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Titus

Chapter 1 Introduction

There are four letters addressed to individuals which the Holy Spirit indicted through the apostle Paul. Three are called pastoral, because directed to young preachers, exhorting them to diligence in their calling. The fourth, to Philemon, is decidedly personal.

While the two letters to Timothy and that to Titus are in some respects alike, there is this marked difference: to Timothy the apostle stresses the importance of sound doctrine, whereas to Titus he dwells on sound behavior. In other words, the subject of this epistle is, "The truth which is according to godliness."

Never was there a time when the necessity of practical piety was so marked as in the days in which our lot is cast. Loose doctrine makes for loose living. On the other hand, it is quite possible to contend earnestly for fundamental principles when the life is anything but consistent with the profession.

Titus was a Greek, as Paul tells us, who accompanied him to Jerusalem to discuss the Gentiles' relation to the law of Moses. A trustworthy man apparently, for to him was committed the responsibility of a collection among the Gentile assemblies for the relief of the famine-stricken Jewish brethren in Palestine. Paul speaks approvingly of Titus' general behavior, and yet significantly adds, "With Titus I sent a brother." He would allow nothing to cast disparagement upon a servant of God in money matters. In this we see an important lesson for ourselves.

When Paul wrote this epistle Titus was in the island of Crete and was what we might call an apostolic legate to whom was committed the work of organizing the churches of Crete. The letter was evidently written between Paul's two imprisonments, for we have no record of his having been in Crete prior to the first imprisonment, nor of his later wintering at Nicopolis. But evidently after he was freed from the charges brought against him by the Jerusalem Jews, he went about, as tradition declares, continuing his ministry until arrested a second time. It was during this interval that he went with Titus to Crete, later leaving the younger man to complete the work while he moved on to other parts.

The three chapters of the epistle are its natural divisions. Chapter 1 dwells upon the need of godliness in the church; chapter 2, godliness in the home; and chapter 3, godliness in the world.

Chapter 2 Godliness in the Church

Titus 1:1-16

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour; to Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in

every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, the Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate, (vv. 1-16)

Let us look particularly at the first chapter. Verses 1-4 give the salutation. J Paul speaks of himself as a bondman of God, and a sent-one of Jesus Christ in accordance with the faith of God's elect. Faith here refers not to trust nor confidence in God on the part of the elect but to that body of doctrine which the elect are called to defend. He adds, "And the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." Godliness is literally "godlikeness," or "piety." The truth apprehended in the

soul produces piety in the life. This is insisted on in this letter.

The statement of verse 2 deserves special consideration: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." It should read, "the age-times," or "the times of the ages," in place of "world." There are two Greek words, not merely one, that are here together translated "world."

The "times of the ages" are the dispensations, the redemptive ages which began after the fall of man. The promise of life here referred to, as also in 2 Timothy 1:1, was the declaration Jehovah made when He cursed the serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). This is the promise of life. It was not a promise given before the creation of the material universe, but before the ages of time had started to run their course. Sin had come in, but man was not to be left under the sentence of death. A divine Deliverer was to come from God, the Virgin's Son, who would bring in life. In due time God fulfilled this promise, and it is now proclaimed by His Word throughout the world.

From verses 5-9 we have instruction given to Titus in regard to the ordination of elders. He was to set in order the things that were wanting, organizing the churches in a godly way and ordaining elders in every city by apostolic direction. These elders must be blameless, husbands of but one wife, having their households in godly subjection. That elder and bishop refer to the same person seems evident: "For," he continues, as though speaking of exactly the same class, "a bishop

must be blameless, as the steward of God," a man who holds himself in control, not willful, nor of bad temper, self-indulgent, quarrelsome, nor yet covetous, but hospitable, warm of heart toward his brethren, delighting in those who are good, sober, just, holy. He must not play fast and loose with Holy Scripture, but hold fast the Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince the gainsayers. Thus in five short verses the apostle portrays for us the ideal elder or bishop. Elder suggests a man of maturity, while bishop emphasizes his office, the word meaning an "overseer."

The need of godly order in the church was evident. In Crete, as elsewhere, there were many unruly, vain talkers and deceivers, particularly those who had come out of Judaism. Never having been fully delivered from the law, they prated of their greater privileges, and sought to bring the Gentile believers into bondage. "Whose mouths must be stopped, [for they] subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." That is, they were seeking to form a party around themselves, having in view their own aggrandizement and enrichment.

These Cretan Jews were like their Gentile fellow countrymen of whom Epimenides had written, "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." The last expression might read, "greedy gluttons." What people are by nature comes out even after Christ has wrought in their souls, and therefore calls for greater watchfulness. The old nature is not changed by conversion, though a new nature is given. But the motions of the flesh must be put to death if there would be a life of victory and piety. So Paul commands Titus to

rebuke them sharply in order that they may be sound in the faith. They must be warned against Jewish fables and commandments of men (taking the place of revealed truth), which would only lead to apostasy.

The fifteenth verse has frequently been utterly misused: "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." This does not mean that things which to others are unholy become in themselves pure when done by those of superior mind. It means that the pure delight in purity, even as the unholy delight in that which is impure. With mind and conscience defiled such may make a great religious profession declaring that they know God, but their evil works prove that they are utter strangers to Him. It is against the behavior of such that Titus is called upon to warn the people of God.

Chapter 3 Godliness in the Home

Titus 2:1-15

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that

he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. (vv. 1-15)

Passing from the question of the church, the epistle takes up godliness in the home. Titus is exhorted to speak the things that are in accord with the sound doctrine, or really “the healthful teaching,” and in so doing he should counsel the various members of the Christian society. There is a message for aged men and women, young men and women, and also servants.

It is not, however, as in Ephesians and Colossians, a direct exhortation addressed to each of these classes. On the contrary, Titus is instructed as to his own line of procedure to help these various persons to walk consistently with their profession.

The aged men were to be so taught that they would be characterized by sobriety, gravity, self-control, soundness in the faith, love, and patience. The aged women were to walk in accordance with their holy

profession, being especially warned against a wrong use of the tongue—"not false accusers." The word is the same as employed for the Devil himself. He is preeminently the slanderer. What a sad thing when Christians so forget their high and holy calling as to be slanderers one of another, thus giving place to the Devil! The aged women are not to become self-indulgent, but to teach, by example as well as precept, those who are younger.

Observe that Titus is not told to instruct the young women personally in regard to their behavior. That might not always be discreet and might compromise him as a servant of Christ. He is to address himself to the aged women and they are to "train" the younger. The word translated teach in verse 4 is really "train." The young women are to be trained in sobriety. They are to be taught to love their husbands and their children, and be discreet, chaste, keepers at home. It is really "workers at home"; idleness is not conducive to holiness. They are to be good, or kind, subject to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed.

To the young men Titus may address himself directly. He is to exhort them to be sober-minded, but at the same time careful to set an example in all things.

Men will forgive a preacher if he is not eloquent or highly cultured. They will forgive him if he lacks in personal attractiveness or even in wisdom, but they will never forgive him if he is insincere. He who handles holy things must himself live in the power of them. His speech, too, is to be as sound as his life and teaching, in order that those opposed to him may be put to shame

when, like the enemies of Daniel, they can find no evil thing to say against him.

In the Revised Version we have “us” instead of “you” at the close of the eighth verse, which might imply that the behavior of Christians would close the mouths of those who desire to find fault with the servants of Christ, through whom they had been led to make a Christian profession.

In verses 9-10 we have the behavior of Christian servants. They are to be obedient to their own masters, to seek to please them well, not answering again, not purloining nor pilfering what is not rightfully their own, but on the other hand showing all good fidelity that thus they may reflect credit on the truth they profess. Integrity and trustworthiness in the little details of their service will glorify the One whose bondmen they really are.

It is to this that we have all been called, as is shown in verses 11-15, “The grace of God, [salvation bringing for all men], hath appeared.” A divine message sent from heaven to earth, showing not only that Christ saves us, but teaching us that denying, or refusing, ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and piously in this present world, “looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” This last expression should be translated in this way, according to the judgment of many sober authorities. He is our great God, and it is He who became in grace our Savior.

It is the return of the Lord that is thus put before us to influence our daily lives. It is one thing to hold the

doctrine of the Lord's return, but quite another to be held by that blessed hope.

These things Titus is to speak, exhort, and rebuke with all authority.

Chapter 4 Godliness In The World

Titus 3:1-15

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer

and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. (vv. 1-15)

In the third chapter we have the Christian's relationship to the world outside. He must not plead heavenly citizenship in order to free himself from his responsibilities as an earthly citizen. The same apostle who wrote to the Philippians, "Our citizenship is in heaven," declared himself a Roman citizen on more than one occasion, and claimed rights thereby.

And so Titus was to teach these restless Cretans to be subject to proper authority, always ready to participate in anything for the good of the community; speaking evil of none, but manifesting the meekness and gentleness of Christ unto all.

This of course does not mean that the Christian is to immerse himself in politics. He will only be defiled if he attempts it, and he will fail in the very thing he is trying to do. Lot could not purify conditions in Sodom by running for office, and many a Christian has found that it was in vain for him to attempt to stem the tide of iniquity by becoming a politician. But the Christian is to set an example of piety in his civic responsibilities. He is to be obedient to law and to pay honestly his taxes, or tribute as the case may be, and to pray for all who are in positions of authority. Then, too, he is to remember the admonition, "[As much as in you is], do good unto all men." Therefore he should be interested in anything which is for the blessing of mankind. This, however, does

not leave him at liberty to take part in plans and schemes that are manifestly contrary to the Word of God, even though they may be loudly vaunted as for the upbuilding of humanity. But by generosity, by uprightness of life, and by compassionate interest in his fellows, he is to commend the doctrine of Christ.

