Articles by Donald M. Taylor

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Freedom From Fear (1961, Vol. 7 No. 12)

From Food for the Flock, 1961, Vol. 7 No. 12.

Not to the long-faced, long-robed priests who fed
The flock of God no whit; themselves instead,
But to some faithful shepherds o'er their flock
Keeping night watch, the shining angel spoke.
"Fear not," he said, calming their fright. "Behold,
To you good tidings of great joy are told.
For unto you is born in David's town
A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." So down
To Bethlehem they went, filled with great awe,
And, as the angel said they would, they saw
The Child in swaddling clothes in manger laid.
Here was no sight to make them sore afraid,
But to send them telling all abroad
Freedom from fear was born: the Gift of God

* * *

And did all men rejoice to hear the news?
The Infant grew. We get not many views
Of Him until at thirty He began
By word, by walk, by deed to show all men,
God manifest in flesh; He healed, He fed,

He comforted their poor, He raised their dead.
And after He had done but good they cried,
"Away with Him! Let Him be crucified!"
Bind back the burden; cringe, cower low again;
Freedom is tombed and fear can bravely reign.
* * *
The earth's aquake! The stone is rolled away
That Caesar sealed across the place He lay.
Quake, too, the bloody men who guard His tomb,
For Caesar's seal now seals but Caesar's doom.
"Fear not," the angel speaks who sits atop
The stone in snow-white robes. But not to stop
The soldiers' fears. 'Tis timid women he
Would reassure. "Fear not. I know that ye
Seek Jesus, who was crucified. Not here
He lies, He's risen, as He said." What cheer
To aching hearts those words. "The place
Where lay the Lord come see. And His own face
In Galilee will His disciples greet,
Go tell them He has risen, and to meet
Him there," And as they go to tell the word
Himself they see, "All hail!" salutes the Lord,
Holding Him by the feet, they worship Him.
"Be not afraid," He says. Now to the dim

Shadows slinks fear, The Firstborn from the dead
Freedom has brought with Him from every dread.

Fruit From The Dead Grain (May 1955)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 1 No. 5, May 1955.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,” (John 12:24).

They hated Him without a cause. The B that dispensed only good, that healed their sick, cured their blind, loosed the tongue of their dumb, raised their dead, blessed their children, and fed their bodies, they nailed to Golgotha’s tree. The Feet that walked only in the path of righteousness, that travelled weary, dusty, sun-scorched miles to bless them, they nailed to Golgotha’s tree. They fulfilled His own prophetic statement, “They pierced My hands and My feet,” (Psalm 22:16).

The Heart that beat only for God, that was ever full of compassion for them; that in every word, every deed, every silence, and every inaction manifested God; the Heart that told out constantly, unremittingly the love of God for His rebellious, wretched creature man; that Heart they would make sure was stilled forever, so, “When they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already… one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water,” (John 19:33-34). The corn of wheat had fallen into the ground and died; what fruit would it now bring forth?

The first three Gospels conclude with a commission to preach the glad tidings that Jesus Christ had died and risen again. Is there no such commission at the close of

the Gospel that in its very inception reaches out to all the world, the Gospel that opens with, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name…” (John 1:12), and, “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,” (John 3:16)? Indeed there is a commission, but it embraces much more than a mere word-of-mouth testimony, much more than just a ministry of baptism, and very much more than even a witness of miracles to a Resurrected Christ, great as are all these. What then is the commission that concludes the Gospel according to John? It is the testimony of the multiplied corn of wheat. Not only is it the telling out of the gospel of the grace of God, but it is the living out of the results of the gospel, the life of the Indwelling Christ.

Read chapter 21, starting at verse 11, “So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me More than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love thee.” Is not this fruit from the pierced side of the Master--a heart drawn out in affection to Him? “He saith unto him, Feed My lambs.” Here we have the commission of the pierced hand--”What I have done, you do,” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father,” (14:12).

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.” The pierced side is reproducing itself in Peter. “Feed (shepherd) My sheep.” The pierced hands are reproduced in Peter.

“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him,the third time, lovest thou Me? And he saith unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.” The pierced side germinates in Peter an affection that can bear the closest scrutiny of His Lord’s all-seeing eyes, the Lord who again commands “Feed My Sheep.” Peter’s hands are to do, from a heart captivated by Him, the work of His heart.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God.” (Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name, (12:27).” “And when He had spoken this, He said unto him, Follow Me.” The pierced feet are to reproduce themselves in Peter, who once walked where he would, but now is to walk in the path of the Lord’s choosing; a path of righteousness that will lead, as did the Lord’s path, to death; but a death that will, as did His death, glorify God.

“Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?” Much gracious work must yet be done within Peter; the newly commissioned shepherd must himself be patiently shepherded by the Chief Shepherd. “Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me.” Peter’s feet are to tread a

weary road similar to that which the Master trod; he is to tread it in a righteous life of service in the gospel and in the feeding of the flock of Christ. His is not a commission of prying into the Lord's plan for John's life, but of looking diligently after the welfare of all the Lord's lambs and sheep.

How vastly greater and deeper is this commission than those which conclude the other gospels. Theirs is to tell what He has done. This is to be a reproduction of His heart, His hands, His feet. Is this commission applicable only to Peter? No; no more than are the other commissions limited to the eleven to whom Christ spoke them in Galilee and in Jerusalem; no more than is the Gospel of Luke only for the eyes of Theophilus.

Ours is the commission of the multiplied corn of wheat. Even a poor leprous Gehazi can tell what wonders his master has wrought (2 Kings chapters 5 and 8). Only an Elisha whose eyes have been fixed on his master glorified can by the spirit of that master do greater deeds than he ever had done (2 Kings chapter 2). Our hearts are to beat as Christ's heart did in love to God and man; our hands are to serve as His hands; our feet are to walk as His feet, and thus the life also of Jesus will be made manifest in our mortal flesh, (2 Cor. 4:10-11).

His Matchless Worth (Apr 1956)

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Donald Taylor

Frequently, as the Lord's people gather on Lord's days in remembrance of Him in His own appointed way in breaking the bread and drinking the cup, emblems of His body given and His blood shed for them, are their thoughts turned to His matchless perfections. They are caused to think not alone on His sacrifice that solved the sin question, but as well on the matchless person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A French version, we are told, in translating John 3:16 says not that God gave His only begotten Son, but that He gave His "unique" Son; that is, the One of Whom there never was, is, or shall be an equal, His matchless Son.

Scripture speaks of a number of matchless men of God who had no equals among other men. Four such come to mind: Abraham, Moses, Job, and Timothy.

Abraham was unique in faith. As God led him from Ur of the Chaldees into the land of Canaan, and through testings, he grew in faith. When in old age he was still childless, God called him out to look at the stars to see if he could number them, and said, "So shall thy seed be." And Abraham believed in the Lord. "Against hope (he) believed in hope… And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to

God, and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:18-21). More than that, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac… accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead" (Heb. 11:17-19). Scripture, moreover, states that he is "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. 4:11). He alone of all the Old Testament characters is spoken of by God as "My friend." "Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend" (Isaiah 41:8).

Moses was unique in his faithfulness as a servant of God (Hebrews 3:2-5), and in meekness. "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3).

When Miriam his sister and Aaron his brother, the high priest, spoke against him, the Lord heard it and called the three of them out from the congregation: Moses, Miriam, and Aaron. "Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses ?" (Num. 12:4-8).

Job had no equal in uprightness, in fear of God, and in shunning of evil. The Lord said to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" Not once, but twice God said that. After Satan, by the Lord's permission, had stripped

Job of everything on earth he could count dear, Job said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” And again the Lord said to Satan, “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an of the earth” (Num. 12:3). upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause” (Job 1 and 2).

Timothy was unique in selflessness; that is, in his concern for the welfare of others rather than of himself. Writing to the Christians at Philippi, the Apostle Paul said, “But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel” (Phil. 2:19-22).

These four and others in Scripture, such as Noah, Daniel, Jeremiah, and Paul were matchless in some good quality, but it was a finite matchlessness, for in the very point in which each one was outstanding in that point he failed. Abraham’s faith failed, Moses’ meekness failed at the waters of Meribah. Job’s integrity may not have failed in the sight of the enemy, Satan, nor in his own eyes in the face of the accusations of his friends; but at sight of the Lord he had to confess, “I am vile… I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.” Timothy had to be encouraged by Paul with these words, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear (cowardice); but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore

ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."

