From Uplook, 1998–2006

J. Boyd Nicholson Sr.

© Uplook Ministries. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

KEE Ministry Library · Faithful Men
kee-ministry-library.netlify.app

Aunt Elsie and the Gederite (May 1998)

From Uplook, May 1998. Story.

“Over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains was Baal-hanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil was Joash” (1 Chron. 27:28).

[A passage here could not be read in the PDF.]

She wore an old, oatmeal gray overcoat, sometimes buttoned in the right holes and sometimes not. On her head was a black felt hat, pressed at a different angle each night. But she had the most electric blue eyes, with a sparkle that indicated behind the old frame and beneath the fading locks was a very active mind.

It was the dead of a Canadian winter and a series of gospel meetings was being held nightly. She lived alone, so we picked her up in the car and took her along to the meetings. She didn’t miss one night in five weeks. Night by night after the meeting, the old soldier would greet the preacher at the door with a rather succinct assessment of the message.

“Well,” she might say one night, “You had a hard time preaching up there tonight, didn’t you?” Indeed, it was one of those nights when there seemed to be no liberty at all to preach, fumbling through the message, forgetting, misquoting—a distressing thing for a preacher.

“Yes, Aunt Elsie, I was really struggling tonight.”

The old lady would nod. “Well, I’m praying for you.”

“Thank you, sister, I need it.”

On another night, it would be different, the strong handshake at the door and the “appraisal.”

“Well, God gave help in preaching the old gospel tonight, brother.”

“Yes, thank the Lord, there was help and liberty in the message tonight,” the preacher would respond. Fastening those eyes on him, she’d reply, “I’m praying for you.” It was not clear whether that was to be a prayer for blessing or for humbling, lest the preacher begin to glory in himself or his preaching.

Then one night, a terrifying thing for a preacher took place. Sitting at the front, just about to climb the platform to speak, the preacher was going over in his mind the message he had prepared. The last hymn before he should rise was coming to a close, when suddenly it was as though the Lord spoke in his heart and said, “That is not the message for tonight.”

What a shock! In a minute he would have to get up and preach. Crying in his heart to the Lord for help, suddenly, and very forcibly, there came to mind an obscure Old Testament scripture. The Lord helped the preacher quickly locate the passage, the hymn ended, and, with his finger in the text, the preacher climbed onto the platform, opened the Bible, and with trembling began to preach the gospel from that obscure text. God blessed the message in a wonderful way and souls professed faith in Christ that night.

The preacher stood at the door greeting the people as they filed out, but he was looking for the little black hat

making its way down the aisle. What was the saintly old prayer warrior going to say to him tonight?

At last there she is. She took hold of the preacher's hand, held on to it and fastened those twinkling eyes on him for a long minute, "Well, I prayed for you today—that you would preach from that very text tonight"!

It is doubtful if anyone ever went to that old soul, and thanked her for praying for the needy preacher, but if there are to be rewards for the work accomplished in those meetings, where do you think they will go? To the man on the pulpit or the old prayer warrior doing business for God and the souls of men in the sanctuary, wrestling in heavenly places to pull down the anointing of God on the public testimony?

Do you remember Baal-hanan the Gederite? Or Joash of the oil cellars? Not likely. Few ever remember them. Why not? Because as far as we can tell, those men never took part in any of the public service of God. They were commissioned by the king to ensure that there would always be an adequate inventory of oil for the anointing of the holy vessels.

Baal-hanan labored in "the low plains" and Joash in "the cellars." They were men out of sight, but whose hidden ministry was absolutely essential for all the service of the sanctuary. Indeed, if their ministry was lacking, there would be no public service at all.

How we have learned to thank God for the saints of the sanctuary; those who wrestle, and labor to pull down the holy anointing of God on the public ministry. Without this, all our preaching would be but a superfluity of words, falling to the ground at our feet.

Those men of the oil were unknown, unseen, unheralded, but the king knew they were there. He had commissioned them and he would reward them.

Well, Aunt Elsie was little known, laboring in “the low plains” and in “the cellars”—on earth that is—for she was well known in the sanctuary. The Lord knew she was there. He had commissioned her and He will reward her. Thank God for the servants of the sanctuary.

The Poet’s Dilemma (January 1999)

From Uplook, January 1999. Article.

Robert Burns, the Scottish plowman poet, or “Rabbie,” as the Scots call him, had a time problem. It is a common problem that affects everyone—poet, prince or peasant—but it hit Burns forcibly one day as he plowed his field. The blade of his plow broke through the nest of a little field mouse and the terrified creature ran for its life. This incident stirred the bard within as the plodding of his horse beat out the rythm of words that easily came together in his mind into what he called “Ode to a Mouse.”

Most people know one line of that brief poem, although they may not know where it came from: “The best laid plans of mice and men go oft astray” (as it would read in English!). But there is a verse not so well known that spells out Burn’s problem. He addresses the mouse:

> *Still thou art blest compared wi’ me!*
> *The present only touches thee:*
> *But och! I backward cast my e’e (eye)*
> *On prospects drear!*
> *And forward, though I canna see,*
> *I guess and fear.*

The poet envies the terrified little rodent at this moment, for its fears were not like his. Burns recognized he had a sinful past to be reckoned with. As a result of this, he knew there was a future to fear, for he must stand before the Judge of all ages at last. Therefore his present was unhappy and all his pleasure-loving ways could not give him an abiding peace nor a lasting joy.

As we step into a New Year, by God's grace, we may do so with both peace and joy. The Son of God died on the cross to deal with our past sins and failures, and to secure a glorious future with Him in heaven, so that come what may in this uncertain world, we need not fear. We can rest in the Saviour's sacrifice on the cross and receive Him by faith into our hearts. The Bible says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

That's better than being a mouse!

“Lord, Teach Us to Pray” (February–March 2000)

From Uplook, February–March 2000. Bible study.

Why must we pray?