It is by such behavior that Christians prove to the world that they are indeed a new creation in Christ Jesus. There was a time when we were like others, “foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving [various unholy desires] and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” We were not all guilty to the same extent, but we were all in non-subjection to God, self-willed, and living in disobedience to His Word.

But He in grace undertook our salvation. Not that we became at last so distressed about our sinfulness that we longed after Him, but He in infinite kindness reached down to where we were. “The love of God our Saviour toward man,” is literally, “the philanthropy of God.”

God is a lover of men, and because He so loved He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And so we have been saved not through merit of our own—“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

The washing is the application of the Word of God to heart and conscience, thus producing through the Spirit’s power, the new nature. Having been thus washed from our old behavior, we are daily being renewed by the Holy Spirit, which God shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

And God's purpose in thus working on our behalf and in us was that we, being justified by His grace, should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Every believer has eternal life now as a present possession. Nevertheless, we are exhorted to lay hold on eternal life as a matter of practical experience, and by and by at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall enter into life eternal in all its fullness.

I have eternal life now in a dying body. In that day body, soul, and spirit will be fully conformed to the image of God's blessed Son. That will be life indeed.

It is a question whether the opening of verse 8 refers to what has already been put before us in verses 4-7 or whether it introduces the words that follow.

If we take it in the latter way, then it balances with 1 Timothy 1:15, where we read, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Here we are told, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." All such things as these are good and profitable to men.

But occupation with idle theories is of no value toward a holy life, and so we read: "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." It is easy to give one's self to the defense of certain views which may not in themselves be of a sanctifying character, but the servant of Christ is exhorted to avoid everything of a merely contentious nature, and first of all to have in mind the edification of the people of God.

Verses 10-11 have to do with one who refuses these admonitions. “A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

The heretic is really a factious person, more concerned about gathering adherents to himself and maintaining some sectarian view of truth, than falling into line with the entire body of revelation, seeking the blessing of all the people of God. His particular hobby may or may not be true, but he uses it to form a school of opinion.

Such a man is to be shunned after he has been twice admonished to refrain from his behavior. It is the same word as in 1 Timothy 4:7; 5:11; and 2 Timothy 2:23, and in those passages translated “refuse” and “avoid.”

There is no hint here of excommunicating the man. False doctrine opposed to fundamental truth is not in question, but the factious man is to be refused; in other words, people are not to listen to him. The result will be, if he persist in his course, that he will eventually go out himself.

The closing verses are all of a personal nature. Paul is about to send either Artemas or Tychicus to Crete to relieve Titus, who is then to come to him at Nicopolis, for there the apostle had made up his mind to winter.

Zenas, the lawyer—possibly a converted Jewish lawyer, that is, a teacher of the law of Moses, or (what seems more likely from his Gentile name) a legal advocate who has become a servant of Christ—and Apollos were evidently also visiting Crete. Titus was exhorted to help them forward in their journey, seeing that they were cared for in temporal things, in order that they might not be left in need.

The saints themselves are exhorted to labor in useful occupations in order to provide for their necessities. This seems to be the true meaning of the admonition. The Christian should shun merely gainful professions or means of livelihood if they are not really “honest trades” for the good of mankind.

Paul and his companions salute Titus, sending their greetings to all who love them in the faith.

The epistle closes with the customary Pauline benediction, “Grace be with you all. Amen.”

Philemon

Chapter 1 Introduction

It has been well said that the letter from Paul to his friend Philemon is the finest specimen of early, personal, Christian correspondence extant. It was written to commend a returning, runaway, thieving slave to his master. With characteristic generosity and a deep sense of the importance of maintaining a standard of righteousness, Paul offers to be surety for this man, Onesimus, and agrees to meet every responsibility as to his past evildoing. He knew that the life of Onesimus had been changed completely by divine grace, and so he unhesitatingly requested Philemon to receive him, no longer as a slave but as a brother in Christ.

Luther said, "We are all God's Onesimi." For in this incident we have a striking picture of our lost condition by nature and practice and of the activities of divine grace on our behalf. The letter sets forth most beautifully the great truths of forgiveness on the ground of the expiatory work of Another and acceptance in the Beloved.

In Philemon himself we have an excellent example of what Christianity could do for one who was, doubtless, a heathen idolater before he was brought to know Christ, but in whom the love of the Spirit was manifested richly after he was brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Apparently, he was converted through the personal ministry of Paul, although the Apostle had never visited Colosse where Philemon resided.

Although so definitely personal, this letter is as truly part of the inspired Word of God as any other portion of the Scriptures. But inspiration leaves room for the writer's personality to manifest itself, and in this intimate epistle we get a wonderful view into the very depths of the Apostle's heart. It is a remarkable thing that so large a part of the New Testament is made up of letters, a form of literature which leaves room for the most simple, homely touches and which stands in vivid contrast to heavy theological treatises. It is as though our God and Father would speak to our hearts in a tender, familiar manner, calculated to win our fullest confidence.

This letter may have been written by Paul while in prison in Cesarea, as some think, but more likely in Rome. Onesimus, a bondman of the household of Philemon, had run away after robbing his master, and, in some way, had come in contact with Paul, through whom he was led to Christ. He felt he should return home to Colosse and submit himself to Philemon, so Paul wrote this letter to explain matters clearly.

Paul was not a recluse. Though in some respects he lived a lonely life for the gospel's sake (1 Cor. 9:5), foregoing the joy and comfort of wife and home that he might be freer to go about preaching the Word, yet he was a man of deep emotions and of very sincere affection. He valued Christian fellowship. He rejoiced when those he loved in Christ labored with acceptance and lived well to the glory of God. He was deeply pained when any turned away and made shipwreck of their discipleship (2 Tim. 4:10). His personal letters show how deep was his interest in others and how fervently he loved his converts and friends. Read carefully this epistle, with

these considerations in view, and you will see how true it is.

This letter furnishes us with one of the most delightful pictures of the grace of God, as revealed in the gospel, that we could ever expect to find. Like Onesimus, we have all wronged our rightful Lord and Master. We have misused His mercies, trampled on His grace, and robbed Him by applying for our own selfish purposes that which He has entrusted to us to be used for His honor and glory. But the Lord Jesus has paid all our debt, discharged every obligation to the broken law of God. Now we can come to the Father in His name, assured of a welcome, and knowing we shall not only be forgiven, but also that we are now accepted in the Beloved and brought into the very family of God. It should ever be our happy privilege, as it is our great responsibility, to manifest the same grace to others as that which has been lavished on us.

Chapter 2 Christianity and Slavery

Philemon 1-25

The spread of Christianity did not drive slavery out of the world all at once. But from the beginning it established a new conception of human values, and Christian masters learned to esteem and treat their slaves as brothers and sisters in Christ. Under Roman law it would not have proved a kindness, in all circumstances, to free the slaves. But as the centuries went on and men became more enlightened, it was through the teachings of Christ and His apostles that slavery disappeared from the civilized world.

But we have stood too long at the door, as it were. Let us enter in and explore the precious things here revealed.

Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother, (vv. 1-7)

“A prisoner of Jesus Christ,... unto Philemon.” This letter was written, in all likelihood, from that hired house in Rome (Acts 28:30) where Paul was kept in durance for two years while he waited to appear before Nero. Philemon was a Colossian believer who owed his conversion to Paul (see v. 19). The letter, as we have mentioned above, concerns the return of a runaway slave. Paul means “the little one” and Philemon, “the loving one,” so this is a letter from the little one to the loving one.

“Apphia... Archippus.” Apphia is a feminine name and refers doubtless to Philemon’s wife. Archippus was apparently a young preacher, perhaps their son. None can speak with certainty, though, as to this.

“Grace... and peace.” It is the customary apostolic salutation uniting those of the Gentiles who said

“Grace” (Chans, or Gratia) and the Jews who said “Peace” (Shalom) in ordinary greetings. Both are united in Christ.

“Making mention of thee always in my prayers.” How real was the interest that the apostle had in this friend and convert! He prayed frequently and regularly for him.

“Hearing of thy love and faith.” The two went hand-in-hand. Philemon’s genuine Christian character was well-known. Paul rejoiced in the way others spoke of his friend’s true piety. Faith works (or, is manifested) by love. Philemon was one to whom the Lord Jesus was precious, and so his heart went out in affection toward all who were in Christ.

“Thy faith... effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” This was not fulsome flattery, but recognition of what the grace of God had wrought in the life and experience of this man. Because of this, Paul felt he could write with confidence as he was about to bring before Philemon the case of Onesimus. He would see every good impulse come to perfection in a practical way. Remember, he was about to plead for a brotherly reception to Onesimus, formerly a thieving, runaway slave.

“Great joy and consolation in thy love.” Nothing is more precious than the manifestation of the Spirit of Christ in his people. Philemon’s fine, gracious spirit had made him a blessing to many. Now Paul was about to test him further. He adds, “The bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee.” For “bowels” we might properly substitute “hearts” in English. The thought is that Philemon’s love had cheered the inward being of many a believer.

Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly, (vv. 8-14)

"I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient." Because of the close tie that bound these two together in Christ and also because of his apostolic authority, Paul might have been free to give a definite commandment as to what would be befitting in the treatment of Onesimus on his return, now that he, too, had become a Christian.

"For love's sake I rather beseech thee." Yet he did not choose to exercise such authority, but preferred to lay the matter before his friend, reminding him that he was now "Paul the aged," in such a way as to give him the opportunity of manifesting that love which ever characterized him, freely, of his own volition and not as acting under stress of any kind.

"I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." This makes it clear that Onesimus was Paul's child in the faith. He had won him for Christ, and he was naturally concerned as to his

future. Where the grace of Christ rules in the heart, I command becomes I beseech.

