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## Beauties of Inspiration

*L. Shel Drake*

One of the striking beauties of inspiration is seen in the modesty of the writers. The retiring meekness of those who wrote the gospels and the book of Acts, is the very opposite of that which is the natural way of man. Every child of Adam is more or less ostentatious. We naturally love to parade our greatness, and to turn attention to ourselves; even our humility desires to be seen and commended. This natural pride of man is wholly absent in the inspired historical writings of the New Testament, the place where it might have more easily lurked without suspicion. In all the experiences recorded in the book of Acts we are told nothing whatever of the doings of Luke, "the beloved physician," who wrote the records, and although he was the faithful friend and fellow-laborer of the apostle Paul, he never once makes reference to himself. Nothing is said of the many times he undoubtedly ministered comfort and healing to the beaten and afflicted apostle, nor a single word about his ministry from the beginning to the end of the story. Were it not for the change of the pronoun from "they" to "we," it would not be possible to tell when Luke was, and when he was not, a companion of the Apostle. It would not be too much to say, I am sure, that apart from the Book of God, this surpassing meekness is without a parallel in the writings of men. "Only Luke is with me," wrote the apostle in his last letter before his martyrdom, so this devoted man was faithful to the last. But for a few, who were not ashamed of the chain which the Man of God wore for Christ in the Roman prison, how very lovely his last days might have been. Luke was still with him to minister to his body and soul, till the moment when Nero did his worst and the warrior was at rest. What a steady long course Luke ran, and how well! In his preface to his gospel he says, "It seemed good unto me, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first." (Luke 1 :3). If this understanding resulted from being an eye-witness, how wonderful that so much should be

written without the smallest reference to himself!

The same can be said of the writers of the Gospels; Mark never refers to himself at all; John occasionally speaks of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." No doubt he was pre-eminent in his love for the Lord: his writings show it, but he does not speak of himself as loving the Lord, but as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." The three occasions when, with James and Peter, John had the special privilege of being with the Lord, viz, on the mount of transfiguration, in the house of Jairus at the raising of his daughter, and in the garden of Gethsemane, are not mentioned in John's record. Peter's fall is passed over without the condemning details that are found in Mark, which was written under Peter's own supervision. John merely says twice that Peter said, "I am not," and the third time, "he denied again." There is not a word of his cursing and swearing. John says, "Simon Peter followed Jesus;" he omits "afar off" as in Mark. Mark does not tell who it was who drew the sword in Gethsemane to defend the Lord; John says it was Peter. Mark records at length Peter's other mistakes; on the mount of transfiguration where he said, "let us make three tabernacles . . . for he wist not what to say" (Mark 9:5-6) ; Peter's mistaken counsel to the Lord and its just rebuke are told without any palliation—"He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me Satan: for thou savourest-not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." (Mark 8:33.) But in Peter's confession of Christ told so fully, in Matthew is passed over with only these words, "And Peter answered and said unto Him, Thou art the Christ," (Mark 8:29), there is no reference to the answer of our Lord supplied by Matthew, "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona, etc." Many other instances could be shown of the same self-abasing humility of Peter in Mark's gospel, where the Apostle passes over his acts of

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devotedness to the Lord and dwells on those incidents in detail which were to his shame. But John's love for Peter is seen in the way he exalts Peter's love, and service, and testimony to Christ, while he passes over with the barest mention the mistakes of the impetuous apostle of the circumcision.

There is a beauty in all this, that is as rare as it is comely, in this world of jealousy and pride.

Matthew in his record is just as modest; while the others speak of him as Levi, which was his more honorable title, Matthew speaks of himself as "Matthew, the publican," (Matt. 10:3). This is the more remarkable when it is recalled that the publicans were most repulsive to the people of Israel; "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican," (Matt. 18:17). In Luke 6:15 Matthew is put before Thomas in the grouping of the apostles in their couples, but in Matthew, Thomas has first place. Luke says Levi made Him a great feast in his house, while in Matthew it simply says, "While Jesus sat at meat in the house," not even saying whose house it was. But more incidents are unnecessary. Without exception the writers of the Scriptures have sought not their own glory, but the glory of Him who has used them. "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?" Proverbs 20:6. They are found in the writers of the New Testament, and the beauty of this happy spirit is another of the many indications of inspiration.

**The quaintness of the presentation of a truth often arrests one, where otherwise it might pass as commonplace, and be easily forgotten.**

## Habakkuk's Problem and Praise

*Joel Portman*

The anxieties of a believer can, sometimes, be overwhelming, and there are many examples in Scripture that illustrate the deep concerns that saints face in life. It is helpful to us to know that they passed through times of discouragement and distress much the same as we. Repeatedly we read in the Psalms the deep longings and genuine anxieties of saints, even David, who felt the oppression of the wicked world and ungodly men in their lives. What we experience in a world that is increasingly turning against God and His principles is only a continuation of the difficulties that they encountered as well.

In this respect, we can appreciate in large measure the deep concern and exercise of the prophet Habakkuk, as he was very aware of the violence and evil that prevailed in his world and concerning which we read his words in the first verses of his prophecy (Hab. 1:1-5). Actually, the prophecy of Habakkuk is very unusual in many ways.

