# Articles by George Sharpe

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# The Wonderful Book—The Bible (May 1960)

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Mr. George Sharpe is an American business man who keeps busy in the service of the Lord. This manuscript is from an address which he gave at a rally of young people in New Jersey. It is hoped that the blessing which accompanied the message when given orally may be experienced by those who read the article. — Ed.

The Bible is the most unique and wonderful Book in all the world. It reaches into every department of life with its divine revelation and instruction. It covers the entire scope of human affairs, delving authoritatively into any selected subject in the realm of science or in the more intimate study of domestic relationships. A brief survey of some of these should suffice to thrill the heart with the wonders of the Holy Book, and to increase our mental and spiritual appetites for its teachings. Let us consider what it has to say about some of the departments of science.

## Meteorology

As we scan the field of science, we understand that it is less than two hundred years since brilliant minds concluded that, although it is not always visible, lightning always accompanies rain. When this conclusion was reached, Lord Kelvin, a true Christian as well as a scientist, remembered the Scripture concerning this, and addressing the Royal Society told it that man only recently had discovered that which had

been revealed to the Psalmist 2500 years before, when he declared, “He maketh lightnings for the rain” (Psa. 135:7).

## Geography

If we had lived in the early days of the fifteenth century, we, no doubt, would have subscribed to the popular belief that the earth was flat. It was thought then that if a vessel sailed far enough from land, it would drop off the edge of the world and be lost. However, some daring explorers proved the fallacy of this and discovered that the earth was round. This truth had been stated in the Bible many years before; Isaiah had written, “He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth” (Isa. 40:22).

## Astronomy

The Bible draws a parallel relationship between the stars of the heaven and the sand of the sea (Gen. 22:17). This, for generations, seemed an irreconcilable statement, but with the invention of the telescope, man has found that there were, not as they supposed, only 5000 stars but millions upon millions. Each new and more powerful lens that has been manufactured has brought into focus an endless eternity of heavenly bodies. The Word of God is truly the most wonderful Book in all the world!

## Psychology

Turning to the realm of psychology, we need not spend money for lectures and courses on how to influence others and get along well with our fellowmen. The Bible gives us the true guide to human behaviour. Our blessed Master taught this clearly when He said, “Whatsoever

ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. 7:12). The Old Testament sets forth the basic principles of psychology for we read, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly" (Prov. 18:24). Although we are familiar with these truths, frequently we do not live in the light of them, signifying by our attitude that the Bible is old-fashioned and not up-to-date. Consequently, we spend time, effort, and money in so-called up-to-date schemes and methods while the basis is in this Book which is old yet ever new.

## History

History found in the Bible is most interesting. Furthermore, in it current events and prophecies are brought into proper relationship; the Word of God makes all three revolve around Israel, the nation of His choice. Israel's past glory and power, her present status of being set aside but not cast off (Rom. 11:1), and her future restoration and glory form the axis around which the course of world events rotates.

## Domestic Relationships

In this field we again find this wonderful Book called The Bible far above human writings in its wisdom and instruction. The care and discipline of children is discussed, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (Prov. 13:24).

Advice is given children as to their attitude to their parents, "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exod. 20:12). The more intimate relationship of husband and wife is considered. The Apostle Paul enjoins "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

We are also given instructions as to our attitude toward civil governments, “Be subject unto the higher powers” (Rom. 13:1). We are not in doubt as to our attitude toward our neighbours for Romans 12:17-21 speaks very plainly on that matter.

The foregoing are a few of the areas in which we find the Bible unique in its dogmatic revelation and authority. There is one other subject we shall discuss before concluding this discourse.