“In time past... unprofitable, but now profitable.” It is a play upon words. Onesimus means “profitable” or “helpful.” He had been anything but that in the past. Now all was changed, and he was living up to his name. We “are all gone out of the way”; we “are together become unprofitable” (Rom. 3:12) in our sinful condition. It is grace alone that enables those who are saved to count for God.

“Whom I have sent again.” Under existing conditions, because of both Roman law and Philemon’s character, Paul felt it wisest and best that this slave should return to his master. So, rather than act on the letter of the Mosaic law (Deut. 23:15-16), he sent him back with this letter of commendation.

“Whom I would have retained with me.” Paul would have been glad if he had felt free to keep Onesimus with him, as he had proved useful in many ways, and he considered that he might have accepted such service as though it were done by Philemon himself.

“Without thy mind would I do nothing.” He would not presume on Philemon’s friendship, however, and as there was no opportunity to consult him in the matter, he preferred to have Onesimus return to his former home.

For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee,

or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord. Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say. (vv. 15-21)

“That thou shouldest receive him for ever.” Now that both master and slave were one in Christ, Paul trusted there might be no future rupture of their association, but rather a fellowship on much higher ground than in times past.

“Not now as a servant, but... a brother beloved.” This gives us to realize what vast changes Christianity was working already in the early church. The onetime slave was now to be recognized as a beloved brother in the Lord. Onesimus in his wayward career pictures the course of all unsaved people. Repentant and truly converted, he goes home to his master. The great doctrine of substitution is illustrated by Paul’s offer to pay his debt. The truth of acceptance is suggested when Paul intimates that they are to show their regard for him by the way they treat Onesimus. It is a delightful miniature of the evangel.

“If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.” What a beautiful picture is this of our acceptance in Christ! In the case of every saved sinner it is as though our Lord presents him to the Father saying, “If Thou count Me as a Partner, receive him as Myself.” We “are complete in him” (Col. 2:10), for, “As he is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17). He says to the Father, “Thou... hast loved them, [even] as thou hast

loved me" (John 17:23). How foolish Onesimus would have been if he had thrown away Paul's letter and undertaken to plead his own case! There can be no greater folly than to ignore the mediatorial work of Christ and seek to approach God in one's own fancied merit.

"If he... oweth thee aught, put that on mine account." It is evident that Onesimus had robbed his master. Paul offers to settle everything for him even as our blessed Lord paid all our debt upon the cross that we might be justified from all things.

"Thou owest unto me even thine own self besides." Delicately, Paul reminds Philemon that it was through him that Philemon had been brought to know Christ. Thus Paul felt sure he could count on Philemon acting now in accordance with his wishes.

"Let me have joy of thee in the Lord." Loving compliance with the Apostle's request on the part of Philemon would gladden the heart of him who was a prisoner for the sake of Christ's name. When one has been saved by grace, it is to be expected that he will walk in grace toward others, even to those whom he feels have mistreated and deceived him.

"Knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say." Not for a moment did Paul doubt but that Philemon would do that which had been asked of him. He did this with the full assurance in his own heart that he would not be disappointed, but that Philemon would go even beyond what was requested in true Christian charity and brotherliness. So the letter was committed to Onesimus, who wended his way back to Colosse, assured that all

would be forgiven and his would be a new standing altogether in the household of his former master.

But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. (vv. 22-25)

“Through your prayers.” Paul confidently expected his acquittal, and believed he would be free again to visit his friends and minister among them. He counted on God answering the prayers of many on his behalf. Nor was he disappointed, for according to the most authentic records that have come down to us, he was set free when he appeared before Nero and permitted to labor on in the gospel for several years before he was rearrested. He was then taken again to Rome, where he was incarcerated in the Mamertine dungeon, and after official condemnation he was beheaded as a martyr for the gospel of Christ.

“Epaphras, my fellowprisoner.” This was the man of God who had come to Paul from Colosse, bringing an account of the love of the saints and also of the efforts of certain teachers of evil doctrine to pervert this young church (see Col. 1:7-8; 4:12). He seems to have shared Paul’s imprisonment for a time at least, whether voluntarily or otherwise we are not told.

“My fellowlabourers.” The four names mentioned are all of real interest. Mark was the relative of Barnabas, whom Paul refused to take on his second missionary journey, but who went with Barnabas when the two older men separated. In the years that followed he had

lived down his early lack of reliability, and Paul now valued his fellowship and testimony (see 2 Tim. 4:11).

Aristarchus was a devoted friend to Paul, and at this time he was also a fellow prisoner with him (Col. 4:10). The names of Demas and Luke, the beloved physician, are here linked together, as also in Colossians 4:14. Alas, later on they were separated because of Demas' defection. He forsook Paul the prisoner because he loved this present world (2 Tim. 4:10).

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." It is the customary Pauline salutation, emphasizing the grace whereby alone we are saved, and which was the distinguishing mark that authenticated all the Apostle's genuine letters.

Paul's personal correspondence was the outcome of a heart devoted to Christ. What of our letters? Do we seek to help others to know Him better as we write?

Conversion and Consecration

Both are Supernatural Experiences;

Conversion by Harry A. Ironside. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself.....he called for a light and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.....and he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized.... and when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God..... (Acts 16:26-34)

Every conversion is a miracle. I've heard people say, "I do not believe in sudden conversions." To be perfectly frank, there is no other kind. I do not mean that everyone has as marked an experience as Saul of Tarsus had. But I do mean that in the life of every person who is ever saved there comes a definite moment when one trusts the Lord Jesus Christ, turning from all confidence in self. And that is conversion.

It may take place after long years of exercise, or, as in the case of the Philippian jailor, it may take place in a moment by a mighty convicting work in the soul, bringing one to an end of himself who has never before been very much concerned about the message of the gospel.

We see both kinds all about us - those who are brought up, for instance, in Christian homes and all their lives

hear the gospel story and perhaps grow to young manhood or womanhood without definitely closing with Christ. And yet many could say that they have never known a time in their conscious lives when they did not have some exercise about spiritual things. But there had to come a definite moment when they trusted Christ for themselves. That is conversion.

And then so many other people, who have lived wild, reckless, careless lives, having no interest whatever in the things of God, brought suddenly to a recognition of their lost, sinful condition and led to definite faith in the Lord Jesus, in a moment become new creatures in Christ.

I cannot too often stress the importance of that second birth. It is being forgotten in so many places today. People imagine they may become Christians by outward reformation, or by joining a church, or even by what they call sometimes "religious education". They think that you can take a child and educate him along religious lines and he will grow up a Christian. But that is all a delusion. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3).

Consecration by Andrew Murray. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him.....(Phil. 3:7-9)

There are Christians who look on the blessedness of spiritual life as consisting in the privilege of ever receiving; they know not how the capacity for receiving

is only kept up and enlarged by continual giving up and giving out - how it is only in the emptiness that comes from the parting with what we have, that the Divine fulness can flow in. It was a truth our Savior continually insisted on. When He spoke of selling all to secure the treasure, of losing our life to find it, of the hundredfold to lose who forsake all, He was expounding the need of self-sacrifice as the law of the kingdom for Himself as well as for His disciples.

It is not enough that, when once you are truly converted, you have the earnest desire to have your life devoted to the service of the Lord. The desire is good, but can neither teach the way nor give the strength to do it acceptably. Incalculable harm has been done to the deeper spirituality of the Church, by the idea that when once we are God's children the using of our gifts in His service follows as a matter of course. No; for this there is indeed needed very special grace. And the way in which the grace comes is again that of sacrifice and surrender.

And such surrender of all for Christ, is it a single step, the act and experience of a moment, or is it a course of daily renewed and progressive attainment? IT IS BOTH. There may be a moment in the life of a believer when he gets a first sight, or a deeper insight, of this most blessed truth, and when, made willing in the day of God's power, he does indeed, in an act of the will, gather up the whole of life yet before him into the decision of a moment, and lay himself on the altar a living and an acceptable sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). Such moments have often been the blessed transition from a life of wandering and failure to a life of abiding and power Divine. But even then his daily life becomes the

unceasing prayer for more light on the meaning of entire surrender, the ever-renewed offering up of all he has to God.

Nature shrinks back from such self-denial and crucifixion in its rigid application to our life in its whole extent. But what nature does not love and cannot perform, grace will accomplish, and make to thee a life of joy and glory. Do thou but yield up thyself to Christ thy Lord; the conquering power of His incoming presence will make a joy to cast out all that before was most precious. And the secret of a life of close abiding will be seen to be simply this: As I give Him wholly for myself; and as I lose myself and all I have for Him, He takes me wholly for Himself and gives Himself wholly to me.

The almighty power of God in the conversion of a sinner is the most mysterious of all the works of God. Thomas Hooker The body has two eyes, but the soul must have but one. William Secker

The Eternal Sonship of Christ

The Eternal Sonship of Christ

H. A. Ironside

Dr. Harry A. Ironside was an internationally beloved Bible teacher and preacher. During his 50 years of ministry he, among other things, authored more than 60 books in addition to numerous pamphlets and articles on Bible subjects.

This article is reprinted from Our Hope magazine (Jan. 1948).

Among the various heresies that have misled saints and troubled the Church down through the centuries is that of the denial of the Eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The assertion has been made that while Scripture plainly teaches that our Lord was the Eternal Word, it nowhere declares that He bore the name of Son until His incarnation. This is a tacit denial of the Eternal Father as truly as of the Eternal Son, for if the Son was not in the Trinity from eternity, how then could the Father have any such title until Christ was born of Mary? One has well asked, "Had the Father no bosom until Christ was born in Bethlehem?" He is said definitely to have subsisted in the bosom of the Father ere He came into this scene — an expression which surely implies Sonship.