Those who can appreciate the depth of the original language in which it is written tell us that its language makes it one of the richest, most sublime of the prophecies of our Old Testament. "The lofty sublimity of this brief composition, as regards both thought and expression, has been universally recognized. 'His language is classical throughout, His view and mode of presentation bear the seal of independent force and finished beauty.'" (Delitzsch, quoted in "Pulpit Commentary"). He was evidently a very educated writer, and as a result of his refined, godly character, he was sensitive to the ungodly conditions that prevailed. There are some who suggest that he might have been a priest as well as a prophet, due to the last words of his prophecy, and thus he was intimately conscious of the holy standard that God desired for His people. His prophecy is entirely in the form of a dialogue between the prophet and his God, in which he (as do so many other godly saints) complains to God concerning the abounding evil and resident wickedness that prevailed among his people, perplexed at such conditions and the apparent lack of God's judgment on those who perpetrate such deeds. Other prophets addressed the nation for God, so their attention was directed man-ward; Habakkuk's attention is God-ward, and he addresses God on behalf of the nation. ". . . He does not adopt the attitude which is characteristic of the prophets. His face is set in an opposite direction to theirs. They address the nation Israel, on behalf of God: he rather speaks to God on behalf of Israel. Their task was Israel's sin, the proclamation of God's doom, and the offer of His grace to their penitence. Habakkuk's task is God Himself, the effort to find out what He means by permitting tyranny and wrong. They attack the sins; he is the first to state the problems, of life." ("Expositor's Bible").

We see from his example, that for godly saints in affliction and experiencing troubles, the best and only thing for them is to speak to the Lord about it. Complaining to others only makes one a burden and a bother; they soon tire of hearing out complaints! However, the Lord's ear is always open and His eye is upon His own, and He never tires of hearing their cries as they heed the admonition of Ps. 37:5, "Commit thy way unto the Lord (or roll thy way upon the Lord), trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Doesn't his perplexity resound in the hearts of many saints today? Who can behold the prevalence of moral evil, open denial of divine standards of behavior, rejection of spiritual realities or accommodation to other forms of depravity without feeling an inward repulsion that makes one wonder why God doesn't intervene? J. N. Darby says that Habakkuk's complaint concerning the insupportable evil that existed is "the natural effect of the working of the Spirit of God in a heart jealous for His glory and detesting evil." Also A. C. Gaebelein says, "Like Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, Habakkuk is deeply stirred on account

of the declension among the people of God, and that led him to cry to Jehovah, to tell Him all about it.” (“Annotated Bible”). It seems that a safe gauge for one’s spiritual state before God is seen in the degree that such evil is detested and judged in the light of divine truth. Carnal believers can tolerate and ignore that which causes a godly saint to cringe and sorrow. We can test our own state by this means. In such cases, it is not only a personal reaction, but is also one that recognizes the such conditions impinge on God’s glory, especially when seen among those who profess to be God’s people, as Israel was.

We can learn a little of the believer’s recourse at such times from a brief study of this prophecy. Beginning with his perplexity and concern directed in the form of a question to Jehovah, he learns what the LORD will do to judge such prevalent evil. However, the information he receives causes further questions, so it is only by waiting further on the Lord that he receives the needed answer. Finally, he ends, as we also should, by recognizing the greatness and grace of the Lord and, with confidence that rests on His goodness, rendering praise to Him no matter what conditions may come in his life. He reminds us that, regardless of the uncertainty of future events that might affect a believer in Christ, continuous confidence in the Lord will result in praise and joy. “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isa. 40:31).

### **Habbakuk’s Person**

Admittedly, little is known of Habakkuk personally. It is conjectured that he might have been a Levite or a priest who was involved in the service of temple singing, since he was evidently familiar with the structure of such songs and words that were used (such as “selah,” v. 9, the structure of his expressions, and the words used at the close (v. 19). However, there is no certainty in those conclusions. Whether he was or not, it is clear that he was very familiar with the psalms of praise that were the normal voices that rose in the temple worship. He was one who knew what it was to rejoice in going into the house of the Lord (Ps. 122:1). Those who constantly know that presence as he did will have a similar sensitivity to evil that he expressed in his prophecy.

Habakkuk’s time of prophecy is not clear, but some have located him as a contemporary with Jeremiah during the time of Jehoiakim, a wicked king who rejected the Word of the Lord through Jeremiah and sought his life. Others have placed him at the end of Josiah’s reign, but the conditions that he describes seem ill-suited to that period of prosperity and righteousness. The conditions he faced are, however, very similar to those that Jeremiah encountered (Jer. 5:1-9; 11:10; 12:1; 20:7-8; 22:3 etc.). Considering the description of those days, we easily relate to such conditions

and feel the same concern.

Habakkuk’s name is very interesting and applicable. It seems to mean “embracer,” either passively (being embraced) or actively (embracing others). He embraced God in prayer and his people in his heart. At the same time, he was embraced by God. The word implies “one who takes another to his heart and into his arms, as one soothes a poor weeping child, telling it to be quiet,” (C. J. Barber, “Habakkuk and Zephaniah”).