Because God Works by Prayer

1. Co-operatively with His People: a. In the past (Dan. 9:2) b. In the present (Mt. 9:38) c. In the future (Mt. 24:20)

2. Objectively through His People: a. Abraham—for Lot’s preservation b. Moses—for God’s people c. Daniel—for God’s purpose

3. Subjectively in His People: a. Fullness of joy (Jn. 16:24) b. The peace of God (Phil. 4:6-7) c. New strength (Isa. 40:31) d. Changed lives (2 Cor. 3:18) e. Our own needs met (Job 42:10)

Why we faint in prayer

1. Laziness: a lack of personal discipline

2. Carelessness: due to slow erosion

3. Weariness: giving up in exhaustion

1. The answer—not AS expected: a. Patience—tribulation (Rom. 5:8) b. Miracle—call to obey (Jn. 11:39) c. Closer walk—the Cross (Mt. 16:2) d. Great blessing—great testing (Eph. 3:16)

2. The answer—not WHEN expected: a. Satan opposes mightily (Dan. 10:13) b. God wills differently (Lk. 11:9) c. We desire wrongly (Jas. 4:3) d. Must ask believingly (1

Jn. 5:14-15) (prayers of faith & hope, Rom. 4:18) e. God resisted stubbornly (Jn. 5:40)

What is prayer?

God's Word Describes Prayer

1. An activity of the mind

Problem: lack of concentration

2. A movement of the spirit

Problem: no appreciation

3. An emotion of the soul

Problem: mere repetition

4. An appeal for help

Problem: no petition

5. An expression of the heart

Problem: unhealthy heart condition

Forms of prayer

God's Word Distinguishes Prayer

1. The sudden prayer: prayer & fear (Mt. 14:30)

2. The sacrificial prayer: prayer & fasting (Mt. 17:21)

3. The steadfast prayer: prayer & fighting (Eph. 6:12)

1. Worship: ministering to the heart of God (see ❖ at lower right)

2. Praise: (to bless—εὐλογέω) (see Ps. 107, the OT commentary on the praise of God)

3. Thanksgiving: (Rom. 1:21) "Neither were thankful"

4. Confession: (ὁμολογέω) (1 Jn. 1:9) preceded by acknowledgement (Ps. 51:3)

5. Supplication: expressing a desire (Jn. 17:5) “glorify Thou Me…”

6. Intercession: standing between someone’s need and God (Jas. 5:16)

7. Advocacy (Job 42:10): “The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends”

❖ Tapes of a seminar on Worship at Rise Up & Build ’97 are available from Uplook Ministries.

Enter In (June 2000)

From Uplook, June 2000. Bible study.

Come across the river to the blessing side.

The heart-cry of many well meaning, hard-working believers today might be expressed in the words of the hymn:

> *Where is the blessedness I knew,*
> *When first I saw the Lord?*
> *Where is the soul-refreshing view,*
> *Of Jesus in His Word?*
> *What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,*
> *How sweet their memory still,*
> *But they have left an aching void,*
> *This world can never fill.*

This could have been the language of the Hebrews to whom this letter was written long ago. They had begun well and suffered for it (10:32-34). They were like their ancient counterparts who had left Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and sung the song of victory as the hosts of Egypt were swallowed up in the water. But then there was the long wilderness journey, and Amalek, and the sad record of disobedience and unbelief. So they wandered 40 years and many “could not enter in because of unbelief” (3:19).

So it was with these Hebrews. They had suffered by “reproaches and afflictions” for their step of faith. They are given a solemn warning by the use of this graphic example—the failure of Israel to enter into the land because of unbelief.

Unbelief Kept Them Out

They are warned that it is possible for New Testament believers also to come short of entering into the blessings of their spiritual inheritance, the realm of conflict, conquest, faith, and rest, because of unbelief. With those Hebrews it was not unbelief in the fact of God. They knew that He was. It was not unbelief in the power of God. He had “made the worlds.” It was unbelief in the measure of the grace of God, that having sinned and failed, their Jewish mindset caused them to look backwards to the old system wherein they had once found solace, the system of oft-repeated sacrifice. They thought, like their forebears, that having failed, they would have to go back and bring another sacrifice. They had never grasped the completeness and acceptability of the finished work of Christ nor the abiding value of His unfinished work on their behalf in heaven.

God Wanted Them In

The Lord is using an OT example, and we in our day may profit by it. There was a covenant promise given to Israel for them to believe:

I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord (Ex. 6:6-8).

This covenant had first been given to the patriarchs (Ex. 6:3); it had been established by His Word (v. 4); and was remembered by the Lord (v. 5). The Lord confirmed it by seven “I will’s” in Exodus 6. They were assured of seven great facts. They would be relieved and brought up; “I will bring you” (v. 6a). They would be released and brought out; “I will rid you out of their bondage” (v. 6b). They would be redeemed and brought back; “I will redeem you” (v. 6c). They would be recovered and brought near; “I will take you to Me” (v. 7a). They would be related and brought through; “I will be to you a God” (v. 7b). They would be led and brought to the land; “I will bring you in unto the land” (v. 8a). They would be blessed and made rich by an inheritance; “I will give it to you for an heritage” (v. 8b).

All these covenant promises are embraced within the parenthetical arms of the Divine Promiser “I am Jehovah” (vv. 6, 8). For NT believers, theirs is a promise of eternal blessings and a spiritual inheritance, “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4). But we need not wait for heaven to taste of its fruits, savor its victories, and be enriched by its spiritual treasures. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

However, to enter into and enjoy some of the riches of that inheritance here and now, certain facts have to be established in our faith, as it was for Israel in viewing the possibilities of enjoying the blessings of God’s promises to them.

First they had to realize that there actually was a realm of blessing to enjoy. This was no dream, no will-o'-the-wisp, no fleeting hope to fade away like the morning mist. There actually was a wonderful place of blessing to enter (Ex. 3:8).

But they had a problem. While still in Egypt, that realm of blessing seemed so distant, so impossible. But the Lord assured them that He had seen their affliction, He had heard their cry, and He knew their sorrows (Ex. 3:7). There are some sorrows that can never be put into words. They are heard only in groaning spirits that only God can know. So He lifted up their head and told them what He intended for them to enjoy. He was going to bring them to a wonderful land, a land of freedom, fullness, and fruitfulness; but it would also be a land of fighting. The enemy would be in the land (Josh. 3:10).

Some Powerful Enemies Oppose Us

So it is with us. We have a realm of spiritual blessings to enjoy. This has been opened up to us at great cost and by the grace of God. However, there are blessings we may enter only by the appropriation of faith and by diligent endeavor (Heb. 4:2, 11). This strategic spiritual territory must be occupied by wrestling and conquest (Eph. 6:12)—not by the energy of the flesh, but by the provision of God and the enabling power of the Spirit whose voice we are to heed.