Abraham's mighty faith failed, though he had perhaps no equal; Moses' meekness and faithfulness failed; Job's integrity failed, though God could challenge Satan to test his perfection; and Timothy's unselfishness failed. "I have seen," said the psalmist, "an end of all perfection," an extremity, a limit.

If these who excelled all mankind in their faith, meekness, faithfulness, integrity, and in unselfish care for the welfare of others were but finite in their perfections, there is One Who was proved to be infinite in every quality. When He came into the world, He said, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me… Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." When departing via the shameful death of the cross as the bearer of our sins, He said, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done."Again, after the agony and forsaking of the cross, He cried, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," and having thus said, gave up His spirit. He could also say, "I am meek and lowly in heart." He could bear silently the jeers and taunts of His creatures. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not his mouth." He gave His back to the smiters and His cheek to them that plucked off the hair. He hid not His face from the shame and spitting. Being reviled, He reviled not again. When He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. He could look up into the Father's face and say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work

which Thou gavest Me to do… Those whom Thou gavest Me I have kept… I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it." What faithfulness! The Father could say from heaven, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him."

As to His integrity, He could challenge men, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" The judge who condemned Him had to say, "I find in Him no fault." The centurion who had charge of His crucifixion in like manner had to cry, "Certainly this was a righteous man." The Spirit of God also testifies that He "knew no sin," "did no sin," and "in Him is no sin."

Scripture gives us ample proof of His care for others. When they came to seize Him in Gethsemane, He said, "I am He; if ye seek Me, let these (His disciples) go their way." Yet, He knew they would all forsake Him and flee. Facing Golgotha, Christ was thinking of His own, for we read, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He prayed that the faith of Peter would not fail. For His tormentors He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." While on the cross, He committed His mother into the care of John, His disciple, and John into the care of His mother, "Woman, behold thy son! Son, behold thy mother!" He was infinite in care for others.

Matchless He was in these qualities and in every perfection. In character and scope His qualities were limitless. These brief sketches of His faith, meekness, faithfulness, integrity, and sympathy, serve only to suggest that in every grace He was matchless, being the very embodiment of that grace.

John, the beloved disciple, caught up to heaven, saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. He saw a strong angel proclaim with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to break its seals?” That voice searched all the universe, all time, the earth to its remote corners, and the heavens to the most distant star, but no one was found worthy to open the book or to open its seals, for to open those seals one must be perfect in character, must be proven by test, and perfect in achievement. “I wept much,” says John, “because no one had been found worthy to open the book, nor to regard it.”

Then said one of the elders to John, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion which is of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book, and its seven seals.” Then John saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as slain… And the Lamb came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne (Rev. 5, Darby).

And when the Lamb took the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, “Thou are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals; because Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God, by thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth.”

Thereafter John saw and heard with the living creatures and the elders a numberless host of angels crying with loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing !”

Then every creature in heaven, upon earth, under the earth, and all the sea, and all things in them joined the chorus, saying, “To Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, blessing, and honour, and glory, and might, to the ages of ages.”

“O heavenly choir who voice His praise,

Bend low, and learn the song you raise

Is echoed here and now on earth

By some who’ve learned His matchless worth.”

Feet Washed With Tears (Sep 1956)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 2 No. 9, Sep 1956.

Donald Taylor

Only in Luke's Gospel do we see the woman who was a sinner entering unbidden into the house of Simon the Pharisee, in which Jesus, as an invited guest, sat at meat. We see her bringing an alabaster box of ointment, standing behind Him weeping, and washing His travel-stained feet with her tears. She wipes them with the hairs of her head, and kisses His feet, and anoints them with the ointment.

In the other three Gospels we see another woman anointing Him from an alabaster box of very precious ointment. In the last of these Gospels we learn that the woman is Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus; a woman of quite different character than the anointer of Luke's Gospel, and one who has quite a different purpose for anointing Him. In Matthew and Mark she pours the costly ointment on His head; but in John it is the anointing of His feet with which we are occupied. After she anoints His feet, she wipes them with the hairs of her head; whereas the woman in Luke wiped them before she anointed them.

In Luke's Gospel the woman's tears, hair, and kisses provide that which in common courtesy Simon the Pharisee should have accorded but failed to give his Guest. The tears of contrition eased somewhat the weariness of the long journey He had come as the Friend of sinners; the humility of the action of wiping His feet with her hair gave Him the comfort of further

evidence that His coming had not been in vain; the kissing of His feet continuously showed that the love which brought Him down from the throne of glory was echoing in one heart at least in a world that hated God. And the anointing of His feet declared her appreciation of the fragrance of His daily walk.

There was no need at the Bethany supper for tears to wash His feet, for there He truly was the honoured Guest, to whom every loving courtesy would have been accorded when He entered. Futhermore, Mary had spent her tears on Lazarus, now raised from the dead and seated at the table with her Lord; and had kept her ointment, which might have been employed at Lazarus' burial, against the day of His burying. Moreover, she was not occupied, as was the woman in Simon the Pharisee's house, in any degree with her own unworthiness, but solely with Him, His worth, and the death He was about to accomplish. Consequently her hair was used on His feet for another purpose than was that of the woman in Luke's Gospel. It was not used to dry His feet from tears, nor to wipe off the ointment she had poured on, but rather to wipe it in, that to the grave He might bear the fragrance of that nard. He bore it indeed far past the grave, for He Himself declared that wheresoever the glad tidings of the accomplishment of His death, burial and resurrection should be preached in the whole world, this also that she had done should be told for a memorial of her. So even today the fragrance of that ointment accompanies the telling of the gospel story.

There is another story of the washing of feet in the Gospels, and in it are the four priceless ingredients of the feet washing in Luke: tears, humility, love, and

ointment. However, the order is reversed in this story in John, that is where we find it; love, humility, tears, and, well, the ointment sheds its fragrance over the whole account from first to last and can be breathed afresh whenever and wherever the tale is read or recounted. It is better here to quote it from Darby's version than to attempt to retell it. John 13: "Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour had come that He should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, loved them to the end. (There is the love, love to the uttermost). And during supper, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon, Iscariote, that he should deliver Him up, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given Him all things into his hands, and that He came out from God and was going to God, rises from supper and lays aside His garments, and having taken a linen towel He girded Himself; then He pours water into the washhand basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the linen towel with which He was girded. (There is the humility—He humbled Himself) He comes therefore to Simon Peter; and he says to Him, "Lord, doest Thou wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do thou dost not know now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter says to him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash thee, thou hast no part with Me." Simon Peter says to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus says to him, "He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly clean; and ye are clean but not all." For He knew him that delivered Him up: on account of this He said, Ye are not all clean. When therefore He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, having sat down

again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? Ye call Me the Teacher and the Lord, and ye say well, for I am so. If I therefore, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet; for I have given you an example that, as I have done to you, ye should do also.”

“Verily, verily, I say to you, The bondman is not greater than his lord, nor the sent greater than he who has sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them. I speak not of you all. I know those whom I have chosen; but that the scripture might be fulfilled He that eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me. I tell you it now before it happens, that when it happens ye may believe that I am He. There are some of the tears. …

“Having said these things, Jesus was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, Verily, verily, I say to you, that one of you shall deliver me up. (The tears again). The disciples therefore looked one on another, doubting of whom He spoke. Now there was at table one of His disciples in the bosom of Jesus, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter makes a sign therefore to him to ask who it might be of whom He spoke.

But he, leaning on the breast of Jesus, says to Him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I, after I have dipped the morsel, give it. And having dipped the morsel He gave it to Judas son of Simon, Iscariote. And, after the morsel, then entered Satan into him. Jesus therefore says to him, What thou doest, do quickly. But none of those at table knew why He said this to him; for some supposed, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus was saying to him, buy the things of which we have need

for the feast; or that he should give something to the poor. Having therefore received the morsel, he went out immediately; and it was night."

Certainly there is fragrance here, love, humility, and tears. Yet the washing of the tired feet of the disciples, in the lesson it gave them, in the momentary refreshing it brought to them, and in its perpetual refreshing as they pondered over it, was but a type of the greater washing of their walk.