### **Habakkuk’s Problem, (Hab. 1:1-4)**

This first section of his prophecy describes his “burden.” This word signifies that what he was concerned with was a weight, a heavy message with ominous implications, something that expressed the deep concerns of his soul. Malachi likewise begins his prophecy, and other prophets use a similar expression (Isa. 13:1, 21:11, 21:13, etc.). The Lord rebuked the false prophets for using the expression (Jer. 23:33-34, 36, 38). It was likely a common expression among prophets who were going to deliver a weighty message to the people. In the case of genuine prophets, it meant that what they were going to say involved severe results to the listeners and that these messengers were responsible before the Lord to deliver the message. What could be more “burdensome” than a message that Habakkuk carried that expressed his concern for the welfare of the people? It was heavy on his heart, and in the entirety of the message, it also conveyed God’s declaration of how He would judge His own people. Such knowledge would be a weight on the heart of any spiritual man of God!

Habakkuk’s problem was two-fold: He had difficulty understanding why God allowed evil conditions to continue among His people, and, secondly, he longed for a reply from the Lord, but it had not been forthcoming. His difficulties are reflected in the concerns of many others in similar conditions. The psalms often express the same question: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed . . .” (Ps. 2:1-2). “Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? . . . the wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor . . .” (Ps. 10:1-4). Repeatedly the psalms express the concerns of saints when they saw or experienced the oppressive power of the wicked. Assuming that the psalms address conditions dealing with actual events of their time, one wonders how it could be that amid the chosen nation of Israel, such violence and wicked oppression could prevail? It seems that the results of sin and its evil influence on man spreads so far as to affect the behavior of those who were identified as God’s people. To read these descriptions reminds us that conditions of our present world are not new, but are only a part of the continuum of the pattern of evil that has existed from the beginning.

The question of Habakkuk is echoed by many, even

unbelievers. "If there is a God," they say, "why does He allow children to suffer? Why doesn't He intervene to stop violence, killing, and all the other forms of evil that offend the normal thinking?" Of course, in many cases, this question arises from an attitude of unbelief or disregard for God or His power, but it is still often a legitimate one. Why is there suffering, and the abuses of mankind even in the most enlightened society? Habakkuk faced this enigma, and turned to God for the response.

His other concern often troubles saints, and that is why they cry unto God in prayer but seem to receive so few answers? They long for some word of comfort, some counsel, some direction, but to no avail. Usually they long for an answer immediately, but it doesn't come. Their heart can become overwhelmed, and the sense creeps into their soul that God doesn't care. Yet that is far from the truth, and in Habakkuk we can learn some lessons regarding both disconcerting questions in our lives as well. "Faith could hardly be more severely tested than by seeing the people of God suffer oppression without any apparent intervention of God on their behalf," (C. A. Coates, "Minor Prophets").

### Habakkuk's Plea

Habakkuk's prayer had been sustained over a long period ("how long . . ."). His expression, "thou dost not hear," actually is based on the lack of an answer. That apparent indifference to his cry seemingly only increased his burden. God's apparent failure to respond gave him the impression that He had not heard. But He had heard! There is not a prayer or petition of a saint that fails to reach the ear of God. The lack of a desired response may be due to other reasons. Habakkuk cried out "Violence," but he saw no act of deliverance by God. Why? He was seeing sin's results in their worst form: iniquity abounded, grievance (worry, perverseness) was before him. Robbery (spoiling) and violence was prevalent along with strife and contention. The people were being victimized, The law was powerless, ("slacked" means it is benumbed, paralyzed, unable to deal with these conditions) and there was no justice. The wicked (plural, lawless ones ) surrounded (in their hostility) the righteous man (singular) and judgment was perverted, and the wicked were obviously invigorated by God's lack of response. They felt that they could commit atrocities with impunity. What a description of abysmal conditions under which he lived!

Undoubtedly there are many saints in this world who suffer equally under similar conditions. They may also feel as Habakkuk did, that they are alone and without recourse since it seems that God doesn't know. May every believer in such stringent conditions know something of the ultimate end that Habakkuk came to, the point of understanding that God was "in His holy temple," (Hab. 2:20), and despite such evils, "the just shall live by his faith," (Hab. 2:4). They can well be like Habakkuk, of whom one

has said that "still, dark as the outlook was, and oppressed in heart as he felt himself to be amidst the mysteries of life viewed in relation to the Divine government, he maintained throughout unswervingly his trust in God; and which so clearly pervaded his spirit and so repeatedly revealed itself in his expressions as amply to justify the representation that he is "eminently the prophet of reverential, awe-filled faith," ("Pulpit Commentary").

*(continued)*

***The worst circumstances cannot destroy the true believer's hold upon his God. Grace is a living power which survives that which would suffocate all other forms of existence.***

## The Riches of Liberality

Poverty is a great help to liberality, as Paul tells us in writing of the Macedonian churches; for their poverty "abounded unto the riches of their liberality." It is not being liberal when what is given leaves the giver but very little the poorer; for liberality is measured by God in what remains, and not in relation to what is given. The true basis, and the only measure of the grace of giving, is, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," Whose aim was that, "through His poverty we might be rich." Who can measure God's riches! We read of the "riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering," as revealed to us in the cross and work of Christ when we were dead in trespasses and sins (Rom. 2:4). We read of the "riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7; 2:7) vouchsafed to us as the redeemed children of our Father in heaven, and enjoyed by faith through the power of the Holy Ghost. We read of the "riches of His glory" (Eph. 3:16), pointing us onward to the eternal future. We read also of the "riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8); of the "riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement (or knowledge) of the mystery of God" (Col. 2:3); of "His riches in glory by (in) Christ" (Phil 4:19) and all these riches are ours through Him Whose poverty secured them for us, and Whose love keeps us for them.