After battling with Amalek in the wilderness, perhaps it was a bit of a shock for the children of Israel to discover that there were powerful enemies yet in the land. Paul reminds us of our spiritual conflict today, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the

darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [heavenly] places" (Eph. 6:12). Heavenly places is the realm of our blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:6).

Pharaoh was overthrown in a day. Amalek battled with them all through the wilderness journey. Now they were going to face seven powerful enemies in the land. In fact, they did more battling in the Land of Promise than either in Egypt or in the wilderness. But ultimately all those enemies in the land would be conquered and subdued. And so it will be with us (see Rom. 16:20).

Perhaps it surprises the child of God, that as we pursue our heavenly calling and seek a closer walk in the purposes of God, the way does not become easier nor the conflict lighter. The Lord never promised His disciples it would be easy—only His abiding presence and His yoke, and that is not easy until we take it up.

Those Canaanite enemies were not the only dangers to the Hebrews, however. There were other solemn dangers that could keep them from "entering in"—the same dangers, in fact, that Israel had faced in the wilderness.

1. Failing to heed the voice of the Spirit (Heb. 3:7): In OT times, it was mainly the voice of the Father; in the Gospels, the voice of the Son; but from Pentecost till now, it is the voice of the Holy Spirit. There are many spurious voices which claim to be the voice of the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit will never speak contrary to the Holy Scriptures. It is to these sacred truths we must take earnest heed. The lamp of the Word will expose the darkness. And, sharper than any two-edged sword, it will pierce "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of

the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). This will mean reading God's Word, heeding God's Word, and feeding on God's Word.

2. Permitting the hardening of the heart to go on unchecked (Heb 3:8): But how is the heart hardened? "Through the deceitfulness of sin" (v. 13). Then we must ask, how does sin deceive? The reference is to Numbers 14, "the provocation" and "the day of temptation" in the wilderness when Israel tested God to see how far they could go on in sin without His intervention. Sin deceived the people by making them think that the pleasures of sin were better than the provisions of the Lord (Num. 14:2). Sin deceived them by making them assume that God's pardon always excludes His discipline. But His word to them after the intercession of Moses was, "I have pardoned...but..." Having tested God's patience ten times, He told them that they would not see the land (vv. 20-21). Sin deceived them by making them presume that their sinful behavior only affected themselves, but a sad consequence was that their children would wander with them forty years (v. 33).

3. Departing from the living God (Heb. 3:12): The word "depart" is not so much "leaving" but "standing off " "holding at a distance" "turning away from" (JND). It is the attitude of the heart being "stand-offish" towards God. In the active voice, it is to cause others to depart. A solemn responsibility indeed.

However, for the Hebrew believers—and all such, all is not lost. There was a 3-fold preservative from such tragic loss. First, they were to honestly examine the condition of their own hearts (Heb. 3:12). "Take heed" that is "look," "intensively contemplate." This was to be

a serious, honest searching of their own heart. A superficial glance would not do. This first step in recovery must be to honestly face the facts of our own condition of heart. These Hebrews were not religious pagans, but “brethren” who were “partakers” of Christ (v. 14). The personal act of heart-searching would give them a burden for others, perhaps in the same state of heart as they had been.

Then they were to “exhort” one another on a daily basis. This action is not to be one of destructive criticism nor was it to be carried out with a judgmental attitude. The word “exhort” means to comfort, to fortify. It means to call alongside, to help, to beseech. Such loving, faithful action for others will ensure that their own hearts will first be kept right with God, on a daily basis.

Thirdly, they were to take hold of the “beginning… confidence” or “the beginning of the assurance” (v. 14). This “assurance” is the substructure or “foundation” to which they were to firmly hold. What was that beginning? Surely it was the discovery of the grace of God and the finished work of Christ. They had, as Jews, been depending on a system of oft-repeated sacrifice, law-keeping, and ceremonials. Then the illumination of the glorious gospel banished their darkness and brought them into the light of God’s matchless grace. They were in danger of looking back at the old system which held on to shadows and not the substance.

How to Enter In

Having engaged in heart examination, loving exhortation, and by faith, appropriation, they could enter into the joy of their inheritance. A three-fold exercise is now called for in chapter 4. They were to

have a fear of coming short of making God's promise good. Many of the children of Israel could not enter the land because of unbelief (3:19). Now these Hebrews were to have faith in the promise of God, simply taking God at His Word, altogether apart from their feelings and fears. The children of Israel heard the wonderful message, truly a gospel of rest, but they did not believe it (4:2). Joshua had said, "The Lord your God has given you rest…" (Josh. 1:13). In the purpose and provision of God it was already theirs, but they failed to appropriate it by faith. Even Rahab and the people of Jericho knew that and said to the spies, "The Lord hath given you the land" (Josh. 2:9). They had heard of the Red Sea and their victories and said, "As soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt" (v. 11). Jericho was already theirs 40 years before they entered the land!

It Is All Ours Already

Oh, how much is ours today in Christ, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32). If we are not entering into these riches we must presume that either they don't really exist or we just don't believe it is all for us. Maybe we think it is reserved for those wonderful Christians we know, for the godly and the great servants, but not for "ordinary" Christians like us.

The Hebrews, having settled their hearts and exhorted one another, were then to "labor"—be diligent—to enter into the realm of rest (4:11). We are pointed again to the children of Israel. In spite of redemption by blood, deliverance from Pharaoh, miraculous provision day by day, and preservation all the way through, many of them

lost their lives on the wrong side of the river and never entered into the Land of Promise.

Let Us Not Miss It

So the danger was for the Hebrews and for us today, that in spite of Calvary, a finished work, an empty tomb, a glorified Saviour, an ever-living great High Priest ministering for us continually and the voice of the indwelling Holy Spirit, it is possible for many whose souls are saved by grace to waste their days and never enter in to the enjoyment of those “spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” The Lord Jesus said, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel’s, the same shall save it” (Mk. 8:35).

The unbelieving may play with their toys, cavort in their neon-lit temples, clutch their tinsel treasures and consume themselves in transient pleasures, forgetting that these so soon will pass away, and they will leave it all behind. The carnal believer, truly saved, but satisfied with the shadows of this world rather than the substance of an eternal inheritance, stands on the wrong side of the river, looking and perhaps occasionally longing, but never entering by faith into all that God has provided in Christ, and at such a cost, for His people to enjoy.