## Anthropology

The Bible of all writings gives us the only reasonable account of the existence of man upon the earth. According to the information we have, Chas. Darwin repudiated in his later years his hypothesis of evolution; and, yet, some today are teaching this same unfounded theory couched in high-sounding language. It is strange and even diabolical that the educators in civilized countries who teach this theory are men of brilliant intellects. Nevertheless, they seek to propagate to an educated generation a doctrine that the heathen of Africa refuse. The theory of evolution, regardless of whatever title may be given it, is a direct insult to the mentality of the average human being. Common sense demands that a created being must have a Creator that is greater than the created. Stripping the theory of evolution of its trappings, the following is what we are asked to believe. In the eons of the indefinite past a protoplasm stirred itself in a great mass of slime, the slime that made up a large part of the earth. None of the exponents of this teaching bother themselves to explain where this cell derived the life required to begin stirring. This is the teaching in spite of the fact that

science has not been able to create life. As the innumerable ages rolled by, this form of life developed under its movements and eventually became fish. More time rolled by, and because it came out of the watery element often enough and long enough, it found itself more at home on land than in the sea; hence, the lizard age. Since time seems to be the greatest commodity of these theorists, they suggest that millions of cycles more passed and during this period the lizard found that it would be easier to move in an erect position, and that it would facilitate matters to rid itself of the heavy armour-type protection it had assumed; therefore, with the development of a hairy exterior for warmth the anthropoid or monkey-type being appeared. Again they dismiss another liberal quantity of centuries during which the animal developed its mind and body to the highest peak; then by wearing off its appendage, and by rubbing off its shaggy exterior, and by dressing itself in conventional clothing, it emerged in our present day man.

In opposition to all this, we repeat, the Bible gives us the only reasonable account of man's existence upon the earth. What a delight to turn to the Scriptures, and to read the truth of God's Word that gives dignity to the human race, "in the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him" (Gen. 5:1). We also read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). God's handiwork reveals God's character.

The Bible indeed is the most wonderful Book in all the world. It needs no defence; it defends itself and prevails against its enemies. Voltaire, the French atheist, boasted that within one hundred years of his time the Bible

would be an extinct volume. Today not many know anything about that man, but the Bible is constantly the best seller. Moreover, it is printed in more than 1,000 languages and dialects. A printing press was installed and Bibles were published in the very building where Voltaire made his satanic declaration.

Although every avenue of learning which we might explore with the Bible is most interesting, instructive, and helpful, that is not the primary purpose of this inspired Book. The purpose of the Bible is to reveal man's need in his sin, and to show God's remedy for sin in the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross. The purpose of the Book is to reveal Christ to us, to reveal God's heart and mind and intention for His creatures, and to insure for them a passport to Heaven and a pathway of fellowship with Himself on their pilgrimage to the Celestial City.

May God give us the spiritual discernment to value this wonderful Book, and to emulate Him of whom it could be said, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth He meditate day and night." The necessity of the constant reading and the diligent study of the Bible can never be over emphasized.

## Gems

"A text of Scripture to a true minister of the Word of God should be like a gate opening into the garden of the Lord. There are some who instead of opening the gate and leading their audience in to pluck the fruit and flowers, content themselves by getting on the gate and swinging to and fro." — Pierson.

“Our life is like the dial of a clock. The hands are God’s hands passing over and over again. The short hand, the hand of discipline; the long hand, the hand of mercy. Slowly and surely the hand of discipline must pass, and God speaks at each stroke; but over and over the hand of mercy, showering down sixty fold of blessing for each stroke of discipline or trial; and both hands are fastened to one secure spot, the great unchanging heart of a God of love.”

## His Mother (Mar 1961)

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George Sharp

It has been well remarked that the pen is mightier than the sword. Of this we have been made aware in the historical record of the simple words, “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother.” These words have made a deep impression on mankind, multitudes have been moved by them.

When Abraham Lincoln dedicated the battlefield at Gettysburgh a burial ground for soldiers of the civil war, a professional orator was hired to make a speech; some felt Mr. Lincoln’s message would be inadequate for the occasion. However, less than one century has passed and very few Americans even know the name of the orator, but thousands of school children can recite Lincoln’s simple words. Thousands stand in reverence and read His Gettysburg address permanently inscribed upon his memorial in Washington, D.C. Few remain unmoved by its eloquence.

When, in our own time, during World War II, the fortunes of the free world, and especially Great Britain, had reached their lowest ebb, the simple words of Winston Churchill, promising only toil, sweat, blood, and tears stirred the hearts of all allied peoples, and humanly speaking turned the tide of history.