"He that is washed all over needs not to wash save his feet, but is wholly clean; and ye are clean," He had told them in replying to Peter. They were cleansed by the blood He was to shed for them within a few hours; their faith being as efficacious in anticipation of the work of the cross as ours is in retrospection. It took the tears, sweat, and blood of Gethsemane and Golgotha for the cleansing of their feet and for their washing all over. "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25-26).

The love, the humility and the tears must come into service again whenever the feet of His saints are washed. "I have have given you an example," He said, "that, as I have done to you, ye should do also." We cannot effectively wash one another's feet without love, without humility. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). Nor can we do so without tears, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears, "Paul tells the Corinthians in speaking of the epistle sent to set them

right regarding many matters. If we so wash the feet of our brethren, the fragrance of the act will be evident before God and men.

Healed By His Scars (June 1957)

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Donald Taylor

“Where Sin Abounded Grace Did Much More Abound” — Rom. 5: 20.

At the opening of the Book of Isaiah, God has a controversy with Israel against whom He calls heaven and earth to witness. “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters,” He labels them. “They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward.”

“Why should ye be stricken any more?” He asks them. The punishment that had resulted from their misdeeds had not turned their hearts back to Him. They had not in contrition acknowledged their wrong-doing, and called on God for mercy. His smiting had been for their ultimate good, but they had not been exercised thereby to repentance. Indeed, they carried on with their sacrifices, their burnt offerings, their oblations, their observances of the new moons and sabbaths, their solemn meetings, as if nothing stood as a barrier between their souls and God. “Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.”

Their plight, though they knew it not, was not merely desperate; it was hopeless. Darby translates “putrifying sores,” as “open sores.” The Douay Version, “swelling sores,” and Young, as “fresh smiting.” Strong’s Concordance says, the Hebrew word for “putrifying” is from an unused root apparently meaning to be moist, probably “dripping” hence “fresh” (i.e. recently made such). The word appears in only one other Scripture, Judges 15:15, where it is translated “new” in the King James Version. “And he (Samson) found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.” The margin says “moist” and Darby translates it “fresh.”

The Speaker’s Commentary translates the “wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores,” as “sword wounds, and livid wales, and festering scourge-wounds.” Then it comments: “The abscesses of the last had not been pressed out, to get rid of the suppuration; and the gaping sword-wounds had not been bound up with bandages; and the coagulated blood in stripe-bruises had not been mollified with oil.”

Under the law, which showed no mercy, it was “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe” (Ex. 21:24-25). The Lord applied that very principle but in inestimable love and mercy for the healing of His hopelessly sin-sick people. Were they wounded because of their evil doings? He, God’s beloved Son, was wounded for their transgressions. Were they bruised for their wrong-doing? He was bruised for their iniquities. Were they covered with rotting sores, ever open, fresh, unhealing? The chastisement of their peace was upon

Him; and with His scars (Newberry margin) they were healed.

That is, for our every sin He paid full penalty; for all that we did and were He suffered the righteous judgment of a holy God; and the very marks of His suffering, the scars, the prints of the nail wounds in His hands and feet, and the spear-wound in His side, are the incontrovertible, eternal evidences of our healing. Having Himself borne our sins in His own body on the tree, He has been raised for our justification, and has ascended to the right hand of God, where as the Man in the glory He bears the marks of the Man of Sorrows as the proof of our healing. “By his scars we are healed.”

The Epistle to the Hebrews corroborates that thought of His scars being the marks of our healing. “When He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (1:3). “He is the Mediator of a better covenant… For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people… their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (8:6, 10-12). “But Christ being come an High-Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (9:11-12). “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entered into the

holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world (the ages) hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (9:24-26). "For the law … can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the corners thereunto perfect… But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year… Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me … Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God… By the which will we are sanctified through offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God… For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (10:1, 3, 5, 9-12, 14).

We are not in this sense like Mephibosheth with lame feet hidden beneath David's table. "By His scars we are healed." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19-22). "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13: 12-13). Mephibosheth could sit at David's table, but he

could neither enter into the sanctuary with him (Psa. 73: 17) nor go out with him in rejection bearing his reproach (2 Sam. 1:16, 19), for he was lame on both his feet. By His scars we are healed, so accordingly we can enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, where He sits as High Priest; and, moreover, we can go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

* * *

Successful is the day whose first victory is won by prayer. Holy is the day whose dawn finds thee on the top of the mount.

The Supreme Test (Sept 1957)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 3 No. 9, Sept 1957.

Donald Taylor

My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me?" — Matthew 27:46

"It is finished!" If our eternity depends on that cry of relief, of achievement, of triumph from the cross, and it does, no less does it rest on that cry of desolation, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Indeed, the One who suffered for our sins could not have uttered, "It is finished," had He not first cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He must be forsaken and left solitary to bear the weight of our sins under the wrath of God, that we might be saved, pardoned, forgiven, and set free.

As a Lamb without blemish and without spot, Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, His fitness was amply demonstrated in eternity past when He was the constant delight of Jehovah (Prov. 8), in creation where everything that was made by Him was very good (John 1:1-3. Genesis 1:31, 2:3), through the years of man's temptation and provocation before Bethlehem's manger. (Hebrews 3:8. Isaiah 1:4; 43:24), and during the period of His manifestation (Matthew 3:13-17; John 1:29; 12:27-28; 17:1-4). From every test He emerged triumphant and untarnished.

We men, the males of the human race, are in a way only half-men for we need an helpmeet, a counterpart to give us balance. We even speak of a man's wife as his better half. Certain qualities in mankind are masculine, certain

are feminine. Courage, strength, and wisdom might be considered as masculine qualities; faithfulness, tenderness, thoughtfulness for others, and virtue are some of the feminine qualities. In our Lord Jesus Christ as Son of Man were all qualities perfectly blended. He was in that sense self-sufficient, complete. Although there never was such a man as He in all strong qualities, He lacked no tender quality. Single-handed He could drive the hucksters from the temple, yet He could weep with Mary over the loss of her brother. He could call to Him the little children His disciples would have driven away, yet He could stop the mouths of those who tried to trick Him in His speech. He could cry, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” while undergoing without a murmur the agonies of the cross.

When David sinned by taking the wife of Uriah the Hittite and then having him set in the forefront of the battle to be slain, so as to cover up his own sin of adultery, Nathan the prophet came to him with a parable of a poor man possessed of one little ewe lamb, brought up and nourished as one of his own children, which lay in his bosom and was with him as a daughter, and of a rich man with flocks of his own who took the poor man’s lamb and dressed it to feed the traveller who had come to the rich man.

Convicted of his crime, David in Psalm 51, written on that occasion, cries to God, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest and be clear when Thou judgest.”

Nathan may have seen in the lamb Uriah’s wife and Uriah’s life, but David saw his own heinous sin, not as

the robbing of Uriah of his wife and his life, but as being that which took God's Lamb, brought up with Him, in His bosom, daily His delight. Our sins, my sins, David's sin brought God's Lamb down from heaven's glory, down from the Father's side to the cross of Golgotha. This may well speak of that aspect of Christ's suffering which was on account of the believer's sins; our unfaithfulness, our trespasses which when exposed give the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme.

The particular point to be made here is that we have the Lord Jesus Christ viewed in His perfection of those qualities which in mankind are tender characteristics.

In the Garden of Gethsemane He prayed on the night of His betrayal, "O, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." And again, "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done."

In the agony of that hour, in anticipation of that cup, He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, and went out, to His betrayal, to trial, to mockery, to crucifixion, where to its bitter dregs He drank that bitter cup.

In Numbers chapter 5 instructions are given to put lepers and every one with an issue of blood outside the camp, which is where Christ suffered; and for trespassers to add a fifth part with the principal in recompensing for a trespass, even as He, in restoring that which He took not away, gave back infinitely more than had been taken away.

Then follows in that chapterdetailed instructions for the strange and awful rite of testing for unfaithfulness when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a husband and he

brings his wife to the priest. He is suspicious that she has turned aside and committed adultery. Yet he has no evidence. He brings her offering: the tenth of an ephah of barley meal, without oil or incense, for it is an offering of jealousy, “An offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.”