This grace of our Lord becomes the foundation of all our expectations, and is to become the spring of all the riches of that liberality which should ever characterize the child of God. Thus, though poor, he is ever making many rich, because having nothing, he yet possesses all things.

The Holy One of God condescended not to the bounty of the rich, but was lovingly indebted to the ministrations of the lowly women who came from Galilee; and His holy cause owns little indebtedness to the wealthy now, but is ever drawing on the love and toil of those who are poor in this world, rich in faith (That is,

faith's riches which we have been enumerating above), and heirs of the Kingdom. What a lofty strain does Paul's appeal for "the want of the saints" assume in 2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9! The result he sought was PRAISE to God for His grace that drew out the grace of giving, and PRAYER for the givers, who therein evinced their subjection to the Gospel they professed.

On this most profitable subject let us turn to Deut. 16 (for every commandment obeyed, becomes a promise enjoyed), and there we find Israel was to appear before God three times in a year, and it is added: "They shall not appear before the Lord empty; everyone shall give as he is able (Heb: — according to the gift of his hand—see margin) **according to the blessing** of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee (Vs. 16-17). The gift was to be according to the blessing given. (See 1 Cor. 16:2.) The gold was to bring its gold, the silver its silver, and the copper its copper. Let us ask ourselves, Does it do so? Do the thousands of the rich believer bring thousands into the treasury of God? Do the mites of the poor saint bring mites into the same treasury? The Lord sees every piece of gold, of silver, of copper that falls into it, and values each at its true value—the value of the love that gave it. A love that should think its all too poor, and its greatest gift too small, in return for that love which was unquenched by poverty, by suffering or by blood—a love that was true unto death, even the death of the cross.

Not only, however, was the full hand to measure out its fullness by what each year gave, but also by the remembrance of what each feast revealed of God. There was to be no empty hand at the passover feast (V. 1) that spoke of redemption by the blood of the Lamb, and of a mighty deliverance from the house of bondage. The love of Christ constrains. It writes deeply on the redeemed soul, "Ye are bought with a price." Nor should an empty hand be seen at the feast of Pentecost (V. 10) ; for therein in the witness of the Spirit's presence and power, filling with joy and rejoicing those who once were slaves in Egypt, and who now come, with a tribute of a free-will offering, "according as the Lord had blessed them. The love of the Spirit constrains." And in the feast of Tabernacles (V. 13) the full hand should bear witness of faith's estimate of the joys at God's right hand for evermore, when in the Kingdom of our God the corn of heaven and the new wine of the kingdom shall rejoice the ransomed soul. The love of the Father constrains. What a three-fold cord of past, of present, and of future blessing is here given to draw out of our hearts all we have and we are, and to lay ALL, and nothing less than ALL, as a free will offering, a holy sacrifice on the altar of the love of God.

We would, in conclusion, remind readers, rich and poor, of that oft-repeated word in Haggai, "**Consider your ways**" in the connection in which it stands, and may the festive prophet (such is the meaning of his name) unite in

our minds this command with the consideration of the feasts of the Lord, and to their precious unfoldings to us of God's riches in grace and glory, which He has made ours through the blood of the cross. Truly He has made us rich; may we make ourselves poor for His sake.

WIS Apr 1941

**If you can hear and bear the rod of affliction that God lays upon you, remember His lesson. You are being beaten so that you may be better. The Lord uses His flail of tribulation to separate the chaff from the wheat.**

## Jonah, Part 10

*Steve Walvatne*

### The Master

*"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee" (3:1-2).*

Jonah has returned full-circle, back to the place where he went astray. Left to himself, he'd have been far from Nineveh at this point, but the Master that commissioned him demanded compliance and "who will say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Job 9:12). Servants may default on earthly masters and get away with it, but not so with God. The Omnipotent retrieved His servant in a way that He, and He alone, could. We've observed His method in chapters 1 and 2. Now we begin again, noting

1. **The Master's Second Call**
2. **The Master's Second Charge**

### The Master's Second Call

"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time..." In chapter 1, the Lord deliberately called Jonah to Nineveh. To honor his Master, the prophet needed to leave immediately for the heathen city, because "we are only of use to God when we are just where He wants us" (W.W. Fereday: "Jonah and His Experience"). But Jonah ignored the summons and plotted his own course, proving that maturity and responsibility by themselves, are insufficient barriers to self-will. Still, the ancient principle abides: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8). Said Jack Hunter, "Men like to close their eyes to this law; so do some Christians...We are ultimately what we determined to be, for character is the outcome of choice of conduct" ("What the Bible Teaches": Galatians). Christians that dally with sin, adopting this world's low estimate

of God and its light analysis of evil, teeter on the edge of calamity, as did the feeble Israelites pursued by Amalek in Moses' day (Deut. 25:17-18).

Jonah's resistance was an affront to his Master's authority. It threatened, in fact, his role as a prophet since disobedience is especially serious in public servants. We rejoice to know that "God is rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4), restoring wayward souls (Ps. 23:3), yet dare not presume from this, that restoration of soul guarantees one's reinstatement to previous service. When Jonah purchased a ticket to Tarshish, he sold his God-given title to Nineveh. Would that call come again? It had for Abraham and did for Peter, but it doesn't always. Squandered opportunities are often lost opportunities. Joan Suisted pondered this when writing,

"And He said unto another,  
'Follow Me.' But he said,  
'Lord, suffer me first...'" (Lk. 9:59)

He paused a moment by the sea,  
He looked, I thought, beseechingly  
Yet all He said was, "Follow Me."

