in the more extended discourses of Romans, so in these briefer lines, we have the word *dikaion* used in its only proper reference. It has to do with law, and tribunal, and a sentence proclaiming that the law is satisfied, and that the accused is accepted by the Lawgiver. "To justify" is a word (we need continually to

remember this and to explain it) not of internal condition but of relative position. It denotes not our subjective amendment or cleansing, in the region of will, but our objective acquittal, in the region of law. Only the acquittal is more than acquittal, for it is welcome, it is acceptance. So complete and magnificent is the reason why, the procuring cause, the price paid, the glory of the substituted Sin-bearer, that the sentence of the law, through the lips of the Lawgiver, upon those who (considered in themselves) merited only its "curse," is not merely, "You may go." It is, "You must come." It is a welcome to the embraces of the Judge, and to adoption into His wonderful home.

Very instructive, by the way, is the manner in which in this Epistle the two conceptions of Justification and Adoption are never confused, but collocated and treated in living relation. Perfectly separable in idea, they are profoundly connected in spiritual fact. And their nexus is our Lord Jesus Christ, and our union with Him by faith. He is at once the Son of God and the Sin-bearer for man. And the benefit for us of both His two characters is appropriated and realized by faith. And faith's revealed efficacy is that it puts us into union with Him, in all He is for us. As we are guilty, it puts us into union with Him who has perfectly satisfied eternal Law as our Representative. But we are also aliens, and He is also the beloved Son. Therefore it also puts us into union with Him in filiation. And so the affiancing which receives from the Judge the gift of His more than acquittal receives also, in the same act, from the Father, the gift of His adoption into sonship.

Only in the briefest way need I point out the practical import of the words "faith" and "believe" in all this connection. Assuredly their great outstanding idea is reliance, affiancing, the taking the Trustworthy One at His word. The whole purport of the Epistle leads that way, to say nothing now of the ample proof of such a reference from our Lord's own use, always, of the words *pistis* and *pisteuein* in the sense of personal trust. From one view-point then "faith" is the simplest thing in the world; and happy the soul which remembers this, and acts upon it, in life and in death. From other sides it is the most profound and pregnant thing in the

world. As exercised by a sinner in view of His Redeemer crucified and glorified, what does it not connote? It is by its very act a confession of self-condemnation and self-abandonment; and it is by its very act a confession of the glory and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. It repudiates utterly all moral merit in itself. By its very nature, faith looks out from and forgets itself; it is occupied with its Object. Salvation by faith is salvation wholly by Christ trusted.

In closing this section of our studies, I note in passing a detail or two in the Apostle's doctrine of Christ.

v. 1, "Christ made us free"; He is the Liberator obviously from the bondage of condemnation, the internal slavery of the unforgiven and alienated. On the other hand, He is the Lawgiver; 6:2, "Fulfill the law of Christ." His liberty is on the other side order and loyalty; His freedmen are also, from the point of view of His blessed will and rights, His subjects, aye, His bondmen. Only, His law is now not only the categorical precept, but the formative power.

Lastly, 4:19: "Till Christ take shape in you." Here is formative power indeed; and it is not an abstraction but a Person. This wonderful Christ, so absolutely One in Himself, so multifarious in His function for us, appears here as living and moving in His disciple, who on the other part lives and moves in Him. He is "Christ, which is our life." And the moral and spiritual development of the Christian is accordingly expressed in this wonderful term, of the development of Christ in him. The Indweller is there, and as it were grows in His dwelling, and fills it more and more. And so the plastic dwelling takes His shape. "The life of Jesus is manifest in the mortal flesh."

Are All The Children In?

I think oftimes, as the night draws nigh,
Of an old house on the hill;
Of a yard all wide and blossom-starred,
Where the Children played at will;
And when the night at last came down,
Hushing the merry din,
Mother would look around and ask,
"Are all the children in?"

'Tis many and many a year since then,

And the old house on the hill
No longer echoes to childish feet,
And the yard is still—so still!
But I see it all as the shadows creep,
And though many a year has been
Since then, I can hear Mother ask,
"Are all the children in?"

I wonder, if when the shadows fall
On the last short earthly day,
When we say good-bye to the world outside,
All tired with our childish play;
When we step out into the Other Land,
Where Mother so long has been:
Will we hear her ask, just as of old,
"Are all the children in?"

True Christian Charity

William Rogers

I went through 1 Corinthians, taking about six nights to it, and giving a sort of outline of the entire Epistle. I enjoyed going over it myself, for somehow I always learn more, when I am trying to get something for others. One simple point that impressed me much was this - if the Corinthians had possessed the charity or love described in verses 4-7 of chapter 13, every one of the troubles described in the Epistle would have been avoided.

1. They wouldn't have had the divisions of ch. 1:11-12, for "love is not puffed up."

2. They wouldn't have tolerated the fornicator of ch. 5, for "love rejoiceth not in iniquity."

3. They wouldn't have taken their brethren to law, as in ch. 6:6, for "love suffereth long and is kind."

4. They wouldn't have stumbled the weak brother, as in ch. 8:10-12, for "love seeketh not her own."

5. Their women would not have been uncovered, nor their men have gotten drunken at the Lord's Table, for "love doth not behave itself unseemly."

6. They wouldn't have been jealous of greater men, or more gifted men, as in ch. 12:15-16, for "love envieth not."

7. And they wouldn't have been pushing their ministry on the others, as in ch. 14:23-34, for "love vaunteth not itself."

So there's a wee sermon for you.