We have a far greater inheritance than Israel ever had. It is “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation…” (1 Pet. 1:4). May we heed the voice of the Spirit as He gives His divine invitation of grace in the

concluding verse of the chapter: “come boldly…obtain mercy…find grace”!

Home at Last: The Man We Love (December 2000/January 2001)

From Uplook, December 2000/January 2001. Story. Transcribed from a tape recorded at Markham Bible Chapel, January 12, 1996.

The war had ended. I was out in Burma when we got word that we were returning home. We went to Bombay to pick up a ship. There were crowds of men going back, of course, but two hundred of us were assigned to the S.S. Scythia, which was a ship that had been completely refitted as a passenger ship. So this was pretty nice for us to go home on a very beautiful ship!

We didn't realize until we were about a day out to sea that there were nearly two thousand Italian prisoners of war down below. They were being repatriated to Italy. Many of them had not been home for years. Every evening, they would bring their guitars and mandolins and would gather in a section of open deck. There, under the stars, they would sing songs of home. We would go to the rear of our upper deck and listen to them. It was really beautiful.

Each succeeding day at sea we could sense the emotion rising as they drew closer to home. We passed through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, across the Mediterranean, and then into Naples Bay, with Vesuvius looming in the distance.

We observed the flurry of activity as the ship docked. From our vantage point, we could see that there was a big tent where the military police were. All these men were to be processed and released through that military

tent before they could go out to their loved ones. We could see thousands upon thousands waiting behind the iron railing. But there was a little group of people who had been allowed in, maybe thirty-five or so. For some reason, they were on the dock, held back only by a little wooden fence.

And what emotion we saw! We were feeling it ourselves; we too were going home!

One big fellow got to the bottom of the gangplank and started to dance around in circles, crying out, “Liberty, liberty!” He was no longer a prisoner; he was free at last!

Another man fell his full length on the cobble stones and kissed the ground. The place he had been dreaming of these years. Italia! Home, sweet home!

Then I watched as a young fellow descended the gangway. He was a stocky fellow, with two kit bags, one over each shoulder. He got about halfway down the gangplank when there was a shout from one of the men in the little group on the dock, “Antonio!”

The boy looked up. There was a man waving his arms. He dropped his kit bags right there and started to run down the bouncing gangway. The military police tried to stop him and direct him to the tent, but he broke right past them, running for the fence. The fence didn't stop him, either. He took a flying leap right over the heads of the people and got his arms around the neck of that man. From the upper deck we could hear them weep for joy. What do you imagine he was thinking about right there? Liberty? No longer a prisoner? I don’t think so. Italy? The olive groves? The grape vines? The sunshine

on the Mediterranean? I don't think so. I think what filled his heart at that moment was the man he loved.

You know, beloved, it's really going to be something, when at last, in a moment, we step on shore, and know we’re home. HOME AT LAST! We’ll feel at home, among the family of God. It's going to be wonderful, beloved, to be home. And it's going to be wonderful to be free. Free of this failing flesh and this wicked heart. But that’s not what will make heaven for us. What will it be? “They shall see His face,” and it will be the Man we love!

The Treasure (February 2001)

From Uplook, February 2001. Poem.

I had a precious treasure
In a box of figured stone,
'Twas costly and its value
Across the years had grown.
Then came the Man of Sorrows
To sup with me one day,
I knew His heart was asking
To give my wealth away.
I went and brought my treasure:
"I offer it to Thee."
But, "No," He said with sadness,
"The box must broken be."
"May I not give these riches still in the box to Thee
Of such exquisite beauty? 'Twould please Thine eye to see."
"No, break it—break it open," the still voice said to me,
"For ne'er another treasure must there containéd be."
In that decisive moment my box I broke apart,
Yet knew that as I did so, the breaking broke my heart.
I poured it all on Jesus, upon His regal head,
For soon 'twould wear the thorn-crown
And lie among the dead.
The devil said, "'Tis wasted;
The common folk need thee,"
But nothing to Him given
Could ever common be.
I bowed myself before Him,

Anointing those blest feet,
Full well I know He's worthy;
My offering was complete.
And then—a strange thing happened:
He gave it back to me;
Not as before containéd, but shed so fragrantly.
The fragrance on His Person was on my lowly hand;
What once the box imprisoned now spread in every land.
And so I learn the lesson: To get, then we must give.
And joy demands we suffer; we die to self—to live.
He does not steal our treasures nor rob what we hold dear. He takes, but to enrich us; rebukes, to draw us near.

Caught Up (August 2001)

From Uplook, August 2001. Article. Excerpted from The Watered Garden.

In these days of growing uncertainty, there is a bright and certain hope!

“Do you think we’ll ever get caught up?” We were standing in the press room as brother Tim asked the question. The heady aroma of printer’s ink, coated stock, and cleaning fluid filled the place. The measured rhythm of the presses, punctuated now and again with the soft crunch of the paper cutter, enthusiastically supported by the speedy clacking of the folder in the background all blended into a kind of mechanical malaria that old printers never quite get out of their system.

Caught up? Deadlines, of course were what it was all about. Those ever-present and pressing deadlines that seem to move over us in the night while we sleep. They are a lot like the dandelions in our garden. Get one dealt with and two more will replace them by the morning.

Yes, we will be caught up. Nothing more sure, except that we cannot say just when that will be. Not only caught up with all the deadlines, but for the believer in Christ, it will be caught up and away from the realm of all that speaks of the dead. It is not a deadline for the Christian, but the lifeline of our hope, reaching within the veil where the Captain of our salvation has already entered and is the guarantee that “He’ll not be in heaven and leave me behind.”

Yet the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church, to catch them up to His own presence (the word

“rapture” means just that), is a deadline every unbeliever might well fear. Think of a world without a single praying mother, or godly father, Christ-loving wife or husband! Often the butt of the world’s jesters, those “born-agains” will be gone, never to distress society again with their pronouncements of coming judgment, and the offer of eternal life. The lovers of this world will be unhindered then in their Christless “New Age” to look downward, as they do, to their ancient god, “mother earth,” worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

The call to the lovers of God in these days is not to look down to this realm of graves and groans and granite stones, where the life story is frequently edited down to a few lines chiselled beside the date of birth and death. The believer in Christ has a higher focus, a heavenly destiny, a holy future, and a real peace. It is not surprising, then, that we are reminded in Scripture that “our [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour” (Phil. 3:20).