But I had many plans, that day,  
I could not throw my life away...  
I thought of all I had to lose  
And how to tactfully refuse...

Then He went on, and I – I stayed  
Quite certain that the choice I made  
My balanced common sense displayed...

Yet, if He'd only walk once more  
Along the fateful, sunlit shore  
And look, and call me as before,  
Then I would go unthinkingly.  
I strain my eyes and ears to see  
And hear Him say just, "Follow Me."

Those words are like a lost refrain,  
The silence is an endless pain.  
He has not passed my way again.

The Israelites learned the solemnity of this, when at Kadesh-barnea, they refused God's call to "go up and possess" the land of Canaan (Num. 14; Deut. 1:19-46). When informed later of God's anger, they assayed to go, presuming the Lord was with them, but He wasn't. Moses warned, "Go not up, for the Lord is not among you...because ye are turned from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you" (Num. 14:42-43). Still, they pressed forward, "and the Amorites which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah" (Deut. 1:44). The writer of Hebrews quoting Psalm 95, related Jehovah's disdain: "...I was grieved with that generation,

and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest" (3:10-11). Thus, the carcasses of an entire generation (with two exceptions), were "strewn in the wilderness" (1 Cor. 10:5, marg.) just shy of the Promised Land. For them, there was no second chance.

Moses too, forfeited his opportunity of leading Israel into Canaan when he smote the rock at Meribah twice, rather than speaking to it as God had ordered. No amount of remorse could alter the Lord's verdict: "...Because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:12). Moses did view the land from Mount Nebo (Deut. 34), but his prior duty went to another. "And I besought the Lord at that time, saying...I pray Thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan...But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter...for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see" (Deut. 3:23, 25-28).

Each believer should "ponder the path of [his] feet, and let all [his] ways be established" (Pr. 4:26), lest he leave the route of holy service and negate his claim to present responsibility. "We have known, and know of cases," wrote W.H. Ferguson, "where it would seem that the moral life of the past, even where there is restoration to God, would make a public place most unseemly" ("Words in Season", May 1952). 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9 bear this out.

How long Jonah waited and wondered isn't stated, but in his case, a second call to Nineveh did come. That "second time" opportunity likely thrilled his soul as it does all true servants who have known the sadness of departure and the sweetness of God's grace. Still, the second call wasn't identical to the first. "Other shades of meaning are in the message...corresponding with the changes which time has brought in circumstances and in character" (Alexander Raleigh: "The Story of Jonah"). Writes G.C. Willis, "The message is a little more preemptory, without the explanation of the reason for the warning as given at the first. The prophet had shown himself unworthy of that intimacy of communion that the first command contained" ("Lessons from Jonah").

Before moving to our second heading, well might we pause and acknowledge the inherent beauties of our "Greater than Jonah." There was no need for a "second time" in His service, for He was impeccable, the glorious Son of God. "...I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things...for I do always those things that please Him" (Jn. 8:28-29). Those "things" were ever His delight (Ps. 40:8) and He fully discharged them,

being “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Php. 2:8). The erring Jonah was restored to service – the “Greater than Jonah” was exalted supreme (Php. 2:9-11).

No mortal can with Him compare  
Among the sons of men;  
Fairer is He than all the fair  
That fill the heavenly train.

-Samuel Stennett

### The Master’s Solemn Charge

“Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.” Here, as at the first, there is a (1) Sudden Exhortation – “Arise”, a (2) Specific Destination – “Go unto Nineveh, that great city”, and a (3) Solemn Obligation – “Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.” There is not, however, a Sovereign Explanation as in chapter 1 – “For their wickedness is come up before Me.” That “pure denunciation, which might reasonably be expected to be followed by judgment” (W.W. Fereday) is omitted now. Rather than “preach against” (1:2), he’s to “preach unto,” a difference Jonah possibly noted with trepidation.

The charge was direct, yet sparse in detail. Jonah acted on what he knew and trusted God for the rest. That dependence applies still. Evangelists especially, have to be flexible – ready to go *when* and *where* they’re called – without *prescribed sermons*, *promised “success,”* or *presumed schedules*. Human nature revolts against these unknowns, desiring instead, that things be “cut and dried.” But God expects faith and fidelity from His servants. They must go as He guides.

What, for instance, is said of Abraham, who left an idolatrous nation at the call of God? “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he WENT OUT, NOT KNOWING WHITHER HE WENT” (Heb. 11:8). Or what of Philip the evangelist who received a similar call while preaching in Samaria? “Arise, and go toward the south...and he arose and went... THEN the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot” (Acts 8:26-29). And then there’s Paul who enquired at conversion – “What shall I do Lord?” The response? “Arise, and go into Damascus; and THERE it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do” (Acts 22:10).