But there are definite Scriptures that make it very evident that He was God the Son, one with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, three Persons in the

unity of the Godhead, ere He stooped in grace to link humanity with His Deity and thus became the Son of God in a new sense, as Man upon earth, having no human father. We think at once of that grand passage which Luther called "the Miniature Gospel," John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Did He become the Son after He was given, or was He the Son from eternity? Clearly the latter is the case. The term, "only Begotten," to some suggests the incarnation as though linked with the thought of generation, but it is not necessarily so used in Scripture. Five times in the New Testament our Lord is called "the only Begotten," and in each instance the suggestion is that he was Son by unique relationship. Isaac is said, in Hebrews eleven, to be Abraham's "only begotten." Yet according to natural generation, Ishmael was begotten by Abram long before Isaac was born; but Isaac was his son by unique relationship, miraculously born, and thus spoken of in a very different way than that in which Scripture speaks of Ishmael. So our Lord was God's unique Son from eternity. Men may try to reason from humanity up to Deity, and so ask the unbelieving question: "How could a son be as old as his father?" — a question which Arians and Socinians have been asking all down through the centuries; but they forget that the divine relationship of Son and Father is not patterned after the human but the human is rather intended to be a picture of the divine. On the human plane, of very necessity, the Father exists ere the son is born; but in the Godhead the Son and the Father are both eternal, as in the Spirit.

Note a number of other passages in which it is very definitely set forth that it was the Son Himself who came into the world. He did not become the Son after He left Heaven to take up the work of redemption. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Here the Word and the only Begotten are clearly identified. He was always the Word; He was ever the only Begotten of the Father. Again in the 18th verse we read: "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." This verse might be more clearly rendered as follows: "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son subsisting in the bosom of the Father, He hath told Him out." The Son came from that bosom down into this scene in order to make God the Father known to man. It would not be correct to say, as some have done, that he left the Father's bosom, for the Father's bosom implies the place of affection. But He came from that place into this scene and ever enjoyed the Father's affection while here. This is what is emphasized in John 3:13: "And no man has ascended up to Heaven but He that cometh down from Heaven, even the Son of man, who is in Heaven." As the incarnate Son on earth, He lived in Heaven in the sense of ever enjoying blessed communion with the Father. But it was the Eternal Son who thus became the Son of man, and so revealed the Father.

This is the test of faith, as we see in John 3:18: "He that believeth in Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only begotten Son of God."

In the First Epistle of John, the same precious truth is insisted upon: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9). It would be the gross misrepresentation of what is here declared so clearly, to teach that God sent the Word, but the Word became the Son after He entered into the world. The very opposite is the declaration of the Holy Spirit.

The term, "The Son of the Father," as used in Second John 3, in itself implies Eternal Sonship in a deeper sense than the term "Son of God," which is used in Scripture in two ways: in some instances it too speaks of eternal relationship; in others, of what our Lord became as a man, as for instance, when the angel said to Mary: "That holy thing which will be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Both thoughts are involved in Peter's great confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

It would rob the soul of the believer of much that is precious, were he to fail to recognize this blessed truth that Christ is the Eternal Son. It would lower, too, one's appreciation of the love of the Father, who sent Him into the world, if we failed to realize that the One whom He sent was the Son of His love from all eternity, the One who had ever been with Him, the delight of His heart, but who came forth from the Father into the world, that he might become the propitiation for our sins.

How could one read our Lord's prayer in the seventeenth of John understandingly, if we failed to recognize that it was the Son speaking to the Father, with whom He had been in eternal relationship. He

speaks of “the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (v. 5). Could this be other than the glory of Sonship — participation with the Father in all that pertained to His purpose of grace toward this poor world?

How cold and disappointing the suggestion that though He was the Word, He was not the Son! And what feebleness of comprehension as to the dignity of Sonship is manifested by those who say, as some have recently declared: “Becoming the Son was His first step downward toward the Cross of shame,” as though He were, in some sense, humiliating or degrading Himself in becoming the Son of the Father! Could anything involve a greater misapprehension of the relationship existing between the Father and the Son, as set forth in the Word?

The Lord's Supper (adapted from a sermon, edited by David Dunlap)

This article was adapted by David Dunlap from an sermon given by Harry A. Ironside(1876-1951). He was internationally beloved for his teaching of the Word of God. He labored in the exposition of the Scripture for over 50 years and was the author of over 60 books on the Bible and Bible subjects.

The last Passover feast that God ever recognized was that celebrated by Jesus Himself, with His disciples, in the guest chamber at Jerusalem. On that same evening, He instituted the great central ordinance of Christianity, the Lord's supper, the memorial of His mighty love and infinite sacrifice. Directions for the keeping of this feast are clearly given in the New Testament. Believers, who have gone on in the ways of Christ, should always be able to give a scriptural reason for everything connected with the observance of the breaking of the bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is my desire, as simply as possible, to attempt to answer some of the questions regarding the Lord's supper, having in mind older, but also new, believers in Christ who desire to walk in obedience to His Word.

The Frequency of the Lord's Supper

Perhaps one of the first questions that will be asked is, "Why observe this feast so frequently when, in many places, it is only at rare intervals that what is commonly called 'the communion' is celebrated?" For answer we reply that we have, in Scripture, no distinct commandment as regarding the particular times it is to

be celebrated. The Passover was celebrated once per year, but, when the Lord instituted the Supper, He implied much more frequent observance when He said, "As often as you do this, do it in remembrance of Me." It is the Lord's desire that His people often show His death in this way, calling to mind frequently His love and sacrifice for them. In the earliest days of the Church's history, the Christians broke bread daily; but, when the first days of transition passed, and the new dispensation was fully established, we get the Scriptural example in Acts 20:7, "Upon the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread and Paul preached unto them." In apostolic days, it is well-known that this was the recognized custom. Now this is not a commandment, but it is a word from the Lord, and He has said, "If a man love Me he will keep My words." A devoted heart does not ask "How seldom can I do this and yet have the Lord's approval?", but "What does His Word tell us about the established order in the early days?" The book answers, "On the first day of the week," and, therefore, upon that day, we delight to come together to remember Him.

No Officiating Clergy

"But when so coming together", the question is asked, "why is there no officiating clergyman to dispense the elements and take charge of the service, as is done in the denominations around us?" We answer, because we cannot find anything like that in the Book. There is no intimation anywhere, either in the Acts or in any of the epistles, of any such officer of the church. Believers came together as brethren. The Lord Himself has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst." Faith laid hold of that and

recognized His presence. He, the Head of the assembly, is today as true to His Word as in the early days. Wherever two or three are found scripturally gathered, He is in the midst to take charge by the Holy Spirit, and to lead out the hearts of His people in their remembrance of Himself. Of old, in that upper room, when the time came to break the loaf and pass the cup, His own lips pronounced the blessing, and His own hands gave to His disciples. Christ is now in heaven. But Christ's church embraces the Lord Jesus Christ as Head, and its believers on earth as members of His Body. Just as He used the members of His literal body of old to bless and give the emblems, so now He uses the members of His body, the church, as it may please Him. Any brother going to the table to give thanks and to break the loaf or pass the cup, becomes, for the moment, hands and lips for the blessed Lord. There is no human officialism required, the simpler the better. It is Christ with Whom we desire to be occupied. If anything more were necessary, the pages of Scripture would somewhere indicate it to us, but in regard to this we search in vain. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

The Meaning of the Loaf and the Cup

"Why do you have one unbroken loaf upon the table at the beginning, and why is it broken afterwards?" Because the one loaf pictures the precious body of our Lord Jesus Christ in its entirety, and the breaking signifies His death. Also we are told, "We being many are one loaf (bread), for we are all partakers of that one loaf" (1 Cor. 10:16-17). To cut the bread into small pieces, as is sometimes done, is to lose sight altogether of this striking symbolism. As it is passed from one to

the other, after having been blessed and broken, each again breaks for himself, thus indicating his communion with the body of Christ.

“What is in the cup, and why do all drink of it?” The cup contains the fruit of the vine. It speaks of the precious blood of Christ, the price of our redemption. “The cup which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” Just as the rich clusters of grapes are cast into the wine-press and crushed to give forth, what Scripture calls the “blood of the grape” (Deut. 32:14), so Christ endured the judgment of God for our sins, and, when crushed in death, His precious atoning blood flowed for our salvation. As we drink in silent worship we recall, with grateful hearts, the mighty cost of our redemption.

Christ the Central Focus of The Lord’s Supper

“Why is there no previously-arranged program as to the order of service, the hymns to be sung, prayers to be offered, and the words of heart-felt worship? Is not time wasted in silence which might be used in teaching the Scriptures?” It is important, first of all, to understand that we do not come together to pray, nor yet to preach, nor to sing or listen to teaching, nor to enjoy Christian fellowship. We come together to meet the Lord Himself, to be solely occupied with Him, to offer Him the worship of our hearts, and to remember what He passed through for us. Let me put it this way: Suppose that on a given Lord’s Day morning it were known definitely that our Savior, in person, would be present in our church building. How do you think real Christians would act on such an occasion? Would we not enter the room with a deep sense of awe pervading our spirits? Surely there would be no lightness of behavior, no frivolity, no worldly

jesting as we came together. Nor would we be coming to listen to one preaching or teaching the Word of God. Our one desire would be to see Him, to fix our adoring eyes upon His blessed Face; if we spoke at all, it would be to tell something of His sufferings for us, and the gratitude and worship that would fill our hearts as we recalled the agony He endured on the cross. At such a time one can well understand how all might join in a burst of melody, singing together some hymn of praise, in which His holy person, His past sufferings, and His present glory were celebrated! But surely anything like mere fleshly formalism would be altogether out of place. If one spoke audibly, it would be simply to praise His Name, or to bring to the mind of saints some portion of the Word that would give a better understanding and apprehension of His Person or work. No one would dare to push Christ aside, and take His place as the teacher of others, unless requested by the Lord.