As violence tears at society, as evil and corruption abound in high places, as idols of the masses are discovered at the last to have feet of clay, as governments totter and leaders fumble in their darkness for any gleam of hope, how wonderful it is for the child of God to know that this may truly be the year of His coming, when we shall at last be caught up!

Yet “hope deferred makes the heart sick” (Prov. 13:12). Paul declared, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor. 15:19). The psalmist cried, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God” (Ps.

42:5). There is triumph over the tomb for “Jesus is coming again!” “We…shall be caught up” (1 Thess. 4:17).

Oh, joy, oh, delight,
Should we go without dying!
No sickness, no sadness,
No dread, and no crying!
Caught up through the clouds
With our Lord into glory,
When Jesus receives His own.
O Lord Jesus, how long?…
—H. L. Turner

The Sin of Loveless Hearts (October 2001)

From Uplook, October 2001. Article. Excerpted from The Watered Garden.

Am I my brother’s keeper?

There he lay in the gathering gloom of the hot Indian evening, hardly discernible from the rags that partly covered him. At a glance, he almost appeared to be just another of the piles of refuse swept into a corner. Then I saw a movement. A dark, scrawny arm appeared from the rags, outstretching a hand, hopefully cupped to receive a little baksheesh from the passersby.

From where I was standing a little distance away, I could barely see his face and couldn’t hear his voice. It was his eyes that spoke volumes to me as I stood on that crowded street. Sad, empty and set deep in their sockets, they spoke only of despair.

An impoverished human being, reduced to beggary. As his pleas were ignored, he withdrew under his pathetic camouflage like a frightened animal. But he is no animal. Within that taut covering of skin, within that prison cage of ribs, somewhere behind those haunting eyes, there exists a human spirit—a precious soul loved by God, for whom Christ died on Calvary’s cross.

For a moment I tried to put my soul inside that emaciated form that knows nothing of what we in our luxuriating comfort consider to be essential for survival: someone who cares, ample food, clean water, adequate shelter, personal hygiene, and a respectable covering. I

tried to look out through those eyes to see things as he might—hopeless despair, helpless fear, and a homeless future. Of course, it is most unlikely that anyone brought into the world in a land of gospel light and surrounded by prayer, Christian values, and blessings, could even touch the ragged hem of the sackcloth that beggar clutched around his skin and bones, or get the feel of what living in this world means to him.

“Without Christ…having no hope, and without God in the world.” Those words came hammering into my mind and I was profoundly convicted of having a heart from which flows so little of the love of Christ for humankind. Having eyes so seldom watered with an honest tear for the lost and perishing, my fellow-travellers to eternity.

Two men on an Indian street, but an unbridgeable gulf between them of privilege, culture, and language—at least, that was the excuse given to God as I turned to make my way back to my comfortable capsule of lodging, food, and fellowship.

Fifteen thousand miles away, another scene. No beggars here. I sat waiting in a modern shopping plaza and watched the people go by. Hardly a smile creased a face. Lines of care, the tense jaw, frowns of anxiety were frequent as these shoppers walked among the glittering baubles of affluence.

Scanning those faces I became aware that the music that had been playing over the sound system had changed. The raucous racket of rock was replaced by the sweet-singing voice of a woman, yet singing one of the world’s songs. Only one line do I remember. It went something like this, “If there’s anybody out there, shine on me.”

How fitting it all seemed to be, expressing so eloquently what was etched in the faces of the people as they scurried by, seeking to fill up the present moment. “Is there anybody out there?” “If there is, does He care about me?” “Does He care enough to help me?”

No beggars! No rags! No dirt! But just as lost if they have no Christ as Saviour, no God as Father, and no hope forever. Now what will my excuse be? We speak the same language. We live in the same culture. How can I turn from these with cold heart and dry eyes and an undisturbed conscience? I am my brother’s keeper!

We who have known salvation’s day have a Light for their darkness. We have the Bread for their hunger, the Water of life for their burning thirst and the Hope for their emptiness. Whatever will our answer be when we give account at last?

May God help us not to be ashamed of the Lord Jesus, nor His gospel. As we prostrate ourselves before Him, confessing the sin of loveless hearts, it may be in His mercy He will touch us with the tincture of His compassion for the lost and open again the floodgates of our tears and unloose these stammering tongues to tell “His love immense, unsearchable.”

“Shall we, whose souls are lighted
with wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted,
the lamp of life deny?
Salvation! Oh, salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth’s remotest station
has learned Messiah’s Name.”

Preparation for the Lord's Supper (October 2002)

From Uplook, October 2002. Article.

It is our supreme privilege on earth. Are we ready for it?

While it is true that worship is in the realm of the spirit, that does not mean that the body and soul are left behind. It only means that they are subservient to the spirit. Obviously there is the necessity of definite preparation of the whole person in view of engaging in this highest exercise of the human personality.

There should be PHYSICAL preparation. We must be rested. Living in a society that is bent on pleasing self, it is little wonder that there is a constant call for self-indulgence. Late Saturday nights can rob the saint of freshness on the Lord's Day morning. Long Sunday lie-ins can add rush and pressure to getting to the meeting on time, putting the mind into a state of excitement not conducive to high and worshipful thoughts.

There is in this day of total demand a great need to control our involvements. The Lord recognized this need in the lives of His own: "And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going…" (Mk. 6:31). It has been pointed out that there is often a connection between busyness and barrenness.

There must be MENTAL preparation. Today there is a concerted attack of the enemy on the minds of God's people, for as a man thinks, "so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

a) The worldly mind is not likely to give much to the Lord at His Supper. It is worldly because of a pre-occupation with the playthings, pastimes and pleasures of the world, and readily becomes defiled. The Holy Spirit is thus grieved and has no liberty to lead that soul into the Holiest for worship.

b) The wandering mind will make it difficult to concentrate on holy things. Often the cause is lack of self-discipline. Brother Lawrence, in his Letters, said, “One way to recollect the mind in time of prayer, and preserve it more in tranquility, is not to let it wander too far at other times.”

c) The weary mind is often burdened with the cares of this life and ready to faint. The blessed remedy for this is found in Hebrews 12:3, “Consider Him…,” that is, think on Him, bring thoughts concerning Him to mind. It is not only that such thoughts are good but that, with bathing the mind with thoughts of Christ, He Himself becomes the balm for the weary mind, putting it into a frame more conducive to worshipful occupation at the Lord’s Supper. This gives the capacity to be able to say to the cares and burdens of life, as did Abraham long ago to his servants, “Abide ye here…and I and the lad will go yonder and worship” (Gen. 22:5).