A modern example of this principle occurred in 1938, when the preacher Lorne McBain from Michigan, arrived at an assembly in Garnavillo, Iowa, following gospel work in Beetown, Wisconsin. Tired and eager to return home, he planned just a couple meetings in this northeast Iowa community, but God had other things in mind (Isa. 55:8). Admonished by a local sister, Mrs. Louis Brandt, to “stay a little while and not leave after a night or two,” brother McBain abandoned his prior plans, “and the Spirit began to move!” (Vern Wirkler: “The Formation and Growth of the Garnavillo Assembly”). Seven souls pro-

fessed salvation in the first two weeks, and before the series ended, the entire town reeled from the virtual “earthquake” in their midst. Brother McBain never ceased to marvel at the Lord’s doings in Garnavillo that year – and how, through the influence of one godly sister, he was blessed to witness them. We’re grateful for men in our day who are equally open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and who like Paul can declare, “As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you...also” (Rom. 1:15).

The Master’s charge, however, did contain two components Jonah must obey in Nineveh. He was to speak pointedly (“preach unto it”) and precisely (“the preaching that I bid thee”). Neither of these was optional and both remain relevant today.

Pointed messages are direct, not vague or impersonal. They target an audience and seek to reach it. Jonah’s hearers were barbaric and brutal, yet he wasn’t to mince words. Their wickedness called for skillful probing and studious plowing, not the soft, smooth presentations some prefer. “...If the awful condition of guilty sinners be properly considered, it will constrain ministers of the gospel frequently to *cry aloud* to them” (R. Waldo Sibthorp: “Lectures on the Book of Jonah”).

In doing this, Jonah had to be precise: pointed as to persons and precise as to precept. The two intertwine. Precise messages never flail or flounder because they’re heaven sent. They don’t embody the whole of Scripture, but specific portions that fix tight to the consciences of perishing sinners. They’re the product of the sanctuary, emanating from ones that are intimately acquainted with God. Those so equipped, are fearless in delivery and faithful in doctrine, far removed from men’s fickle notions. May God give us more like this today; men who when coerced by the crowd to modify or abandon their message, echo in the words of Peter: “God must be obeyed rather than men” (Acts 5:29, JND).

**We can only be happy as we ascertain what the will of God is, and conform to it. We should therefore daily read God's Word and seek grace at God's throne.**

## The Lord’s Supper

*Robert Surgenor*

Every Lord’s Day throughout the world, if you go to the right place, you will discover a most unusual meeting of Christian believers gathered together, sitting in a circle with a table in their midst bearing two emblems, a loaf of bread, and a cup of wine. If you were to ask them what they were doing, they would reply, “We are remembering the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death at Calvary, and

proclaiming that death to His Father and our God.”

If you were curious enough to stay and view this unusual company, you would notice that there was no presiding minister, but there was an unusual godly order to the functioning of the meeting. Various brethren would rise and give out a hymn for all to sing. Others would rise and worship God in prayer. Then, after many men participated, one would rise and thank God for the loaf of bread that was on the table. Then, breaking the bread open to make it accessible for all in the circle to take a portion, it would be passed and all the saints would tear off a piece and eat it. After all had partaken, in like manner the same thing would be done with the one cup, all would drink from it.

In most gatherings of this nature, following the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup, a basket, or box, would be passed among those in the circle, that they might give the Lord a portion of their monetary substance. Perhaps during this meeting, a brother or two in the circle, would rise with a message from the Word of God, either before partaking of the emblems, or after.

According to the Scriptures, this ministry of separated believers is called, “The Lord’s Supper.” You will not find it in its true form practiced in the so-called churches of Christendom. In denominationalism, the Lord’s Supper has been grossly perverted from the distinct plan laid down in the Holy Word of God.

Considering the unique purity of the Lord’s Supper, and its perversion in religious circles, this article has been written to show the distinct plan instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ of the nature and reason for the Lord’s Supper. I hope that you are interested, and if so – please read on!

The Supper was instituted at a most appropriate time. It was the night of our Lord’s betrayal when He requested of His own that they remember Him in this way. Knowing their proneness to forget, He gave them this ordinance that on the first day of every week they might be brought into fond remembrance of Himself, through partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

There are reasons for the name “The Lord’s Supper” being attached to this ordinance. Be clear on this, the word “Lord’s” is not necessarily a possessive proper noun, as one would think. By that I mean, it is not His Supper. If I were to say to someone, “That is John’s house,” the word “John’s” would be a possessive proper noun for it means that the house belongs to John. Not so with the “*Lord’s Supper*.” True, He instituted it, but essentially it belongs to us, not to Him. It is for US, not for Him, to partake of. The Lord ate the Passover with His disciples, but did not partake of the Lord’s Supper with His disciples. What then does the word “Lord’s” mean? Simply this, The Greek word translated “Lord’s” in our Bible, is found only twice in the Scriptures, in 1 Corinthians 11:20, and in Revelation 1:10, where John said, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day.” The word is “*kuriakos*,” and it means, “lordly.” In other words,

the Supper has a special dignity to it, it is *lordly*. The first day of the week has a special dignity to it, it is “lordly” (the Lord’s day, the lordly day).

Now you will find the word “Lord’s” elsewhere, such as in 1 Corinthians 11:26 “the Lord’s death,” and verse 29, “the Lord’s body,” but the word there is slightly different in the Greek language, for it is, “*kurios*,” not “*kuriakos*.” In those two verses it means possession. The body was His. The death was His. I hope that I have made this clear to you, that it is the “Lordly Supper.” There is no other supper like it!