The Lord's Supper & Spirit-Led Worship

It must be remembered that when we come together for the Lord's Supper, Christ is as truly present in our midst as He was among the first disciples two thousand years ago. Yes, there will be room for praise and for the reading of a portion from the Word of God, which might bring out more vividly the sufferings of Christ. But any brother would be decidedly out of place who sought to give a lengthy exposition of Scripture or an exhortation to the believers. The sense of awe which comes over the soul who recognizes he is in the Lord's presence will curb the flesh. The Holy Spirit will guide those gathered concerning prayers of worship, the spiritual tone, and portions of the Word of God which exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. If there be periods of silence there will be no

wasted time as we all sit gazing with rapt, adoring eyes upon Himself, whom we have come to meet. It is also well understood that prayers of a general nature, prayers for the salvation of the lost, and intercessions for the sick are quite out of place. These subjects of prayer are necessary, proper, and good, but should be brought before the Lord at the weekly prayer meeting and in private prayer.

The Lord's Supper is for True Christians

"Why is this holy and reverent time of worship not open for everyone? Why is such care taken so that only true believers and those walking faithfully with the Lord partake at this worship time?" This supper is for those who have a deep love for Christ and have been saved by His blood. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, Christians are directed to walk in a path of separation from evil and evil-doers. We are told, "with such a one do not eat." Again in 1 Corinthians 6 we have impressed upon us the importance of walking apart from the world, if we are to have fellowship in the things of God. This clearly includes the Lord's Supper, and shows to us its holy character. And while it is true that each individual is responsible to examine himself, in the fear of the Lord, before sitting down to eat of the loaf and drink of the cup, there is a grave responsibility resting on assemblies of Christians to maintain a fellowship that is holy and faithful to the instruction of Christ.

A Call to Reverence at the Lord's Supper

And, in closing, let me press upon the hearts of the worshipers at the Lord's Supper to remember that distractions during these times can greatly disturb spiritual worship. A little care as to this will often go a

long way towards creating a climate for precious and happy times of worship. Sadly, individuals coming in late and distracting the attention of others may greatly hinder the worship of the heart. It is a pitiful commentary on the spiritual state of many believers that they can be sharply on time every weekday morning to their places of business or employment, and yet be among the stragglers on the first day of the week, when the hour set is much later than that which they frequently go to business. A heart for Christ is what is needed to put this right.

This article was adapted from an sermon given by Harry A. Ironside(1876-1951). He was internationally beloved for his teaching of the Word of God. He labored in the exposition of the Scripture for over 50 years and was the author of over 60 books on the Bible and Bible subjects.

The Ministry of Women

The Ministry of Women

H. A. Ironside

Dr. Harry A. Ironside was an internationally beloved Bible teacher and preacher. During his 50 years of ministry he, among other things, authored more than 60 books, in addition to numerous pamphlets and articles on Bible subjects.

This article is reprinted from Our Hope magazine (May 1950).

The question as to the place and scope for the public ministry of women is one that occupies rather a prominent place in the minds of many at the present time. Undoubtedly there have come to the front in Christian testimony many very devoted and godly women who have marked gift and ability in opening up the Scriptures, and to numbers of God's people it seems unthinkable that their ministry should be in any sense restricted. Are their minds not fully as good as those of any of their brethren? As to the ability for public utterance, are they not fully the equals of their brothers in Christ? Is it, then, true that the Word of God actually limits their testimony in a way that it does not limit those of men?

It is important that all of us realize that it is not for us to decide what our work for Christ is to be. We are told that the Holy Spirit divideth "to every man severally as He will" (1 Cor. 12:11), and that it is He who, through the written Word, has given instruction as to where and how such gifts should be used. In the fourteenth chapter

of 1 Corinthians, for instance, we have very clear and definite instruction as to the use of the gift of tongues, once very prominent in the Christian church. Also, the same chapter makes clear the place of the prophet, that is, the one speaks to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort in the assembly of God.

As we come toward the close of that chapter, we are met by two verses that many seem disposed to reject or else to attempt to explain away. The apostle says: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (v. 34).

Now just what did the apostle mean by these words? Some have thought that he meant that they were not to use the gift of tongues in public, even though they possessed that gift. This might appear to be a true meaning to the words, and yet it seems clear that they must have a wider application even than that, for the apostle says so definitely: "Let your women keep silence in the churches." Then he goes on to say that, "if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home" (v. 35).

In trying to understand a passage of this kind, one needs to have before him as a background something of the actual conditions of the times in which the letter was written, and the people to whom it was written. Corinth was notoriously a city of gross immorality and great looseness of behaviour. It was said if one were guilty of any excessive violation of the moral law, that he "corinthianized," and naturally the Christian women of that city would be subject to a great deal of suspicion if they allowed themselves the full liberty in public which some women might have felt free to take in other places.

The apostle says: "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). This might be translated: "Let all things be done respectably and by arrangement." One can understand that what might be respectable in Jerusalem might not be respectable in Corinth. What might be agreeable to public taste in Rome might not be suitable in Antioch. What the apostle is evidently telling us is that we are to take into consideration the customs of the people where we dwell.

The same thing is true today. There are certain customs in different parts of the world which differ very radically from those that we are used to here in America. There was a very devoted lady who caused great scandal in the minds of her fellow-missionaries in Columbia, South America, because she insisted on going out into public parks and sitting down beside almost anyone she might find there, to talk to them about the Gospel, whether it was a man or a woman. Her fellow-missionaries were greatly troubled because, they said, this reflected them all: nobody in that community but a loose, immoral woman would ever take such liberties; and, therefore, the people would naturally conclude that these Protestant Christian women were of a very bad character. So we can understand what the apostle meant when he said: "Do all things respectably and by arrangement," that is, coming together and deciding what would be the most suitable thing.

With this in view, let us remember that many of these Christian women of apostolic days had been, or were, slaves, and that many others were members of pagan families. They had never enjoyed the liberty that was theirs in the Christian company, a liberty which, with the very best of intentions, perhaps, they were inclined to

misuse. So the apostle, by the Spirit of God, lays down some very definite rules.

In the interest of godly order in the assembly, it is important to bear in mind the place that God has given to men, and the place that he has given to women in the order of nature. Of course, we know that in the new creation there is no difference — no difference between Jew and Greek, between cultured and uncultured, between male and female — but this is not true in nature. In nature we all have our own places and positions to fulfill, and so God Himself has ordained that, in the public ministry of the Word, when His people are gathered together for worship and prayer and intercession, men should deliver His message to the assembly. Therefore, He says: “Let your women keep silence in the assembly,” that is, in the church, but He is not referring to a building. It is not, as some have thought, that when one enters or participates in a service in a building which we call a church, the women must be in silence; but when the Christian company is gathered together in its capacity as the assembly of God, men are God’s chosen instruments to minister His Word. If questions arise that women do not understand, they are not to interrupt by asking for an explanation, but are to wait until they get home and ask their husbands, or literally, their men at home. It is not permitted unto them to arise and address the audience or speak.

Elsewhere, the Apostle Paul says: “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over a man” (1 Tim. 2:12). It is didactic teaching, or taking the place of the official teacher, that he has in mind. There is nothing here that touches the question of a woman’s acting as teacher in her own sphere. In the Epistle to Titus, the

aged women are told to teach the younger women, and the younger women are to teach their children; and in the book of The Acts we read of a godly woman, Priscilla, instructing even so eminent a servant of the Lord as Apollos, opening up to him in a private way the truth of God more perfectly (Acts 18:24-26). It will be noticed that in almost every case where this lady and her husband are mentioned, her name precedes his; at least this is so in the best manuscripts, which would indicate that she was the one who had the better understanding of the Word, or the greater ability to set it forth clearly. Neither was Apollos above receiving instruction from this devoted and godly woman.

There are many spheres of service for women indicated in Scripture. Phebe was a servant, or a deaconess, of the church at Cenchrea. Just what her duties were we are not told, but there are always many things connected with any Christian assembly where a woman can serve with helpfulness. A woman acted as an evangelist to the men of Sychar, to whom she said: "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29). The risen Lord Himself sent special messages by the women who came to the sepulchre, which they were to carry to the disciples, making known His mind and will to them. The Scriptures tell of Dorcas, whose service was a most valuable one, and we read in the fourth chapter of Philippians of two women who, unfortunately, at the time that Paul wrote, had fallen out insofar as fellowship with one another was concerned. I refer to Euodias and Syntyche, of whom Paul says they "labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlaborers, whose names are in the book of life" (v. 3).

Now in view of what Paul has written in 1 Corinthians 14 and again in 1 Timothy 2, we may justly conclude that these women did not share the public platform with the Apostle Paul. No one would imagine that Paul sat in the audience, or sat to one side on the platform, while either Euodias or Syntyche did the preaching. But there are many, many lines of service that a woman can carry on in which men have no real part. Take, for instance, what is commonly known as Zenana work in India. It is quite unthinkable over there that men should penetrate into the women's enclosures in the homes and talk to them, and so we have Zenana-workers, godly women who can go from home to home and talk with women and open up to them the precious truths of the Gospel.

Then, it is evident, from 1 Corinthians 11, that there were certain less formal gatherings in the early church where women were perfectly free to take part in both public prayer and in public testimony. Otherwise, there would be little reason for the Apostle Paul to give the instruction which he does give concerning women having their heads covered while praying or prophesying. Remembering that to prophesy is to speak unto men to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort, we cannot but recognize the fact that these women had messages from God which they could give, even in the presence of their brethren, but they could not proclaim them in the regular assembly of the saints. And as they took their part in these less formal services, they were to be careful of modest behaviour. They were to see that their attire, even to the veiling of the head, was such that no reproach could be brought upon the testimony of Christ. In Corinth, an unveiled woman appearing in public was immediately branded as an immoral woman,

and Christian women were to avoid any such occasion for misunderstanding.