There must be SPIRITUAL preparation, a careful apprehension of what we are engaged in at the Lord’s Supper. What is expected of us as holy priests is to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. Like the meal offering, there should be preparation for this at home during the week.

We also need a clear understanding of who is the object of our gathering; at most of our meetings we not only

think about the Lord, we are there to minister to the needs of others—through prayer, ministry of the Word, or personal encouragement. But the Lord's Supper is entirely focussed on the Lord. Who is this Personage we come to worship? He is not now "Jesus only." A great deal has happened since that lonely Stranger walked the shores of Galilee. "God hath made that same Jesus…both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). We remember Him at the time when He voluntarily took the lowest place, but we know He now occupies the highest.

Daily communion at the Lord's Table (described in 1 Cor. 10) is assumed in the life of each believer. The Supper should be considered the climax of our feasting throughout the week at the Table. The measure in which we enjoy the Lord and His provisions all week long will largely affect our responses at the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week.

A devoted attitude and reverent decorum is expected as we "enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus." Like the sanctuary of old, it is still a fragrant place and a privileged place. Let us be prepared when we enter.

The Lord’s Supper (June 2004)

From Uplook, June 2004. Article.

A careful, thought-provoking, and comprehensive look at the Remembrance meeting. Reprinted from an excellent book, The Church of God: a Symposium, available from Everyday Publications.

There is something plaintively beautiful about the words from the old paraphrase of Matthew 26:

> *‘Twas on that night when doomed to know*
> *The eager rage of every foe;*
> *That night on which He was betrayed,*
> *The Saviour of the world took bread.*

Yet no record could be more beautiful than the act itself. How very far away has Christendom travelled down the road of religious ingenuity in the celebration of this simple institution!

The Lord’s Supper is surely the central function of a local church from which all service takes its character. It is the zenith of assembly fellowship, the one unique gathering of saints when all spiritual exercise is directed Godward. The Father is seeking worshipping children (Jn. 4:23). The heart of the Lord yearns for the expressions of the first love of His beloved: “Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely” (Song of Sol. 2:14). The Holy Spirit seeks to direct the hearts and minds of the redeemed to a more intelligent apprehension of the Lord.

God does not assess the spirituality of His people by the activity of their service alone, nor by the eloquence of their preaching, but by the quality of their worship. This is brought to our attention in the book of Ezekiel (chs. 8–11). The Lord brings the prophet to see the reluctant departure of His glory from the midst of His people because their worship had degenerated to the point where the Lord could no more identify with the center of their religious activity.

In the forty-fourth chapter of the same prophecy we see another principle. In different days, it is true that forms, ceremonies and order for the worship of God have differed somewhat, but the nature, principles, and priority governing that holy exercise never change. When lsrael went astray after idols, many of the priestly family, the Levites, continued in that office, but to serve the people before their idols. Be cause of this behavior, the Lord forbade them to enter the most holy place when the proper order was to be re-established. However, God extended His mercy towards them and did not cut them off altogether, but said of these, “I will make them keepers of the charge of the house.” They were permitted to minister to the “house”but not to the Lord.

The sons of Zadok, of the priestly family, however, did not give themselves to idolatrous practices, and for that, the Lord said, “They shall come near to Me, to minister unto Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me…” Their ministry was not to the house but to the Lord Himself. Surely this shows the distinction we have in 1 Peter 2—the two aspects of priesthood: the holy priesthood entering in with spiritual sacrifices unto the Lord, and the royal priesthood going out to the people to

display the virtues of a risen Christ. Of course it is only illustrative, not an exact parallel, since all believers have the privilege of engaging in both of these spiritual activities. The distinction must be kept clear, however, between that service which is directed to “the house” and that which has God Himself for its object.

If this was clear in the minds of the saints, it would be a preservative to keep the Lord’s Supper from being reduced to “sharing” meetings, where subjective experiences take up the attention. These, while good in themselves, are not the purpose of the gathering. Nor is the purpose of that meeting to gain some approval from the Lord; nor to obtain by the keeping of it some means of grace by which our standing before God is improved.

An apprehension of the truth concerning the institution and instructions given concerning the Lord’s Supper will greatly aid the earnest believer as he or she engages in this high spiritual privilege.

Institution of the Lord’s Supper

1. When it took place historically. Matthew 26:26-30 clearly shows that it was instituted just before the Passion of the Lord and just after the Passover supper. Being instituted before the Passion might well, at first, have reminded the disciples of the Old Testament usage of the bread and wine. Picture the scene. The Passover supper is ended. Bread and wine are still before them. Then the Lord reaches out again and takes the bread and the cup.

In Jeremiah 16:7, NKJV we read, “Nor shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; Nor shall men give them the cup of

consolation to drink."This custom had to do with the comfort of the bereaved. We have something like this with us today. After a funeral, friends of the bereaved usually meet and share refreshments. The atmosphere is different than that prior to the funeral. It is lighter, as comfort and encouragement are poured out on the mourners to face their new life. So here is the Lord Jesus, the One about to die, ministering comfort to those He would leave behind, giving them hope.

Occurring after the Passover, it signified that it had to do with a new covenant, as the Passover had to do with the old. Indeed the Lord so states it in verse 28, that His blood is of the New Covenant.

2. What it signified spiritually. What was the blood of the old covenant? In Exodus 24, Moses rehearses to the people, all the words of the Lord ... The people respond, An the words which the Lord hath said will we do. The next morning, Moses reads the book of the covenant to all the people. The people respond, All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient.

At this point, Moses took the blood that had been shed, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant." That blood had already been sprinkled on the altar, so it bound the people figuratively to the altar of sacrifice. It bound them also to the word of their own promise. It was of course limited to the nation of Israel alone.

A great deal more could be considered with regards to the sprinkling of blood and the shedding of blood. The sprinkling of blood has to do with the imparting of the power of the life to the recipient for specific need. In Egypt it was for preservation. To the leper it was for

purging. For the priestly family, it was preparation for service. In Exodus 24, it was with a view to obedience, as they had promised.