The priest brings her near and sets her before the Lord. He takes holy water in an earthen vessel, and of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle, and puts it into the water.

Then the priest sets her before the Lord, and uncovers her head. Now she is immediately in the presence of God without her husband standing between her and Him, as normally. The priest puts the offering of memorial in her hand, which is the jealousy offering, while in his hand he holds the bitter water that causes the curse.

The priest then charges her by an oath and says, “If no man hath lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleannesss with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man hath lain with thee beside thine husband …” Then he adjures her with an oath of cursing, and says, “The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the Lord make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell. And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot.” And the woman shall say, “Amen, amen.”

The priest writes the curses in a book, and blots them out with the bitter water. Then he causes the woman to

drink the bitter water that causes the curse, and the water that causes the curse enters into her and becomes bitter. Next he takes the jealousy offering out of the woman’s hand, waves it before the Lord, and offers it upon the altar. He takes a handful of the offering, as a memorial thereof, and afterward causes the woman to drink the water.

When he has made her drink the water, then it shall come to pass, if she had been defiled, and has committed unfaithfulness against her husband, the water that brings the curse shall enter into her for bitterness and her belly shall swell and her thigh rot or shrink and the woman will be a curse among her people.

Israel may well be typified by the unfaithful wife, and so too, sadly, might be the Church.

The bitter cup consisted of holy water, symbolic of the Word that declares to us His will, and the dust of the floor of the tabernacle which speaks of the record of the walk before God in this wilderness.

In our unfaithful walk there is much contrary to the Word of God, so that there is far from a blend of Word and walk. When the bitter trials come from God to bring to remembrance the strayings, the defilements of our path, the unfaithfulness of our walk even when treading His courts, the testings bring out murmurings and complaints. The bitterness of the cup brings out the bitterness in us, and we, with Job, seek to uphold our own cause and put God in the wrong.

At last, stripped of pride, position, self-conceit, hypocrisy, made to bare ourselves in the light of His holiness, we must cry with Job, “I abhor myself;” and with Peter, “I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

What about the faithful wife; what would be the result for her of this trial of jealousy? “But if the woman have not been defiled, and be clean, then she shall be clear, and shall conceive seed” (Num. 5:28, J. N. D.).

Who then is typified by the faithful one made to undergo this ordeal? Is not our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, pictured here, as in the aspect of God’s Lamb He was made to suffer for our sins, our unfaithfulness, our turning aside from Him Who bought us with a price, so that we are not our own? His faithfulness has paid the price of our unfaithfulness.

There was being meted out to Him all the punishment due to our sins, He was made to drink so bitter a cup as none other have ever tasted or could ever taste. When all His earthly days were reviewed in that hour, when every step He trod, every thought and deed passed in review, what must He say, He who was under an infinite load of sin? Would all this searching, all this cup bring one sin to remembrance, one act, one word, one thought, one period of silence when He should have spoken, one neglect to do or go what or where He should, one jot or tittle not in absolute harmony with the word and will of God?

No! Thanks be to God, No! There was none, for out of that depth of suffering and anguish, as He drained to the last drop that bitter cup, He cried, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” In Him was no cause of forsaking, no iota of reason why God should turn from Him.

Furthermore, under punishment for sin not His own, forsaken by God when there was no cause in Him for such forsaking, He was faithful, loving, uncomplaining.

The bitter cup found no bitterness in Him. The word of God and His earthly path blended perfectly, and His will was to do the Father's will even when that will ordained the death, the forsaking of the cross, the punishment for sins not His own. Now His heart in longing for His God cries out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The faithful wife subjected to the trial of jealousy might well be glad to be thereby vindicated. Yet she might also resent her husband's suspicion of her and never feel toward him the same as before. The perfect love of the Man Christ Jesus for His God remained unchanged.

God ever knew the spotless perfection of His Lamb, and there was no need on His part for the trial of jealousy, but through that trial He would make more evident the infinite righteousness of the Holy One.

None can ever challenge the perfection of that Lamb, for the very suffering and death which purged our sins constituted the supreme test which proved His spotlessness.

What then is the outcome of His endurance of that test? What was it for the faithful wife? "She shall be clear, and shall conceive seed." What did David say in Psalm 51? As cited in Romans 3:4, he said, "That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged." What did Isaiah write? "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isaiah 53:10).

Our salvation is a result of the cry, "My God, My God why hast Thou forsaken Me?" equally with the cry, "It is

finished!” Our eternal welfare hangs no less on the one than it does on the other.

How Jesus Walked (June 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 6, June 1958.

Donald Taylor

“And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.”—(John 1:36).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering… that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind … walk in love … walk as children of light … See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time …”—(Ephesians 4-5).

ONE way to learn the character of God is to study the instructions He has given to His people, for He has given them that we might become as He is. “Be ye holy; for I am holy,” He tells us. “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked” (1 John 2:6).

How did our Lord Jesus Christ walk before God and before men during His earthly days? What was there about His steps that caused one to exclaim with wonder and joy, “Behold the Lamb of God!” and another to say, “This Man hath done nothing amiss;” another, “I find no fault in Him;” others, “He doeth all things well;” and the Voice from heaven to say, “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”?

May we submit that He walked worthy of the vocation wherewith He was called? He stepped down from the

glory that was His from all eternity to take His place as the Son of man and as man's Redeemer to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He could say to the heavy laden, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." He was longsuffering and kind, patient with His ofttimes dull disciples, constantly forgiving, and even on the cross assuring the repentant thief who had but minutes before been reviling Him, "Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise." He came into the world to save sinners, and therefore He companied with them, received them, ate with them; rejoiced as at Cana of Galilee with those who rejoiced, and sorrowed with the sorrowing even when He was about to turn their sorrow to joy. And as the worthy walk for us, as outlined in Ephesians 4, requires that we employ the gifts He has given to each for the edification of the body of Christ, so He employed His attributes and power ever for edification of them whom He would make His own.

May we submit that He never walked as the Gentiles walk, vainly? His every step was purposeful. His journeys to and fro between Galilee and Judea, around the shores of the Sea of Galilee, into Phoenicia, into Caesarea Philippi, or wherever He went, were not like the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, but all according to the direction of His Father God, and all with the cross as the ultimate goal. His every step was clean. He could challenge His enemies who constantly observed His path to find some cause against Him, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" His words were ever good to the use of edifying, ministering grace to the hearers. No split second of His days brought grief to God, but only joy and satisfaction.

May we submit that He ever walked in love — and that love led Him to Golgotha, to give Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour? His words were perpetually with grace seasoned with salt. He was ever thankful.

May we submit that He ever walked as the Author and the Child of Light? Indeed He was that Light which coming into the world lighteth every man. As long as He was in the world He was the Light of the world, and He Himself ever walked in the light of His Father's will. When He was about to go back to Bethany from beyond the Jordan after hearing of Lazarus' sickness, His disciples protested, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again?" He answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." He walked in the sunlight of His Father's will, for His ear was open morning by morning to His Father's instructions. "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Consequently He never stumbled, He never took a misstep, He never swerved aside from the path appointed to Him. The Word of God was a lamp to His feet and a light to His path.

May we submit finally that He walked circumspectly? The circumspect walk delineated for us in Ephesians 5 and 6 requires that we redeem the time, that we understand the will of the Lord, that we be filled with the Spirit, that we be ever thankful, that we submit ourselves one to another in all the natural and temporal relationships in which we find ourselves, in the fear of God.

His walk, His words, His silences, His deeds, His waking and His sleeping bought up His every moment. Not one second of the billion or so seconds He walked this earth was wasted. He redeemed the time, for He was careful ever to know and understand God's will for Him. He was filled with the Spirit. He was ever thankful, giving thanks even for the bread and cup with which He instituted the Supper which then foretold and now recalls His suffering and death. He thanked His Father that He heard Him at Lazarus' tomb, for He ever heard Him. Yet He knew that Lazarus' resurrection and our salvation required that He must cry from Golgotha's tree, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

How circumspectly He walked in every natural and temporal relationship! When Mary and Joseph sought and found Him in the temple in the midst of the doctors, though they understood not His words about His concern to be about His Father's business, "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them," for He had been placed by His Father in the relationship of a child to them as parents. His relationship with God and with man was perfect. From childhood "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." As Servant He was ever swift to obey the will of Him Who sent Him. As Master He patiently taught His followers, and yet He served them. He taught them humility and love by washing their tired and travel-stained feet. Born under the law, He fulfilled its every jot and tittle. Born into a race in subjection to Roman rule, He observed and taught rendering to Caesar that which was Caesar's, and to God that which was God's.