I hope that nothing said here would seem to indicate that one would attempt to impose any legal restrictions upon gifted women and hinder them from using their gifts to the glory of God. Women should rather, it seems to me, give God thanks that He has not put upon them the heavy responsibilities that rest upon pastors and elders in the church. And right here, let me point out that nowhere in the New Testament do we read of a woman having the place of a pastor or an elder.

Elders' families are mentioned, but no such person comes before us, in the New Testament, as a woman having the care of the public assembly.

Another point is this: in God's dispensational ways with men, He often recognizes the fact of failures having come in. God can transcend, as it were, His own rules, if I may put it that way, by honoring and using that which ordinarily would not be in full accordance with His Word. For instance, go back into the days of the judges in the Old Testament times. When there was no king of Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes, when it seemed as though there was no man in Israel who could take the responsibility of guiding and directing His people, God raised up and used Deborah, a devoted woman, and through her brought deliverance to His afflicted people.

This brings to mind an incident which occurred some little time ago. Two very devoted and earnest servants of Christ were on their way home from a meeting one night in a large city. As they came along, they found two women holding a street meeting, with a great crowd of

men gathered about them. One of these brethren turned to the other, and said: "What a shame, to see women taking such a public place, so contrary to the Word of God!" The other, turning to him, replied: "My dear brother, they are where they are because you and I are not there." God was going to have a testimony, you see, to those people, and as there were no men there to give it, He used those women.

I do not think that there is anything contrary to Scripture in any woman's using her gift as an evangelist or as a missionary to the heathen world, or as giving out the Gospel in any way, other than simply taking over the regular public church meeting.

There does not need to be any difficulty in regard, for instance, to young people's meetings and Sunday school groups. All of these are outside of the regular assembly of the saints, and furnish abundant room for godly women to use their gifts in accordance with the Word of God.

Sometimes, when we speak of the Scriptural limitation to the ministry of women, we are met by the objection: "Well, but where women do take this very public place, apparently in direct opposition to these plain Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, the blessing of God rests upon them, souls are saved, and really a great work for God carried on. What about this?" We have only to say that God is sovereign, and wherever His Word is preached, He will honor that Word. This does not necessarily say that He endorses the manner in which it is given out, or the attitude of the persons who proclaim it. The great thing for each of us is to seek to be subject to what God has clearly revealed, and we can be assured

that when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ, we will be rewarded according to our faithfulness to the revelation that He has given.

The Times of the Gentiles

And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Lk. 21:24).

The term, "times of the Gentiles," is only found once in the Word of God, and that is in Luke 21 where our Lord Jesus Christ Himself so designates the entire period during which the children of Israel are wanderers among the nations, and Jerusalem and the land of Palestine are trodden town by Gentile feet. This expression "times of the Gentiles" covers a period of time that has now reached to something like 2500 years. It is symbolized in the great metal image as seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, related in Daniel 2, and in another form by the prophet in his vision, related in chapter 7. It embraces all the ages since God permitted Nebuchadnezzar to assume world-wide dominion, and delivered His people into his hands as a punishment for their persistent idolatry. From that day to the present Jerusalem has been dominated by Gentile powers.

Already everything is being prepared for the solemn events of the time of the end, the brief period of judgment which is to follow the rapture of the Church, the period in which the judgments predicted in the third part of the book of Revelation will be poured out upon this earth. In order to lead up to this it will be necessary to carry your minds back to the previous acts of this great drama.

Act One

The beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold (Dan. 2:38).

When the curtain is rung up, we find Nebuchadnezzar, the

"head of gold," and his Babylonian army overrunning the land of Palestine, and finally battering at the gates of Jerusalem. Thousands of the wretched people of Judah are carried in chains to the very land from Abraham, at God's command, separated himself, and went forth "not knowing whither." For seventy years the captive Israelites were embittered by hard bondage.

Act Two

And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee....(Dan. 2:39). When the curtain rises again, the Medes and Persians are in the ascendancy. This is the silver part of the image. Babylon has fallen and under the milder rule of the Persians, a remnant of the Jews were permitted to return to the land of Palestine. There they rebuilt the temple and the city of Jerusalem was restored, but never on the same scale of magnificence as in the days of old. For almost a century and a half a measure of liberty is enjoyed.

Act Three

And another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth (Dan. 2:39).

When the curtain rises again, we see Alexander the Great, after having united the states of Greece, crossing over from Europe, intent upon avenging the Hellenic

states. Alexander is clearly the "he-goat" from the west who rushes with choler upon the Medo-Persian ram with two horns, and overthrows completely the authority of the Persians. After his death his great empire is divided into four parts, and for about two hundred years the descendants of four of his generals partition the world among them. During the long period Palestine is almost continually a scene of war and conflict.

Act Four

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise (Dan. 2:40).

As we open our New Testaments, we see the curtain rising on the Roman empire. In Luke 2:1 we read that "there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed". Every country in the known world was under the sway of the great iron kingdom. The Roman empire was in the ascendancy when our Lord Jesus Christ was born. This fourth act ended when the Lord Jesus died on the cross. For these past 1900 years people have been living as it were between the acts.

Act Five

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever (Dan. 2:44).

The fifth act will begin when the Lord Jesus descends from heaven with a shout to receive His church. When

this act begins, you find the city of Jerusalem in the center of the stage once more, and the Jews are gathered back to the land of Palestine. I think we may say that God is preparing all this at the present moment. The curtain is still down, but the stage is set.

It is surely God who has brought Jerusalem to the front. Recent events, in connection with Palestine and the Jews, tell us with unerring certainty that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. At the time of the end, Jerusalem is not only to be the center of the stage, but the land of Palestine is to be a battleground for the greatest conflict the world has ever known.

In the West there will arise a ten-kingdomed confederation in the territory of the old Roman empire, thus reviving it in a new form and acknowledging the ruler of one of these kingdoms as sovereign of the western world. This head of the western confederation will make a league with the head of the Jewish nation guaranteeing to protect them in their land if any enemies come against them. Then the enemies of the Jews will make an effort to conquer the land of Palestine for themselves.

The stage is being set. The curtain may go up at any time.

Every Christian may be taken away from the world before tomorrow's sun arises, and everything would be in readiness for the last act of the times of the Gentiles. The darkest days that this world has ever had are just before us.

I would commend to my fellow-Christians the serious words of the apostle Paul, found in 1 Cor. 7:29-31: But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that

both they that have wives be as though they had none;
and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they
that rejoyce, as though they rejoiced not; and they that
buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this
world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world
passeth away.

The Vital Lesson of Obscurity

It is ever God's way to prepare His servants in secret for the work they are afterwards to accomplish in public. All of the following of God's servants attest to this fact:

1. Moses at the backside of the desert: "Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons." (Acts

7:29)

2. Gideon on the threshing-floor: "Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said." (Judges 6:37)

3. David with his few sheep out upon the hillside: "Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep." (1 Sam. 16:19)

4. Daniel refusing to be defiled with the king's meat: "But

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank....." (Dan. 1:8)

5. Amos herding the cattle in the wilderness of Tekoa: "The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa....." (Amos 1:1)

6. John the Baptist in the desert: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea." (Matt. 3:1)

7. Simon Peter in his fishing boat: "Now as He walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen." (Mark 1:16)

8. Paul in Arabia: "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia....." (Galatians 1:17)

It is important to observe that only he who has thus learned of God in the school of obscurity is likely to shine in the blaze of publicity.

Books That Have Helped Me

From my early days I have been an omnivorous reader. I am afraid I have wasted a lot of time reading some books that were of very little profit, but in an effort to get a general idea of literature, embracing history, science, poetry, philosophy, belles-lettres, and worthwhile fiction, as well as that which was of far more importance than the rest,- a knowledge of the Bible and related subjects,- I have read as widely perhaps as one so busily engaged as I, could do....

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But as I look back over the years there are certain books which stand out in my memory and thoughts as having meant more to me than the general run, whether secular or religious. I think, as a youth, my first appreciation of history was due to reading a series of books seldom seen now and which many would look upon as rather juvenile, namely, the Biographical Histories by John and Jacob Abbott. It was these books that made historical characters live before my mind's eye, and all that I have read since along that line has never blotted out the memory of the thrills that used to come to me as I pondered over these books by the two Abbotts. I have

always had a love for poetry, both secular and religious, but Tennyson and Shakespeare stand out above all others in the secular field, and the "Hymns of TerSteege, Suso, and Others", as translated by Mrs. Bevan, have had the greatest appeal to me of any religious poetry.

As to fiction, which I have read somewhat more sparingly than along other lines, I have always felt I owe a great debt to Dickens, whose vivid portrayals of various phases of life inculcated in my mind a deep appreciation of human values. I turned to Dickens again and again when I attempted to read some modern bestseller and found myself so disgusted with its filth that I consigned it to oblivion. Dickens never wrote a line that he need to have been ashamed of. I do not speak here of works of science and philosophy, as I do not recall any of these books or set of books that stands out above others as having been of special value to me.