The blood of the New Covenant, the precious blood of Christ, links the believer to a completed work, “for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14), a sacrifice that can never, and need never, be repeated. It binds the people with His promise, “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”It has no national boundaries, but is for all men—for the sins of the whole world.

3. Why it was instituted. “This do in remembrance of Me” (Lk. 22:19). It is not to be a preoccupation with our benefits as a result of His death, although we will be appreciative of all that Christ’s death has accomplished. But it is rather the stirring of the mind to recall the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, in the light of who this was that died, and what was accomplished in that great work on Calvary. While the Holy Spirit may direct us to think about any aspect of the person and work of Christ, it will always be in the light of the cross, for the participants at the Lord’s Supper are primarily remembrancers.

Instructions re. the Lord’s Supper

There would seem to be seven salient movements in the carrying out of the Supper.

1. In 1 Corinthians 11:28 there is examination. “But let a man examine himself.”When we do engage in honest heart examination, what do we find there? Most of us find to our sorrow that the heart is indeed desperately wicked. Our immediate reaction would be to stay at

home and not partake. But the Lord has made a way for forgiveness and renewal of fellowship if needed (1 Jn. 1:9).

2. In that frame of heart we then are to “eat.” That is participation. To discern the Lord’s body is not simply a matter of thinking that the portion of bread we break and eat speaks of the Lord’s body. It is to recognize the force of the words of the Lord when instituting the feast, “This is My body, which is given for you.” That is, given for you as you have discovered yourself to be by examination—nothing but an unworthy sinner with no claim upon God at all. The heart made conscious of its true condition, and made aware by the Spirit, of the Person and work of Christ on our behalf, will respond in worship and in praise.

3. Thus the Supper becomes a proclamation of the value of that wondrous death for sinners (v. 26).

4) The feast is to have continuation. But how often? It seems clear that Paul’s visit to Troas was extended over the first day of the week so that they could attend the Lord’s Supper; then they were ready to depart the next day. Had it been the practice of the early church to hold the Supper on any and every day, there would have been no need to wait over to the first day of the week, “when the disciples came together to break bread.” The first day of the week is most eloquently the day of the new beginning and of the new covenant and of a new order of priority.

We must avoid legalism like the plague, where outward habit and form are exalted above inward condition. But another great danger of the day is a liberalism where anything goes and submission to the principles of

Scripture can become very subjective and made a matter of convenience.

5. Anticipation is a hallmark of the Supper. “Till He come” are the words that remind us that the Supper is not only retrospective but prospective, when the emblems will no longer be required, for the Lord’s people will be forever with the Lord Himself.

6. Of course it is primarily a Supper for recollection of the Lord in His suffering and death for our sins. Such continual remembrance ought to stir the heart in love to the One who died for us. As the letter to the church of Ephesus (Rev. 2) reminds us so forcibly, all our sacrificial service, steadfast patience, suppression of evil, spiritual discernment, and firm stand against error cannot make up for that great lack: “thou hast left thy first love.”It is at the Lord’s Supper that the heart is warmed and love inflamed. Then things are seen in proper perspective.

7. A proper preparation of heart beforehand, and a right attitude at the Supper will lead to adoration.“In remembrance of Me,”said the Lord. The Supper is not for the exhibition of gift nor for the recounting of our subjective experiences during the previous week. It is for the satisfaction of the Lord Himself.

In Luke 24, the risen Christ has a hunger! “Have ye here any meat?”He asks. It was not a hunger of necessity but of desire. Doubtless He desired to show them that His body was real and capable of eating. But more, He desired a token of fellowship. What did they have for the risen Lord of the universe, into whose hands all things had been given? A piece of cold fish and of an honeycomb! But, says the record, “They gave it.”Not

very much, but it was what they had. Then we read, “He took it…”

Personal Preparation

While it is true that worship is in the realm of the spirit and according to truth, that does not mean that the body and the soul are left behind. It only means that they are subservient to the spirit. Thus we can see the necessity of definite preparation of the whole person in view of engaging in this highest exercise of the human personality.

There should be physical preparation. We must be rested. Living in a society that is bent on pleasing self, it is little wonder that there is a constant call for self indulgence. Late Saturday nights can rob the saint of freshness on the Lord’s Day morning. Long Sunday lie-ins can add rush and pressure to getting to the meeting on time, putting the mind into a state of excitement not conducive to high and worshipful thoughts. There is in this day of total demand a great need to control our involvements. The Lord recognized this need in the lives of His own. Come ye yourselves apart and rest awhile. Someone has truly said that there is sometimes a connection between busyness and barrenness.

There must be mental preparation. Today there is a concerted attack of the enemy on the minds of God’s people, for as a man thinketh, so is he. The worldly mind is not likely to give much to the Lord at His Supper. It is worldly because of a pre-occupation with the playthings, pastimes and pleasures of the world and readily becomes defiled. The Holy Spirit is thus grieved and has no liberty to lead that soul into the holiest for worship.

The wandering mind will make it difficult to concentrate on holy things. Often the cause is lack of self-discipline. Brother Lawrence in his letters said, “One way to recollect the mind in time of prayer, and preserve it more in tranquility, is not to let it wander too far at other times.”

The weary mind is often burdened with the cares of this life and ready to faint. The blessed remedy for this is found in Hebrews 12:3, “Consider Him,”that is, think about Him. It is not only that such thoughts are good. By the act of bathing the mind with thoughts of Christ, He Himself becomes the balm for the weary mind, putting it into a frame more conducive to worshipful occupation at the Lord’s Supper. This gives the capacity to be able to say to the cares and burdens of life, as did Abraham long ago to his servants, “Abide ye here while I…go yonder and worship.”

Of course there must be spiritual preparation, a distinct apprehension of what we are engaged in at the Lord’s Supper. As holy priests we are expected to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. We need a clear understanding of the One to whom we gather: He is not now “Jesus only.” A great deal has happened since that lonely Stranger walked the shores of Galilee. “God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ.” It is the Lord Jesus Christwhom we now worship, while we remember Him as the lowly Man of Sorrows.

Daily communion at the Lord’s Table is assumed in the life of each believer. The measure in which we enjoy the Lord and His provisions all week long will largely affect our responses at the Lord’s Supper.