Now then, you will notice that it is not called “The Lord’s Breakfast,” or “The Lord’s Lunch” or even “The Lord’s Feast,” or “The Lord’s Meal.” Why is it termed “Supper”? It is because it is spoken of in a moral way. The last meal of the day is called “supper.” In like manner, we are living in the last days. Supper time is during the darkness when night is setting in. Does this not characterize the day in which we live? The world abides in spiritual darkness. After supper, as the night moves on, the bright and morning star appears (Rev. 22:16), and then later the sun rises for another day. We, of this dispensation are waiting for His coming as the bright and morning star, and that will be followed seven years later by the Sun of righteous arising with healing in His wings for Israel and the nations (Mal. 4:2). So, looking at it in a moral way one can understand why this ordinance is called a supper.

One more thing about the name, be assured of this, it is never called a feast. I know that some of our hymns term it a feast, such as # 252 in the Believer’s Hymn Book, which says, “Sweet feast of love divine! ‘tis grace that makes us free, to feed upon this bread and wine, in memory, Lord of Thee.” However, Edward Denny was wrong. Perhaps his excuse for using this word “feast” would be “poetic license” for the word “supper” would not have fit as well in the rhythm of the hymn. Nevertheless, the hymn gives us no excuse to unscripturally call the Supper a feast.

Connected with the Lord’s Supper are five tangible things. (1) One loaf of bread. (2) One cup of wine. (3) A veil (hat) covering the sister’s head. (4) The sister’s long hair. (5) The uncovered head of the men.

There also are things used in Christendom, that were never ordained by Holy Scripture to be used in a Scriptural Assembly of saints, such as: (1) Musical instruments; (2) A choir; (3) Images of saints; (4) Crosses; (5) Wafers; (5) Burning incense; (6) “Holy” water; (7) Glass stained windows; (8) An altar; (9) A presiding clergy; (10) Religious robes; and the list could go on and on.

*(Continued)*

***He that shows any kindness to a saint is sure to have God for his paymaster.***

## Baptism and the Lord's Supper

*Charles S. Summers*

One would hardly think it would be necessary to contend for these truths, but in some quarters it is being taught that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are not for the Church. Such teaching should be refuted, and for the sake of some who are liable to be upset by this teaching, we would like to briefly state these truths from the Scriptures.

Baptism and the Lord's supper are not only plain commands of the Lord, but ordinances that set forth the truth concerning the individual believer in Christ and the Church which is the body of Christ.

It has been truly said that what the Lord commanded in the Gospels, the disciples practiced in the Acts, and the apostles expounded in the epistles, is truth for us today. This is true of both baptism and the Lord's supper. We do find a phase of baptism that was only applicable to Israel. We refer to the baptism of John which was for the remission of sins. This aspect of baptism was continued into the Acts of the apostles. In the earlier chapters of that book we find the Lord appealing to Israel as a nation, but when finally the Gospel went out in all its fullness to the Gentiles, baptism for the remission of sins was discontinued. The Jews had occupied a place of nearness and responsibility as a nation that Gentiles never did. Israel sinned and failed in that favored place. Their guilt culminated in their rejection and crucifixion of their own Messiah, the sent one of God.

In the earlier part of the Acts we find the Lord bringing the sin of the nation before them (Acts 2:23; 3:17), and calling upon them to repent (Acts 2:38; 3:19). At the same time the promise of restoration is given them. (Acts 2:39; 3:19-21). Baptism for a Jew, especially at that time, meant the public acknowledgment of their sin in crucifying their Messiah and that he no longer identified himself with the nation. His baptism also implied the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). That was how a Jew would carry out Peter's exhortation, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

The time came when the Jews as a nation were set aside, and, as we find in the epistle to the Romans, both Jew and Gentile are seen on the same level. "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." That aspect of baptism which was for the remission of sins and which applied only to the Jew was then discontinued. Baptism as an ordinance for believers was still practiced because we find Peter going to the house of Cornelius and baptizing the disciples in water.

John's baptism was different from baptism as practiced later by the apostles, because that when Paul came to Ephesus he found some who had been baptized with John's baptism and they were re-baptized. See Acts 19: 1-7. Baptism, then, was commanded by the Lord, and was practiced in the Acts not only in the special form as it applied

to the Jew, but also when the Gospel went out in all its fullness to the Gentiles, disciples were commanded to be baptized.

We would now notice some references to, and the teaching of, baptism in the Epistles. Romans 6 is the first and most important reference to baptism in the epistles. Some tell us that water baptism is not meant there at all. Certainly it is not the mere ordinance of baptism that Paul is speaking of, but the truth set forth in the ordinance. Baptism is a figure (1 Pet. 3:21) of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. When one gets saved, God puts that believer in Christ. (1 Cor. 1:30). Being in Christ the believer is seen by God on the resurrection side of death. We died, were buried and raised again with Christ. Christ passed through death, burial and resurrection in reality. This is all true, judicially, of the believer as being in Christ. In water baptism the believer shows in a figurative way his union with Christ, in death, burial and resurrection.