When it comes to expository works. I have no hesitancy in saying that I owe more to five writers of the so-called Plymouth Brethren school than to any one else. C.H.M.'s (C.H. Mackintosh) Notes on the Pentateuch, together with six volumes of his Miscellaneous Writings, (Things New and Old) proved of inestimable value when as a young preacher I was seeking a firm foundation for my faith and a better grasp of Bible truth. Then a little later some unknown friend, to whom I shall be forever indebted, presented me with a set of J. N. Darby's Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. I remember well that I literally devoured these five volumes, giving almost every spare moment to them, so that I read them in two weeks' time, I think I am safe in saying that they opened up the Scriptures in their comprehensiveness in a way

that nothing else has ever touched. Needless to say. I have familiarized myself with practically everything J. N. Darby wrote and I regard him as far in advance of any of the other commentators on the Bible. The works of William Kelly, particularly as set forth in his Lectures Introductory to the Pentateuch, Early Historical Books, Minor Prophets, The Four Gospels. Paul's Epistles, The Acts, Catholic Epistles and the Revelation, added much to that which J. N. Darby had already opened up to me. These early books of Kelly whetted my appetite so that I was not satisfied until I had read everything else of his, amounting to thirty or more volumes. I admit they are sometimes rather dry and I like to have a glass of water by my side as I read them, but they are clear and definite, and so far as scholarship is concerned, Kelly towers far above many who are held in honor as outstanding theologians and expositors.

When it comes to theology itself, I owe more to the works of F. W. Grant, I think, 'than' even to Mr. Darby and Mr. Kelly. F.W., as he is familiarly known, led me into an appreciation of what I might call the "inwardness" of the great truths of the person of Christ and His propitiatory work, such as I have never found anywhere else. Samuel Ridout, who was a close collaborator with F. W. Grant, helped me much, particularly as to setting the example of simplicity in unfolding the truth of God, so that the ordinary mind could readily grasp it.

The following books I have found most helpful in giving me a deeper knowledge of Bible history and connected subjects: Edersheim's History of Israel and Judah and also his Life and Times of Jesus, Messiah. Though not absolutely clear as to certain great truths concerning the Person and work of our Lord, both Geikie and Farrar,

in their books, both entitled *The Life of Christ*, helped fix certain outstanding facts in my memory that have always been helpful in my study of the Gospels.

Sir Robert Anderson's various books have been a joy and delight because of their keen analysis of great Biblical themes, though unfortunately Sir Robert was during his later years evidently somewhat under the influence of that great scholar, but distressingly ultradispensational teacher, E. W. Bullinger.

I should probably mention in closing that I have been greatly indebted to both Strong and Young in the study of words and their inner meaning. Their great concordances are always within reach and I find them invaluable.

Poems and Hymns

Zondervan Publishing House

Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Overshadowed

How desolate my life would be,
How dark and drear my nights and days,
If Jesus' face I did not see
To brighten all earth's weary ways.
With burdened heart I wandered long,
By grief and unbelief distressed;
But now I sing faith's happy song,
In Christ my Saviour I am blest.
Now judgment fears no more alarm,
I dread not death, nor Satan's pow'r;
The world for me has lost its charm,
God's grace sustains me every hour.
I'm overshadowed by His mighty love,
Love eternal, changeless, pure,
Overshadowed by His mighty love,
Rest is mine, serene, secure;
He died to ransom me from sin...

He lives to keep me day by day.

I'm overshadowed by His mighty love,

Love that brightens all my way.

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Altogether Lovely

Oft I am asked why Christ I love,

And what He means to me;

I answer, "He redeemed my soul.

By dying on the tree."

He came from heav'n to rescue me,

My load of sin He bore;

And since I've learned to know His love,

My dread and fears are o'er.

And now He lives in glory bright,

And pleads my cause on high;

And soon He'll come and take me home,

Where pleasures never die.

He is altogether lovely,

Yes, the fairest of the fair,

Chief is He among ten thousand,

And with Him I'll glory share.

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The Spirit's Call

O soul, for whom the Saviour died,
Once more with you we plead;
Why not tonight repent and live,
To mercy's call, to mercy's call give heed?
How few of those forever lost
In regions of despair,
Beyond the reach of saving grace,
How few of those intended to be there!
How many tho't the day would come
When they would trust the Lord!
But now they rue the evil hour
They spurned His Word, they spurned His Holy Word.
O heed the Spirit's call tonight,
And turn from darkness to the light;
The Saviour waits to cleanse your soul,
To justify and make you whole.
Why not tonight, why not tonight,
Why not decide—tonight?

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House Of Many Mansions

In the house of many mansions
Christ my Lord prepares a place,
Where His own—all His own—

Shall dwell in the light of His face.
In the house of many mansions
Neither toil nor care shall come;
But His own—all His own—
Forever shall rest in that home.
In that house of many mansions
Death shall nevermore molest;
But His own—all His own—
Shall be by their Lord fully blest.
Mansions—O house of many mansions
Prepared in heav'n for me;
Mansions—O house of many mansions...
Where I shall dwell, where I shall dwell with Thee.
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His Grace Proclaim

When I behold the Holy One
Who laid aside His robe and crown,
My frankincense and myrrh I bring
A humble off'ring to my King.
When I behold Him on the cross,
Bearing for me the shame and loss,
In adoration low I bend,
And worship Him—the sinner's Friend.
When I behold Him on the throne,

The once-slain Lamb who did atone,
I join with saints unnumbered there
To praise His name, my Lord so fair.
Oh, praise His name!
His grace proclaim,
Who lived and died
And lives again.
Forevermore He is the same,
Who thro' eternal years shall reign.
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My Cross I'll Bear

Tho' grief and pain my heart oppress
Tho' foes and strife my soul distress,
A rest secure from ev'ry harm
Is mine while leaning on His arm.
Tho' dark the sky and rough the way
My feet must take, it leads to day;
Alone the path I do not tread,
My Lord is nigh; what should I dread?
And when the morn at last shall dawn,
If I but hear His glad "Well done,"
'Twill recompense for all the loss,
The tears and anguish of the cross.
My cross I'll bear, reproach I'll share,

Till called on high a crown to wear;
Forever then to praise His name,
Who bore for me the guilt and shame.

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Since I Am Found In Thee

In peace, O Christ, I face the throne,
Since I am found in Thee;
I claim no merit of my own,
Thy blood my only plea;
A sinner justified by grace,
Redeemed to look upon Thy face.
And now where'er my steps may go
Since I am found in Thee;
O'er mountain or thro' vale below
Thy guiding hand I see;
Yea, found in Thee I cannot stray,
Or stumble on my pilgrim way.
When tempted in an evil hour,
Since I am found in Thee;
Thou art more near than sin's dark pow'r,
My inward purity;
Ah! found in Thee the tempter's dart
Is hurled in vain against my heart.
When Thou at last my name shalt call,

I shall be found in Thee;
Redeemed before Thy feet to fall,
And own Thy victory;
Thro' all eternity to be
Safe in the Father's house with Thee.
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The Suffering Saviour

In the darkness, blindly groping,
Cursed by sin, you've wandered long;
Christ rejecting, vainly hoping
Peace to find in paths of wrong.
Hast'ning downward to destruction
Seeking that which is but dross
Pause, I pray you, weary wand'rer,
Lift your eyes to Calvary's cross.
Oh, draw near in awe and wonder,
Contemplate Him hanging there;
On His great atonement ponder;
Can it be you do not care?
Lifted high, 'twixt earth and heaven
Blessed Lamb for sinners slain;
He is dying, spurned, rejected
Crowned with thorns and racked with pain.
Listen to His cry of anguish,

“Why, O God, dost Thou forsake?”

Why must He in sorrow languish?

Why the cup of judgment take?

In His Word you find the answer,

‘Twas for you His life He gave,

He Himself could not deliver,

If your soul from wrath He’d save.

“It is finished!” hear Him crying,

Nothing more remains to do,

He has settled by His dying,

Every claim God had ‘gainst you.

Oh, believe the wondrous story;

Trust alone His saving grace,

Then when He returns in glory,

You shall see Him face to face.

The Wonder Of His Love To Me

A theme there is that fills my heart with rapture

A song that stirs my soul to melody

‘Tis the grace of Christ to me, a worthless sinner

Oh the wonder of His love to me.

When I was guilty, lost, by sin polluted

From His throne He came to darkest Calvary

Saved me by His death from misery eternal

Oh, the wonder of His love to me.

Soon Hell come in pow'r and glory all transcendent
Then from pain and woe forever I'll be free
Thru eternity I'll praise Him and adore Him
For the wonder of His love to me.

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Is It Nothing To You?

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
Beholding the Saviour uplifted on high?
Maltreated by men and forsaken by God,
Oh why is He nailed to that cross of wood?
The Righteous One He, His words without blame,
And yet He is suff'ring in sorrow and shame;
Has justice forgotten the rights of the pure?
Oh why is He left God's wrath to endure?
He only the my'stry great can explain:
"I lay down my life, I will take it again,
To ransom my sheep I am willing to die,
The Shepherd of Love uplifted on high."
Now the work is complete, He triumphed o'er death,
But hark to His cry, ere He yields up His breath,
"It is finished," O Soul, then believe it and live,
There's naught else to do, God can freely forgive.
Is it nothing to you? Is it nothing to you?
That Jesus died so that you might be free?

Is it nothing to you? Is it nothing to you?
That He, by His blood, has bought liberty?

Only To Love And Serve Thee

Thy voice I hear, Lord Jesus,
Bidding me walk with Thee
Carry the cross Thou givest,
Rough tho' the path may be.
Often I've dreaded leaving
All for Thyself alone,
Hoping I still might please Thee,
Now I'd be all Thine own.
The world's vain fleeting follies
Have kept from liberty
Now I renounce each idol
That I loved more than Thee.
Henceforth to serve Thee only
All my life I would spend,
Knowing Thy grace unfailing
Will keep me to the end.
With Thee I'd walk, my Saviour—
Following day by day,
Tho' it mean trial and hardship,
Sacrifice all the way,
For Thou hast grace sufficient

With Thee I will not fear.
Heaven would lose its sweetness
If all were easy here.
Only to love and serve Thee
Daily to bear the cross,
Counting for Thee, my Saviour,
Treasures of earth as dross.