And did He not add luster to the appelation “friend,” when He said, “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep,” and “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.” He laid down His life for His friends; yes, and for enemies He would convert to friends.

Indeed He glorified every circumstance into which the path His Father marked out for Him led. Every encounter, every relationship glorified God. Truly He walked circumspectly.

One day, the third day after His crucifixion, two of His disciples walked together into the country, talking sadly of His betrayal, trials, and death and the failure in consequence of all their hopes. As they walked and talked Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. He drew them out as to what was on their hearts. Then He began to talk and open to them the Scriptures. Their theme terminated at the cross. His theme was: “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” After He had revealed Himself to them in the breaking of bread in their home in Emmaus and had vanished out of their sight they said one to another, “Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?”

Today He still draws near and walks with those whose thoughts and conversation are occupied with Him. If we

are taken up with Him and with His, but especially with Himself, if we will walk as He walked; we will walk worthily, purposefully, in love, as children of light, and circumspectly.

What is That in Thine Hand? (May 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 5, May 1959.

Donald Taylor

In Moses' hand it was a rod when God asked that question of him. In David's hand it was a sling. In Shamgar's hand it was an ox-goad. In left-handed Ehud's it was a dagger. In Paul's it was a tent-maker's needle and there perhaps was no more essential utensil in his missionary kit than that needle. It enabled him to preach the gospel of God's free grace without charge.

In Jesus' hand it was a reed. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band. And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head. And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him" (Matthew 27:27-31).

Moses, brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. The rod, therefore, that was in his hand as he stood and watched the bush that burned, but was not consumed, bespoke not only his occupation as a shepherd to the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, but also his relinquishment of the

sceptre of Egypt. Henceforth that rod in the hand of Moses, by the Lord's power, would smite Egypt with plagues, would part the Red Sea to make a dry path for the children of Israelout of Egypt, would smite water out of the flinty rock, would ensure Amalek's defeat, and would establish Moses as God's appointed prophet and leader for Israel.

But what of the reed in the Lord's own hand? Moses' rod was his symbol of authority over a flock of sheep, and God used that rod in Moses' hand to liberate His sheep, Israel, a tremendous flock, and lead them through forty years of wilderness wandering to the border of the Promised Land. Faithful in small things, Moses with his rod was promoted to great things. But the reed in the Lord's hand was a symbol of weakness, a travesty on the sceptre of a king, as the crown of thorns on the diadem of a monarch, as was the scarlet robe on royal apparel. It spoke of weakness. It spoke of humiliation. It spoke of rejection. Here was an alleged King of the Jews, whom the Jews themselves repudiated, made a laughing-stock by the soldiers of Rome.

What would He Himself do with what was in His hand? "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," the two on the Emmaus road sadly told the Stranger who drew near and went with them. But, instead, He had been crucified through weakness, despised and rejected of men. What would He do with that reed that was soon snatched from His hand to batter the crown of thorns into His brow?

He would triumph through weakness! He would slay death by dying! Nailed hand and foot to the cross, stripped of all power, spurned by men, assaulted by all

the hosts of darkness, forsaken of God, He would, being made sin for us, He who knew no sin, by Himself — solitary — by the perfection of His being and the eternal efficacy of His sacrifice of Himself, purge our sins and sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high!

We sing with the poet: “By weakness and defeat He won a glorious crown; trod all our foes beneath His feet by being trodden down. He Satan’s power laid low; made sin, He sin o’erthrew, bowed to the grave, destroyed it so, and death by dying slew.”

What would He do with the reed of weakness, and derision, and rejection that men placed in His right hand? “And I saw,” says John, “in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.

“And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb,

having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

“And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever” (Revelation 5).

The hand that once held the reed of weakness, of humiliation, and rejection, by taking that place became the One alone worthy to take the book, to open it, and to wield eternal, universal power as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah! What a Saviour! What a King!

* * *

“This is from me,” the Saviour said,

As bending low He touched my brow;

“For One Who loves you thus has led.
Just rest in Me, be patient now;
Your Father knows your need of this,
The ‘why’ perchance you cannot see;
Grieve not for things you seem to miss,
The thing I send is best for thee.”

Lifted Up - No Bone Broken (Sept 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 9, Sept 1959.

Vol 5:9 (Sept 1959)

Lifted Up— No Bone Broken

Donald Taylor

“Even so must the Son of man be lifted up —” (John 3:14).

“But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs … that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken” (John 19:33 - 36).

The minute perfections of the Word of God should be our constant amazement were we more constant in reading it and meditating on what we read. Here is one example of its beauty. The very Gospel which tells us of the Son of Man being lifted up, even as was the serpent in the wilderness, is the one which assures us that, despite the prevailing plea of the Jews to Pilate that the legs of the three who were crucified be broken to hasten their end that the sabbath might not be desecrated, no bone of Him was broken.

The children of Israel, murmuring in the wilderness against God and against Moses, were bitten by fiery serpents and many died from the bites. When they acknowledged to Moses their sin, he prayed to God for them and was instructed to make a serpent, an image of the reptile which had bitten them, and put it on a pole. Whoever had been bitten and looked on the serpent was

healed. Moses fashioned a serpent of brass, and those poisoned Israelites who looked on it lived.

Declaring to Nicodemus the profound gospel in the simplest terms, our Lord Jesus Christ said, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” Nicodemus looked, and as is evidenced in John 19, he lived.

Turning away from God after they were settled in the promised land, the Israelites became idolators, worshipping the work of their own hands and other objects. When Hezekiah came to the throne of Judah some seven hundred years after the wilderness wanderings, he found the people burning incense to the brazen serpent which Moses had made. In his wisdom, Hezekiah called it just what it was, “Nehushtan”, a piece of brass, utterly powerless to help, as it had been utterly powerless to harm. And he broke it in pieces.

The serpent of brass had served its occasion. There had never been an iota of power or virtue in it. It was not intended for more than the one purpose when, at the direction of God, it was used as an object to focus the eyes of Israel on Him Who could not only send fiery serpents to cause death because of sin, but Who could also heal the bitten through a look at a lifeless object made by one of God’s creatures. Probably after that occasion, the serpent had been preserved as a reminder of Israel’s sin and God’s mercy, but it had become an object of worship. Whereas, by the grace of God, a look at it had brought life, now it brought death to those who looked to it instead of to God.

This piece of brass, which was a type of sin judged, as it brought healing instead of death, was also a type of Him Who, knowing no sin, was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He was to be lifted up, at once the Object of God's wrath against sin and sinful man's wrath against God. What He accomplished on the cross, in the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself, made it possible for those who looked to Him to be saved, and to have eternal life.

"Nehushtan" served its day and was properly broken to pieces, but it was otherwise with the Anti-type: "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, 'A Bone of Him shall not be broken' " (John 19:31-36).

Those bones, that framework of theWord made flesh to dwell among us, was to be used again, eternally. Only a few days later, Thomas would view the nail-pierced hands and the spear-pierced side of this same Jesus, risen from the dead, and cry, "My Lord and my God!"

He "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" went down, down, down

in obedience, even to the death of the cross. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

Lifted up, the piece of brass fashioned by Moses into a serpent, brought life, on that occasion, to all who looked, but in itself it had no life-giving power. And when the occasion passed, it was fit only to be broken in pieces. But He, Who was made flesh to become sin for us, was raised from the dead, and is seated now at the right hand of God in heaven, a Man in the glory, to be the Object of eternal adoration and worship. He is the source of life eternal, the One Who lives and became dead and is alive forevermore.

Feeding on Tears (Aug 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 8, Aug 1960.

My tears have been my meat day and night," cries the Psalmist, his soul thirsting for God as the hart pants after the water brooks. It is his own personal experience of which the writer is speaking in Psalm 42, and also, as commentators would suggest, of the longings of Israel exiled from their own land because of enstrangement from God. But prophetically, in part at least, the Psalm voices the sorrows of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only He could know to the full the weight of grief expressed by verse 7: "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me."