In Rom. 6 the apostle is answering the question, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" This is answered by asking another question: "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" The apostle in speaking of being dead to sin in verse .2 refers to our spiritual union with Christ in death. If there was absolutely no reference to water baptism in the passage he would not need to go any further, but in the following verses the apostle refers directly to baptism. Our spiritual union with Christ is a truth that practically every Christian is ignorant of at the time it takes place. To be saved and know it, is the experience of the soul who has just trusted in Christ; but it often takes quite a while to learn that we are dead, buried and raised with Christ. The believer learns this in connection with baptism. Baptism teaches it and sets it forth; so here the apostle appeals to the figure of baptism as being into Christ and into His death. It is only in figure that the believer in baptism is put into Christ; but it is true because that is where God has put the believer.

Baptism, like a monument, stands at the beginning of the believer's pathway. It is something that could be appealed to as the apostle does in Romans 6. Inscribed on that monument is the death of the "old man;" so for a believer to think of living in sin is a contradiction of the truth of baptism. In baptism we have immersion—death; submersion—burial (ratification of death); emergence—resurrection.

Baptism is the "likeness" of the death of Christ. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." The believer's death and resurrection with Christ is judicial, and not actual. Many of God's saints have died actually and at the coming of Christ all will be resurrected actually. But now, there should be a practical manifesting in our lives of being "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God."

So death, burial and resurrection are brought before us in the scriptures in four ways: First, historically and actually, as true of the Lord Jesus. Second, judicially true of

the believer in Christ. Third, figuratively set forth in water baptism. Fourth, practically, in the lives of God's people. Baptism is referred to in 1 Corinthians, Galatians, and in Ephesians it is mentioned as one of the things that make up the "unity of the Spirit."

We would now say a word about the Lord's supper. This, as we all know, was instituted by the Lord Jesus just before He went to the cross. He did not just make it a command, but made the request: "This do for a remembrance of Me." Like baptism, the Lord's supper is full of meaning for the child of God. There is this difference. Baptism sets forth the truth concerning the individual believer in Christ, while the Lord's supper has more to do with the truth concerning the Church. In both ordinances we have the death and resurrection of Christ set forth. We would mention here that at least once baptism is carried out apart from an assembly, in the case of Philip and the Eunuch. On the other hand the Lord's supper is only mentioned in connection with an assembly. Celebrating the Lord's supper is an assembly act and cannot be properly celebrated but by a Scriptural assembly.

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the church had her beginning. That was true of the Church as the body of Christ, because when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were baptized into the one body, (Acts 1:5; 2:4; 11:16 and 1 Cor. 12:13). Thus the Church as the body of Christ had its commencement on that day. But the Church as a local company spoken of as "the church which was at Jerusalem" also had its commencement that day; for we read, "They that gladly received His Word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." It is in connection with this second aspect of the Church that we find the breaking of bread mentioned. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The words "continued steadfastly" mark those things in verse 42 as belonging to the practical side of things and connected with the local church that had just been formed in Jerusalem.

We could not continue steadfastly in the church as the body of Christ. We had nothing to do with putting ourselves in there and we could not put ourselves out if we tried. The apostle's doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers, are things that God's people can and should continue steadfastly in. These things have been spoken of this way: The apostle's doctrine, the Word of God, forms the fellowship. The breaking of bread is the expression of it, and the prayers, give the power to carry on the fellowship. So we find in the first church which was at Jerusalem, that the breaking of bread had its place. The next and only other time the breaking of bread is mentioned in the Acts is Chapter 20:7.

Paul and seven companions were on their journey up to Jerusalem which resulted in Paul's imprisonment. Here at

Troas on the first day of the week, Paul and his companions joined with the company of disciples in breaking the bread in remembrance of the Lord. In Acts 2 we find the Lord's supper practiced by the church at the very beginning. Then at Troas, with Paul present, it was celebrated at the end, practically, of Paul's labors, as far as the record goes.

To the simple child of God who desires to be guided only by the Word of God, what has already been noted would be sufficient. But in the first epistle to the Corinthians we certainly have truth for the church. It is addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth—with all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Then in Chap. 11, where the Apostle gives the order to be carried out when gathered to eat the Lord's supper, the supper is directly connected with the church. "When ye come together in the Church." The R. V. and other authorities leave out the article, which would give the sense simply "in church," or in church capacity, or as an assembly. That is when the breaking of bread is to be. The instructions about eating the Lord's supper given in 1 Cor. 11 were received "from the Lord" and are to be practiced "till He come."

In chapter 10 of this epistle the apostle gives teaching connected with the remembrance supper. The cup is mentioned first in Chap. 10 because there he is not giving the order to be observed as in Chap. 11, but teaching connected with the supper. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" Christ drank the cup of wrath, which should have been. ours, to its very dregs. Drinking at the Lord's table is symbolical of enjoying and entering into the blessings that are ours through the shedding of His blood. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one. bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." Three things might be noticed as set forth in the bread. It represents the literal body of Christ, "This is My body which is given for you." It speaks of Christ as the bread of life to our souls which we ate when we came to Him as sinners. This is borne out by the statement, "For we are all partakers. of that one bread." The bread also speaks of the body of Christ, the Church. "We being many are one bread and one body."

A local assembly is representative of the church which is His body. There are features in the body aspect of the church that should be seen in every local assembly. On the other hand, there are distinctions between the church which is His body, and a local assembly.

The Lord was pleased to choose two emblems as memorials of Himself in death and resurrection. The fact of it being two, suggests a competent testimony. It is well to remember that the breaking of bread is a testimony. "Ye do show, (or proclaim) the Lord's death till He come." The supper looks back to His death on the Cross, and at the same time directs the eye to His coming again.