Washed, Whiter Than Snow

Lord Jesus, what grace do I see in Thy face,
The thorn-marks, methinks, on Thy brow I can trace
The wounds out of which Thy life's blood did once flow;
By which I've been washed and made whiter than snow.
Lord Jesus, in Thee by the Father I'm seen,
Accepted in Thee, I'm made ev'ry whit clean,
Tho' once a vile sinner, how blessed to know,
That now I've been washed and made whiter than snow.
Lord Jesus, since now for Thy home I'm made meet,
My blessed position's to lie at Thy feet,
Not there as a penitent, nor as a foe,
But one by Thee washed and made whiter than snow.
Lord Jesus, aye there I desire to remain,
'Till that blessed day of Thy coming again,
When Thou for Thy bride shalt in glory forth go,
And take her all washed and made whiter than snow.
Lord Jesus, Thy praises in glory we'll sing,

When throned with Thyself as the bride of the King,
And through all eternity this song shall flow,
“Thou hast washed and made us e’en whiter than snow.”
Whiter than snow, yes whiter than snow,
I know I’ve been washed and made whiter than snow.

The Way Of Man¹

From the Golden Gate a pathway
Bunyan saw that led to Hell—
Led away from love and beauty,
Led away from life and duty,
Led to gloom earth ne’er could borrow
Souls still charmed by Satan’s spell!
Oh! how perverse human mind is.
Oh! how faltering human will—
Many well nigh entering Heaven—
Turning—lost in darkness still!
Oh, how blind our human eyes are,
Oh, how dull the human ear,
When the sights and sounds of sadness,
Found where’er we seek for gladness,
Charm with such a fatal madness,
Luring on in spite of fear!
Can men know their soul’s importance,
When they barter all away,

For earth's paltry fleeting trifles,
That must soon be lost for aye?
Few will tread the way to glory,
Few will heed the Gospel's story—
Careless youth and grandsire hoary,
Life beginning or life ending—
Treasure hoarding—treasure spending,
All alike are wrapped in seeking,
Folly's flowers of rosy hue;
All alike are daily finding,
Weeds sprung up where flowers grew
And e'en flowers have briars too.
From the past few seem to learn,
From their sin few care to turn,
But with minds full bent on evil—
Backs to God, led by the Devil,
Madly, wildly, blindly, rashly,
Stopping not nor caring not—
Down they rush,
Nor ever thinking
Of the depths,
To which they're sinking
Till entombed in living grave,
Lost without a Christ to save,

They remember
Chances gone!
They remember
Mercy flown!
They remember
Evil sown
To be repeated eternally.

The Worthy One

Lord Jesus, we praise Thee,
Blest Saviour and Friend,
Who lovest Thine own
And wilt love to the end;
Once spurning Thy mercy,
Our song shall be now,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
Lord Jesus, 'tis Thou.
No worthiness ours,
We were worthless and lost;
But Thou hast redeemed us
At marvelous cost;
Enraptured, adoring,
Before Thee we bow,

'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
Lord Jesus, 'tis Thou.
The depths of Thy suff-'ring
No tongue can express,
When love brought Thee down
To relieve our distress.
With all of Thy riches
Thou didst us endow,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
Lord Jesus, 'tis Thou.
The life Thou hast ransomed,
O Lord shall be Thine,
Henceforth not my will—
But Thy will shall be mine;
Surrendered for service,
I yield to Thee now,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
Lord Jesus, 'tis Thou.

Soon, soon in Thy presence,
Exalted above,
We'll praise and adore
Thine unchangeable love;
And sing while the glory,
Encircles Thy brow,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
'Tis Thou who art worthy,
Lord Jesus, 'tis Thou.

Come, Heavy-Laden, Rest

Oh, who can tell how many lives are wrecked and ruined
by sin, How many hearts are breaking and have no
peace within! Not all are tramps and drunkards, not all
are outcast men Who wander downward to the pit where
hope has never been.

The Scriptures say that "all have sinned," and all a
Saviour need, If they from judgment due to sin would be
forever freed.

To save them, Christ the Lamb of God, has shed His
precious blood—

Have you been saved from wrath, dear friend, through
that rich cleansing flood?

If not, to you He kindly says, "Come, heavy-laden, rest,
Pillow your weary, aching head upon My breast."

No needy one will be denied who shall in Him believe—
Then trust His love and mercy now: Eternal Life receive.

Far, Far From God

Far, far from God thy weary feet have wandered
Dark, dark, the night wraps thy guilty soul
Deep, deep the pit of woe that lies before thee,
Where waves of sorrow through eternity roll.
Thorny the path thy feet have long been treading
Vain, vain the search for lasting joy below;
Christ, Christ alone can meet thy spirit's craving
His precious blood can cleanse thee whiter than snow.
Do not delay, but trust the sinner's Savior,
In grace He waits thy deepest need to meet;
He came to die, to manifest God's favor,
Nought now remains to do; His work is complete.
Tell out thy need, fear not, for Hell befriend thee,
Confess thy darkest sins into His ear
Rest on His word, the message He hath sent thee,
All who believe from every change now are clear!

If This Should Be My Last Year

If this should be the last year
That I shall know on earth,
I would not want to spend it
In carelessness and mirth.
I would each passing moment
Might glorify my Lord,

That I might know Him better
And feed upon His Word.
I would be more in earnest
Seeking for the lost,
As one redeemed by Jesus,
Bought at such a cost!
I would grow ever like Him,
Whose name I have confessed;
I would be more compassionate
To those who are distressed.
And this may be my last year,
I cannot tell for sure;
But I would live as if it were,
His "Well done" to secure.

He Paid My Debt

He came from the light and the gladness
To the darkness and woe where I lay,
He touched me and healed the foul leper,
My debt in His love stooped to pay.
For a stranger becoming the Surety
He smarted on Calvary's tree;
Though rich became poor as the poorest,
To lavish His wealth upon me.
From The Continual Burnt Offering.

Awake

The hour is late,
The darkness is deep;
But it is the darkness that precedes the dawn.
Cast off all that hinders,
Walk honestly as in the day.
Character is what a man is in the darkness.

Eternal Life

Eternal life the portion is
Of all who have believed,
On Him, the spotless Son of God,
And thus His gift received.

Now I Will Glory In The Cross

Now I will glory in the cross
For this I count the world but dross.
There I with Christ was crucified;
His death is mine; with Him I died;
And while I live my song shall be,
No longer I, but Christ in me.
From The Continual Burnt Offering.

He Is Coming

He is coming; oh, how solemn,
When the Judge's voice is heard,
And in His own light He shows us

Every thought and act and word.
Deeds of merit, as we thought them,
He will show us were but sin.
Little acts we had forgotten
He will tell us were for Him.
From Care for God's Fruit Trees.

Saddened

Saddened, ah yes, saddened
By earth's deep sin and woe.
How could I pass unheeding
What grieved my Saviour so!
From Care for God's Fruit Trees.

None But Christ Can Satisfy

I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But all their waters failed.
E'en as I stooped to drink they fled
And mocked me as I wailed.
The pleasures lost I sadly mourned,
But never wept for Thee,
Till grace my sightless eyes received
Thy loveliness to see.
Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me;
There's life and love and lasting joy

Lord Jesus, found in Thee.
From Care for God's Fruit Trees.

He Is Near

I know not when the Lord will come
Or at what hour He may appear,
Whether at midnight or at morn,
Or at what season of the year.
I only know that He is near,
And that His voice I soon shall hear.
I only know that He is near,
And that His voice I soon shall hear.
From Care for God's Fruit Trees.

Calvary

In the darkness, blindly groping,
Cursed by sin, I wandered long,
Christ-rejecting, vainly hoping
Peace to find in paths of wrong;
Till, while hastening to destruction,
Seeking that which is but dross,
Passing by I saw on Calvary
Jesus dying on the cross.

Chorus

I will love Thee, Savior.
Drawing near in awe-struck wonder,

Scenes most fearful met my eye;
Lightning flashing, rolling thunder,
Scoffs and groans of agony;
Lifted high 'twixt earth and Heaven,
As a Lamb for sinners slain,
I beheld One, marred and wounded,
Crowned with thorns and racked with pain.
While I gazed He cried in anguish,
“Why, oh God, dost Thou forsake?
Why must I in sorrow languish?
Why the cup of Judgment take?”
Quick my heart gave back the answer,
For my sins His blood He gave—
He His life could not deliver
If my soul from wrath He'd save.
Broken-hearted, yet triumphant,
Fast His life-blood ebbed away,
As He cried! “My work is finished!
Now the sinner's debt I pay!”
As the Roman's spear-point pierced Him
From His side a crimson stream
Issued forth to heal the nations—
Plunging in, I was made clean.

Chorus to Last Tune

My sins were laid on Jesus, (Repeat twice)
When He died on Calvary.

The Angel's Message

Down the ages rolls the echo
Of the angel's song so sweet,
Sung that first glad Christmas morning,
Wafted from the golden street.
Where the weary pilgrims falter,
Where the broken hearted pray,
Rings the song so full of gladness,
Driving care and gloom away.
To the highways and the hedges,
Carry forth the gladsome word;
Tell how Jesus lives, entreating
All to own Him as their Lord.
Sing it in the slums so lowly,
In the haunts of sin and vice,
Tell each poor, despairing captive,
Christ has paid his ransom price.
'Tis the Gospel for all classes,
Sinners Jesus came to save;
Sing it out till every lost one
Plunges 'neath the cleansing wave.

Spread the tidings far and near,
So that all the world may hear,
Unto you is born a Savior,
Freeing from all sin and fear.

1 Lines suggested by hearing a Christian remark, "I don't care much any more," when questioned about his spiritual condition.