His tears were indeed His meat day and night, for He who brought relief and healing and joy and gladness to men in a sin-blighted world was Himself the Man of Sorrows. The sorrows were not of His own making, occasioned by any ills of His own, but He bore "our griefs, and carried our sorrows." He was, as we esteemed Him, "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:4-5).

Although insofar as Psalm 42 might be applied to His being forsaken of God, it must be limited to His time of suffering on Golgotha's tree while God was dealing with Him about our sins, yet He could say as to all the time of His public testimony, "My tears have been My meat day and night." For although it was only on the cross He

bore the punishment due our sin, when He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, yet He ever felt the burden of man's misery and grief. In fact, even before He came into the world as Man, He was affected by His people's sorrows: "In all their affliction He was afflicted" (Isa. 63:9). But it was when He came down to earth as Man, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, that He so felt in His own person the weight of man's grief that He could say, "My tears have been My meat day and night."

How often He wept in this world, we cannot know, but we are told of three occasions on which He shed tears. Let us look briefly at these, but first let us note that His crucifixion at Golgotha is not one of the occasions; indeed, when a great company of women followed Him to Calvary, bewailing and lamenting Him, He turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children."

Tears of Sympathy

The three occasions in point of time are quite close together, and in distance perhaps three or four miles apart. The first was just outside Bethany where Jesus went to raise Lazarus out of the sleep of death. Martha, sister of Lazarus, met Him outside the town, and after He had there talked with her, sent word to the other sister, Mary, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." Mary arose quickly and came to Him.

Falling at His feet she said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When He saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. He asked,

“Where have you laid him?” They answered, “Lord, come and see.” “Jesus wept.” The first recorded tears in Scripture are Hagar’s, shed when she lays down her son Ishmael to die, as she supposes, of thirst. They were tears of love and loss; sympathy and bereavement. So are these of our Lord Jesus Christ: love for the mourners, and a bereavement for the loss of His friend Lazarus. Yet immediately He was to turn their tears into smiles by bringing Lazarus back to them.

Tears of Sorrow

The second occasion was when He approached Jerusalem on His final visit six days before the last passover. It is usually described as a triumphal entry, when it seemed, as the Pharisees said, all the world was gone after Him. The multitude cast their garments in the way, cut down branches from trees and strewed them before Him, crowded around, some going before and others following, rejoicing, praising God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen Him perform, and crying, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the Name of the Lord: peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest!” The only sour note was that of the Pharisees who said, “Master, rebuke Thy disciples.” He silenced them, saying that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. Surely this would seem to be an unlikely time and place for tears of grief.

Yet, as He drew near and saw the city, He wept over it, for He knew that within a week some of that very crowd who now cried, “Blessed be the King that cometh in the Name of the Lord,” would cry, “We have no king but Caesar … Away with

Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" "If thou hadst known," He said as He wept over the beloved but rebellious city, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now, they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Such tears surely He still sheds over unrepentant sinners who wilfully go on to doom despite the great salvation He offers. "Weep for yourselves," He might well say to them, as He said to the daughters of Jerusalem.

Tears of Suffering

The third occasion on which He shed tears is mentioned in Hebrews, chapter 5. And here we learn something of the value of those tears. We need to read the last two verses of chapter four to get the thought: verses 15 and 16: "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Chapter 5:1-10: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for

sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, or, out of death — and was heard in that He feared;" — or, for His piety — that is, it was not that He feared death, but that He reverenced God — "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him; called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec."

Those tears were essential to His perfecting as High Priest. Himself without sin, He had to feel the weight of misery and sorrow caused by sin; He had to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities that He might as High Priest sympathize with us in all our infirmities. In chapter two we are told that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man, that as the Captain of our salvation He might be made perfect through suffering.

Inherently, He, Himself the eternal God, was perfect, without flaw or lack. But for the offices He bears as the Captain of our salvation, as High Priest, He must be fitted through suffering. He must feed on tears.

In Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" an envious contemporary of the emperer asks: "What meat is this

on which our Caesar feeds, that he has grown so great?" The meat on which our Saviour fed to fit Him to be an efficacious High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, full of compassion for the ignorant, the wayward, the sorrowing, the bereaved, the scorned, the destitute was tears. The meat on which Caesar fed elevated him far above his companions, made him aloof from the common run of men and even from his former friends. And so it is in general with the great men of this world. But the meat on which our Saviour fed was the sorrow of mankind. Quite the contrary to making Himself aloof from the common trials of men, He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and was for our sakes stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.

Tears were the meat on which He grew

To Priesthood that can succour me and you.

Down to the dregs He drank the cup of woe,

That our rich cup of joy might overflow.

Yet bound we are to share His bitter cup,

If at His table joyful we would sup.

For if we would His great commandment keep

To love, like Him we'll weep with those who weep.

Communion then with Him will be more sweet

When for His sake tears, too, have been our meat.

The satisfaction of the heart in the personal nearness of the Lord, the being in His company for the simple joy of it, is true communion; thus it is we have common mind with Him, which is the meaning of communion. When this is the case, we know the mind of our Lord and

Master, and this it is which qualifies us for every service as Christ's confidential servants: it is well to bear in mind that the amount of our service or the laboriousness of our work does not of itself constitute us confidential servants.

Christ in the Midst (June 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 6, June 1961.

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts (living creatures), and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four beasts (living creatures) and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev. 5:6-10).

I had not before noticed what is here quite obvious: that the Lamb not only is in the midst in this heavenly scene, but that He is at once in the midst of three circles. He is in the midst of the throne. He is in the midst of the four living creatures. He is in the midst of the twenty-four elders.

If the twenty-four elders speak of the redeemed of all ages and peoples, as evidently they do, for their new song is to their Redeemer, then it has always been His delight to be in their midst. In Proverbs 8, where He speaks as Wisdom personified, He declares, “My delights were with the sons of men.” Indeed, it would appear that that delight was the motive for creation:

that He might enjoy the companionship of His creature, man.

When Moses, leading the children of Israel through the wilderness, went up into the mount of God, Sinai, the Lord said: “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). And when sin and departure from God abounded on every hand, where here and there was found a solitary individual with a heart for Him and His ways, He would still make His abode with such an one. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15). Centuries later when our Lord Jesus Christ was instructing His disciples, He said: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20).

Certainly He was ever in the midst of the government of God over the earth, (represented by these four living creatures) although unseen, for “all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3); and that includes, “thrones., dominions, principalities and powers” (Colossians 1:16). Moreover, not only is He the One by whom the worlds were made, but He has ever upheld all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3).

Again, His place was ever in the midst of the throne. Referring once more to Proverbs 8 where He speaks as Wisdom personified, we read: “The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths. I was

brought forth when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: When He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: When He gave to the sea His decree, that the water should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him (8:22-30). Turning back again to John, we see Him as “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father.”

Yes, He had a place before in the centre of the throne, of government and of His earthly people. But all that He laid aside. Out of the ivory palaces He came. “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:6-8) Ever God’s delight, yet for our sakes He became the One who must cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

The One who upheld all things by the word of His power; the Lord of whom Proverbs 21:1 says: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water. He turneth it whithersoever He will;” the Most High who ruled in the kingdom of men and gave it to whomsoever He would, as Nebuchadnezzar learned.

That One became the song of the drunkards, the One over whose cross they set up in derision this accusation: “This Is Jesus The King Of The Jews.” That One was mocked and taunted: “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.”