A devoted attitude and reverent decorum is expected as we enter “the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” The sanctuary of the Old Testament was a holy place, and no irreverence was tolerated—at the risk of death! It was a fragrant place and it was a privileged place. Surely, under Grace we should not enter the heavenly sanctuary with flippant thoughts, careless attitudes, cheap slang, or scruffy decorum, when this holy privilege was purchased for us at such a cost.

> *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! > > Thou glorious Bridegroom of our hearts, > Thy present smile a heaven imparts; > Oh, lift the veil, if veil there be, > Let every saint Thy beauties see! > —C. H. S*

Worship (June 2004)

From Uplook, June 2004. Article.

If we could approach the Supper with this desire to give to the Lord what will please His heart, we would make sure that we had something. It need not be much. A brother, not accustomed to public speaking, stood up at the Lord's Supper one morning and simply said "O God, we just want to tell Thee how much we appreciate Thy Son." He broke down in tears and sat down. The whole assembly responded to such an honest outpouring of the heart.

The word translated "worship" in the New Testament means literally "to kiss towards." It bespeaks an attitude of love, of obedience, of allegiance, of adoration. Worship (from worth-ship) is the response of the spirit in appreciation of the worthiness of the object.

Worship is beautifully pictured for us in Leviticus 16. on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest was to enter the holiest of all, he was to take his hands full of the sweet incense beaten small into the Holy of Holies, place it upon the burning coals of the censer that the cloud might fill the place. Without that, no further service was to take place. The sweet incense speaks of the fragrance of the Person of Christ. This is to be presented to the Father as we enter in as holy priests.

We see the Lord Jesus do this in Luke 24. He joins the two on the way to Emmaus. He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning Himself That is the sweet incense beaten small. He placed it on the burning hearts of those two, and at the end of the

chapter they worshiped. Nothing will produce a worshipful spirit like a sight of the Lord before the eyes of the heart, “loving, giving, bleeding, dying.” That is why some feel strongly that ministry at the Lord’s Supper should be in the character of that meeting and fulfill the purpose of it. It must direct the hearts of the people to Christ. It is not a case of legislating the kind of ministry, but having an intelligent view of why we are there.

The enemy of souls, the antagonist of Christ, seeks by any means to rob Him of worship. He does this, not by open opposition but by subtle diversion.

Peter, on the mount was thus diverted. He said, IT … good for US, the experience was good for him. But the Father had to remind him that they were not on the mount to be occupied with any subjective experience, but to be occupied with the Lord and His Word. Let all believers be awake to the danger of diversion away from Christ and from that great sacrifice and all its glorious implications.

See the Difference: Distinctions Between the Lord's Supper & the Lord's Table (June 2004)

From Uplook, June 2004. Bible study.

A clear distinction must be kept between the Lord's Supper and the Lord's table. These terms are often used interchangeably. It is not altogether wrong to do so, so long as we understand the biblical distinction. The Supper is contained within the table but it is not the same. There are, in fact, eight distinctions between the Lord's Supper and the Lord's table in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11. The Lord's table is not limited to New Testament usage only. The Lord's Supper is strictly a New Testament institution. Note:

1. The form of the language differs: In chapter 11 it is literal, in chapter 10 it is representative. The table is not a literal table, but is that which represents a fellowship. The Lord's table is that to which all His people are brought. It is the provision of the Lord for the need of His own, and from which resources may be drawn. David could speak of it in Psalm 23, He prepareth a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. The Supper is a literal "meal" to be actually partaken of.

2. The action of the participants differs: In 10:17 they are "partakers." In 11:24 they are remembrancers.

3. The order of the elements differs: In 10:16 the cup comes before the bread. This is the order of human experience. The believer enters into the oneness of the body through the value and efficacy of the shed blood. In

11:24 the bread comes before the cup. This is the order of divine expediency. The Lord's body was given before the precious blood was shed.

4. The figure of the bread differs: In chapter 10, it is a figure of the mystical body of Christ, "for we being many are one bread and one body." In chapter 11, the bread is a figure primarily of the physical body of Christ, given for us.

5. The function differs: In chapter 10, the believer praises the value of the blood by a life of communion, enjoying the provisions of the Lord at the table. The word translated "bless" is really to "eulogize" or to speak well of. In chapter 11 the believer proclaims, or shows forth, the meaning of the death of Christ, by a regular remembrance at the Supper.

6. There is a danger that differs: In 10:21 the danger is an evil system, the table of demons, figurative of that which is in fellowship with what is opposed to fellowship with the Lord. The contrast is drawn between the table of demons and the Lord's table. In 11:28, the danger is an evil principle, "self," and the contrast is between the Lord's Supper and our own supper (v. 21).

7. The emphasis differs: In chapter 10, it is a continuous experience of fellowship, in chapter 11 it has to do with a weekly remembrance.

8. There are two impossibilities that differ: In 10:21 it is impossible to have fellowship with the Lord and with the system of evil at the same time. In chapter 11, we cannot discern the Lord's body without first discerning ourselves (vv. 29-30).

The solemnity of the judgments can be seen when we compare these two chapters. Why such severe judgments as “weakness,” “sickness” and even death? Because of the oneness of the body as taught in chapter 10. Each one brings to the Lord’s Supper a spirit that will either be an aid to the spiritual exercise of the body, as locally gathered, or one that will be a hindrance to the spirit of worship. If this hindrance continues and one is repeatedly the cause of the Lord being robbed of the worship due to Him, then He will intervene and deal with the hindrance, temporarily or in an extreme case, permanently.

What Is He Doing Now? (May 2006)

From Uplook, May 2006. Article.

What does Christ's High Priestly ministry mean to believers today? How do we benefit from it and so enjoy the privileges of the priestly family?

He makes RECONCILIATION for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17). He provides CONSOLATION because He Himself has suffered, being tempted, and so is able to succor those that are tempted (2:18). He engages in continuing INTERCESSION for His own (7:25). He provides an acceptable REPRESENTATION in the presence of God (9:24). He provides ACCEPTATION in the presence of a holy God by virtue of His precious blood (10:19). He gives to His own a glorious ANTICIPATION founded on His unfailing promise (11:40). Then for the daily on-going race, so that His people might finish well, He Himself becomes their Goal, the INSPIRATION, the glorious Exemplar who Himself finished well and is now glorified (12:2-3).

In the light of all this revelation of glory and beauty, let us urgently obey the admonition of Scripture: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus…" (Heb. 3:1).

© Uplook Ministries. Used by permission. All rights reserved.