The One who delighted to be in the midst of His people is the One who was betrayed by a trusted follower and forsaken by the other disciples. He is the One of whom it was written: “He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.” He is the One for whom the psalmist speaks when he cries, “I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.” His heart yearned over Jerusalem, and Jerusalem cried out: “Away with Him! Crucify Him!” “Shall I crucify your King?” asked Pilate. “We have no king but Caesar,” the people answered. This was the One before whom the crowd had cried a few days earlier: “Hosanna: blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord!” And now they take Him, bearing His cross, outside Jerusalem, that He might suffer and die outside the gate. The One who was in the midst of the throne is crucified between two thieves: on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

But now the suffering is over, the work He came to do is finished. He commends His spirit into His Father’s hands and expires. He is buried. The third day He rises from the dead and thereafter is carried up into Heaven. And now through John’s eyes we see Him, who was rejected, forsaken, and cast out of the earth by man, in the centre of the twenty-four elders; Him, whom men

crucified as King of the Jews, in the centre of the four living creatures; and Him, who was forsaken of His God, in the midst of the throne.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

The Throne

As to the first circle, the throne, “When He had by Himself purged our sins (He) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;” He “is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;” After He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down on the right hand of God;” and “is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

The Living Creatures

As to the second, the living creatures, it is God’s revealed purpose “that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth” (Eph. 1:10). After His resurrection and before His ascension He met with His disciples in a mountain in Galilee, and there He told them: “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth” (Matt. 28:18). Paul tells the Corinthians that “He shall put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet” (1 Cor. 15: 24-25).

The Four and Twenty Elders

As to the third circle, in the midst of the twenty four elders, “He is the head of the Body, the Church” (Col. 1:18), He is the One who “loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church… holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27), He is our Shepherd, our Teacher, our Advocate, our High Priest. And He it is who says, “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto Thee” (Heb. 2:12, cited from Psalm 22:22).

The Three Circles

We see Him at once in all three circles in Ephesians 1:20-23, which tells us of the exceeding greatness of God’s power toward us who believe, being the power by which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places (first centre), far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet (second centre), and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (third centre).”

“Throughout the universe of bliss,

The centre Thou, and Sun,

The eternal theme of praise is this,

To Heaven’s beloved One.

Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,

That every knee to Thee should bow!”

Young Christians and Consecration (May 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 5, May 1962.

Donald Taylor

The prophet Samuel was chosen by God to anoint Israel's first two kings, Saul and David. When Saul came to Samuel his hands were empty. He had failed to find his father's lost asses, and he was concerned that he had nothing to give the prophet in exchange for a solution of his problem.

When David met Samuel his hands were full. While his older brothers were at the feast to which Samuel had called them in his search for a new king for Israel. David was busy keeping his father's sheep. And not one of them had been lost, even though a lion and a bear had attacked the flock. David had protected them at the risk of his own life. His hands were certainly full when Samuel anointed him as the Lord's chosen to rule over Israel.

David's hands were full when King Saul sent for him to come from tending his father's sheep to play the harp at court to quiet Saul's troubled spirit. While shepherding the flock, he had mastered the harp to accompany his psalms of worship and praise.

David's hands were full when he visited his older brothers in the army of Israel, drawn up in battle array against the Philistines. Obedient to his father, he had came to bring food for them and for their regiment.

David’s hands were full when he went out to meet Goliath and his armour bearer; full with staff, shephard’s bag and five smooth stones, sling, strength, skill, and confidence in God.

David’s hands were habitually full, not, of course, just with things to carry; but he was always busy with some worthwhile task. And whatever he tackled he did thoroughly, because he looked to God for help, whether it was for physical strength, or for skill, or courage, or wisdom, or a right spirit. In one of his Psalms he sings: “By Thee have I run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.”

Do you know what consecration means? It means: filling the hands, filling the hands for God. This was pictured dramatically when the tabernacle was set up in the wilderness and the Aaronic priesthood was installed. According to the commandment of God, Moses, the leader and prophet of Israel, filled the hands of Aaron and his sons with elements of the consecration offering, to be waved before the Lord. This act, with their anointing and other ceremonial actions which you can read about in Leviticus chapter 8, marked them out as consecrated to God for priestly service perpetually.

That was a type, a picture. The Apostle Paul gives us the reality when he writes to the Romans (12:1): “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (or, intelligent) service.” And to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:58): “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in

the Lord." Again, "Whether therefore Ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (10:31).

How can we live consecrated lives today? By doing what our parents tell us to do, even as David cared for his father's sheep and ran his father's errands. We can consecrate our studies to God, our eating and drinking, our waking and sleeping, our work and our recreation. Peter doesn't use the word consecration, but he talks about it in his first letter, when he encourages servants to serve well their bosses, even when they are cruel and hard to get along with: encourages wives to respect and obey their husbands, even if the husbands are unbelievers; encourages husbands to love and honour their wives, and all of us to honour those in authority. Peter says that such attitudes and actions are true sacrifices, acceptable to God. They are far more pleasing to Him than was Aaron in all his priestly robes and solemn dignity, standing before the altar waving the sacrifice of consecration. Truly, whatever we do for God is worship.

When God saw David faithfully caring for his father's sheep, his heart full of melody as he thought about the wonders of God's creation and about His goodness to Israel and to David himself, God said: "There is a young man after My own heart. I want him to be the shepherd for My people Israel."

If our hands are full for God when we are young, no matter how trivial, or menial, or boresome the work may seem to be, we can be sure that He will have larger work for us to do as we grow older. Doing the little jobs faithfully now prepares us for the big duties later. God is looking for consecrated Christians.

Shut Out Brought In (Apr 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 4, Apr 1965.

Shut Out

Brought In

Donald Taylor

Brought In By That Which Shut Us Out

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the House of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:19-22).

The first recorded sin of man against man is the slaying of Abel by his brother. Cain murdered Abel because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. The Lord said to Cain, “Where is Abel thy brother?” He answered, “I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?” The Lord said, “What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto Me from the ground.”

The blood of Abel has cried to God from the ground ever since, and in an ever swelling chorus there has joined with it the blood of myriads on myraids of innocents slain down through the ages by evil men. Castigating the scribes and pharisees, our Lord Jesus Christ said: “Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them shall kill and crucify; and some shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and

persecute them from city to city, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matt. 23:34-35). That cry of innocent blood sounds through the courts of Heaven in the Apocalypse, as the Lamb opens the fifth seal. "And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:9-11).

But that cry of blood is not alone of those whose lives have been violently taken away, but of all who have been wronged by their fellow man. Such a cry rose to the ear of the Lord from Sodom and Gomorrah. James speaks of it in addressing rich oppressors (5:1, 4): "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you… Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth."

The blood of Abel and of all wronged by their fellow men makes us all fugitives and vagabonds in the earth, shutting the door of Heaven in our faces, for Romans three declares: "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God… there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction

and misery are in their ways—" (3:10-16). The cry of the blood, for the life of the flesh is in the blood, witnesses to our unfitness for the presence of a holy God on the score of our evil works. And should it be pleaded that there might be found some provocation to occasion all this evil, be it remembered men hated Jesus Christ without a cause, and by wicked hands crucified and slew Him…

In order that the Lord might dwell among His people Israel, He gave Moses precise, detailed instructions for the erection of a tabernacle. The innermost part of this tabernacle was the holiest, or holy of holies, wherein stood the ark of the covenant, on top of which was the mercy seat overshadowed by the cherubim of glory. That mercy seat was the spot where the Lord dwelt with Israel, appearing in a cloud upon the mercy seat. A heavy veil of blue and purple and scarlet and fine-twined linen, with cherubim artistically woven into it, stood between the holy of holies and the holy place.

No stranger dare approach that tabernacle. The Israelites could come to the tabernacle with their sacrifices and offerings. The Levites served according to their allotted tasks inside the tent of meeting — the court—of the tabernacle. Only the priests, sons of Aaron, could go into the holy place. And only the high priest could venture inside the veil into the holy of holies, and that but on one day in the year, the Day of Atonement, when he entered with blood according to a manner established by the Lord's word, which he must observe in minute detail lest he die.

That veil pictured the absolute perfections of our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in flesh, who did no sin, who

knew no sin, in whom was no sin. Only such absolute purity, such unalloyed holiness, was fit for the presence of a holy God. So that veil stood as a barrier between God and man, for there was none righteous, no, not one. That was but a worldly sanctuary, a material, temporal one, set up to typify the unseen, real and eternal presence of God. Yet into this typical holy of holies none but Aaron and his successor high priests could enter, and that only with blood that confessed their personal unfitness; and that only on the prescribed Day of Atonement.

And even as the veil in the tabernacle in Israel shut man out from God's presence, so the perfect life of our Lord Jesus Christ while on earth as Man declared the unfitness of all other men to approach to God. He alone fulfilled the law in every jot and tittle. He was God's standard of righteousness. Paul at Athens declared that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man. In raising Him from the dead He has given proof of that (Acts 17:3). All men are to be judged by comparison with His perfection. That perfect life, typified by the veil, shuts us out from God…

But not only the blood that witnesses to the evil of our relationships with our fellow man, not only the veil that declares us to have come short of the glory of God, but the very high priest ordained to approach God on man's behalf evidenced that we had no right of approach in ourselves. The singling out of Aaron and his sons for the priesthood, the setting apart of the Levites for the service of God, and the choosing of Israel as a people apart from all nations of the earth for Himself, all stood as barriers between God and us, for we were "aliens

from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). And even for Israel the fact that into the holiest went "the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people," signified that the way into the holiest was not yet opened (Heb. 9:7-8). The provision for the high priest to enter in itself shut all other men out. Fire from the Lord consumed 250 princes led by Korah, a Levite, when they offered incense before the Lord. King Uzziah died a leper for intruding into the priesthood. But now these very things that barred us from God's holy presence: the blood, the veil, the High Priest; bid us draw near.

That precious blood speaks better things than that of Abel which cried for vengeance. It stands not as a witness against us, although the shedding of that blood put the capstone on man's edifice of evil; it stands as a witness for us, for "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." We who were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

As to the veil, depicting the perfect life lived by the Lord Jesus Christ as a Man in the body on earth, which barred the way into the holiest; that veil was rent in two from the top to the bottom when Jesus Christ, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, cried with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). And all His acceptability before God, who from Heaven testified concerning Him, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" all that acceptability was put to our account, for we now are "accepted in the Beloved."

What then of the high priest? If into the holiest of the typical tabernacle only he could enter, and that but once a year, would not the very presence of the anti-typical High Priest in the true tabernacle in Heaven itself, at the throne of the Majesty, proclaim the unfitness of any other person to be there? No. On the contrary, it is His presence there that affirms our right to enter, that bids us draw near. The blood of Jesus declares us cleansed and fit for God's holy presence. The rent veil opens the way for our entrance, and the High Priest is there to assure us of a welcome when we approach. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16). He is there as High Priest by virtue of His one sacrifice for sin, perpetually seated, appearing in the presence of God for us. And we by virtue of His work and His presence can approach into the holiest and as priests offer acceptable sacrifices.

"The sacrifice is o'er, the veil is rent in twain,

The mercy seat is red with blood of Victim slain.

Why stand we then without in fear?

The blood of Christ invites us near.

"The gate is open wide; the new and living way

Is clear, and free, and bright, with love, and peace, and day.

Into the holiest we come,

Our present and our endless home."

Christ --Prophet, Priest And King (Dec 1967)

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Christ

Prophet, Priest And King

Donald Taylor

The Old Testament foretells the prophethood, priesthood and kingship of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moses speaking to Israel says, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken; … I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him” (Deut. 18:15-18).

That Moses’ prophecy concerns our Lord Jesus several passages in the New Testament affirm. For example, Peter in the temple speaking to the crowd gathered by the healing of the lame man says concerning the Lord Jesus, “Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you… unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:22-26). Other Old Testament prophets also speak of Christ as the coming Prophet.

David prophesies His perpetual priesthood in Psalm 110: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand,

until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool… The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Seven times over the Epistle to the Hebrews declares that our Lord Jesus is the fulfilment of that prophecy.

Isaiah foretold His kingship, as did David and other Old Testament prophets. "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness ….(Isa 32:1). "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. 9:6-7).

The New Testament opens with magi from the east coming to Jerusalem saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him."

Yet for all the prophecy concerning Christ's prophethood, priesthood and kingship, and the overwhelming evidence that He is the fulfilment of prophecy, there has not lacked challenge to His claims. There is a scornful "if" raised concerning His prophethood and kingship, and the Holy Spirit Himself introduces an "If" concerning His priesthood. Let us look at these and how wonderfully they were answered.

The Challenge of His Prophethood

He is guest for dinner in the house of Simon the Pharisee. A woman of the city, knowing He was there,

brings an alabaster box of ointment. stands behind Him weeping, begins to wash His feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head, and she kisses His feet and anoints them with the ointment. Within himself the Pharisee says, “This Man, if He were a Prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner.”

Immediately the Lord answers Simon’s unspoken thoughts with the parable of the two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence and the one who owed fifty. When they had nothing with which to pay, their creditor freely forgave them both. “Tell Me,” He asked Simon, “which of them will love him most?” Simon answered, “I suppose that he to whom he forgave most.” The Lord replied, “Thou has rightly judged.” Turning to the woman, He says to Simon, “Do you see this woman?” Certainly Simon sees the woman and knows all about her. “I came into your house,” continues the Lord. “You gave Me no water for My feet: but she has washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. You gave Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in has not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman has annointed My feet with ointment.” All the courtesies due his Guest that Simon had failed to accord Him, the woman, whom Simon judged a sinner compared with himself, had supplied from a heart overflowing with love.

“Wherefore I say to you, her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (Luke 7:47).

Is He not a prophet, Simon? He has looked into your mind and heart and told you precisely what was there.

He has looked into the woman's heart and seen what was there.

The Demonstration of His Kingship

Then we come to the scorning of His kingship in Matthew 27. At a place called Calvary they have crucified Him between two thieves, setting up over His head His accusation, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." The Chief priests, scribes and elders who had demanded His death, when Pilate would have released Him, now taunt Him: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God." King of Israel indeed! Why, all Israel had delivered Him up to be crucified, and by Rome to whom Israel must bow. He now hangs on the cross of an alien power, despised and rejected. Let Him now demonstrate His kingship, ran their taunts.

A demonstration they shall have that will convince any reasonable person. Their taunts were too early. He had not yet arrived at the full extremity where all the power, every iota of it, was in the hands of the enemy. Now He is at the extremity; now He is in death; now the forces against Him have wreaked their full end.

But wait! Did He not even in dying demonstrate His kingship? None actually took His life from Him. Having cried with a loud voice, He yielded up His spirit. And more, the earth quaked; the graves were opened; many bodies of the saints arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared to many. Was ever a king who in dying shook

the power of the grave, and freed saints from the chains of death? Did king David in whom they gloried? No, David is both dead and buried and his flesh has seen corruption.

And more, to insure against His disciples coming by night and stealing away His body, saying He had risen from the dead; they had sealed the stone which closed the mouth of the tomb and set a watch to guard it. At the dawning of the first day of the week, the angel of the Lord descended and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. The Roman guards shook with fear and became as dead men. Angels bade certain women to enter and see that He was no longer there. They had rolled back the stone, not to free Jesus from the tomb, but to demonstrate that He was risen from the dead. Is He not indeed King: King of Israel, King of kings! Is He not the King with power over the grave, over death, over Rome, over Satan and all his forces? He alone can say, “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.”

The Arena of His Priesthood

The “if” regarding His priesthood is not a quibble, but a plain statement of Scripture concerning the arena of His priesthood. In Hebrews 7:14 we are told, “It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood” (Heb. 7:14). Again, it is stated, “If He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law, who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things” (Heb. 8:4-5). The tabernacle in which they served was but a shadow, a type, a picture

of that which was to come, the true tabernacle the Lord pitched. He could not be a priest in such a tabernacle.

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:11-14; 24-26; 10:11).

Though on earth not a priest serving in the typical tabernacle, He did His priestly work alone in offering Himself without spot to God in order to put away sin and to purge the conscience, and to fit us for God’s holy presence. Had He not come; had He not offered Himself, the one efficacious, acceptable sacrifice to God, the whale Aaronic priesthood with its tabernacle, services and sacrifices had been a farce; a shadow without a substance; a fingerpost without a destination.

Not only is He King, the King of kings, but He alone has been the perfect subject. He alone fulfilled the law in every jot and tittle. And even beyond the law, He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Is He King of kings? “Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put all enemies under His feet, … that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Enthroned He ever serves His people.

Not only is He a Prophet, but He is the central theme of all prophecy. Prophecy would be without purpose without Him. As Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes, so also is He the end of all prophecy.

Prophet and theme, Priest and sacrifices, King and subject: such is our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“He’s Prophet and the theme of all God’s speaking;

He’s Priest and Sacrifice that rent the veil;

He’s King ‘gainst whom there can be no uprising;

Yet One who serves His people without fail.”