We will, however, search in vain throughout the whole range of literary works to find words more simple and precious, yet more moving than the ten words of our Scripture reference, “Now there stood by the cross of

Jesus His mother." Let us briefly consider them and note the beauty of the various facets which appear as we turn each one to the light.

## There Stood

First, we note that there stood by the cross … This was a position of respect, in contrast to that which Matthews records of those who crucified our Lord. To their everlasting shame, he writes, "Sitting down they watched Him there" (Matt. 27:36). Matthew sets forth Jesus as King, and no one sits in the presence of royalty unless bidden so to do. John's words then are so refreshing with regard to those who loved our Lord, they stood.

## Stood By

In second place, we notice that they stood by … Within their power there was nothing they could do. Man's heart was manifesting its wickedness by crucifying Jesus. Satan's most powerful assault was being hurled against the Godhead; above all this, the eternal counsels of God were being accomplished. The only thing they could do was to "stand by." To their eternal credit, it is written in the Word of God that they did just that. Often we can only comfort and help one another by just standing by. How much this can mean when words or actions seems meaningless.

We now see that those who stood by, stood by the cross. The offence of the cross is still very real. Let us not be ashamed of the cross, but let us be found like those of old taking our place beside it. Paul could say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the

Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rona. 1:16). The Gospel in essence is the story of the cross and how by its mighty accomplishment man is reconciled to God.

## The Cross Of Jesus

Was it indeed the cross of Jesus? Could it not have been designated the cross of Barabbas? Surely he would have hung upon it if Christ had not taken his place. It is questionable as to whether Barabbas ever thought of it in this light, but he should have given thanks every day of his life thereafter that another took his place on Calvary.

Let us today make this a very personal matter. Was it not our cross? Had not the Lord died as our substitute, we would not have had a Saviour. Do we thank Him every day for Calvary? How wonderful is God's mercy! The cross now is referred to as His cross: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, … now hath He reconciled" (Col. 1:20-21).

## His Mother

What pathos is found in this statement: "There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother." There is no reference to the mothers of the malefactors. Perhaps they stayed away because of shame. Where else would we expect to find the mother of our Lord at such a time but beside His cross? Strange thoughts indeed must have passed through her mind as she gazed at Him through her tears. She would be reminded, of course, of the words of Simeon in Luke 2:35, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." Other thoughts in like manner must have occupied her mind and heart. Thoughts that would assuage her sorrow, lovely, wonderful thoughts and

memories of her son. She would remember the circumstances surrounding His wonderful birth; she would remember the tender infant days when she cradled Him in her arms, and the days that followed when she saw Him develop, grow, and learn to walk and talk. She would recall the completely human side of His nature.

She would remember that she had the privilege of bringing into the world and caring for One who had never caused her a moment of grief. Not an impertinent word had ever escaped His lips, not a rebellious look had He ever cast at her, not an unkind or unthoughtful act had she witnessed. She would recall His solicitude and consideration to her and to all others with whom He made contact. She would bring to mind such scenes as when they found Him in the temple “sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions.” She would reflect that on such occasions, she, as “His mother, kept all these sayings in her heart” (Luke 2:51).

Here were two who loved and knew Christ so well that they could minister comfort to one another. Mary could tell John, in the days that followed, of the private years of the life of Jesus, the years before John knew Him. John could tell her of His public years, the years that Mary, because of household duties, could not witness. What a precious privilege and what a ministry we may exercise today in this cold indifferent world! A ministry of making up to one another that which is lacking, and of comforting one another with the thoughts of Christ as we have come to know Him. May these meditations move our affections toward the Lord, and toward our fellow-believers as we continue to muse upon those

simple, yet majestic words, “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother” (John 19:25).

## What’s Wrong With It? (Apr 1962)

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George Sharp

The subject of the young believer and temptation is one of great importance, because the manner in which the Christian responds to the experiences of youth will largely determine what kind of Christian he will become in later life. It has been well remarked that,

“A thought put in motion becomes an act, and an act repeated becomes a habit, and a habit continued forms a character.”

Reputation is what others say of us, but character is what we really are as a result of the process of development. Thus the constant yielding to temptation will develop a life of spiritual failure, whereas continued victories over sin and temptation will lead us step by step onward in a life that will be pleasing to God.

In the Epistle of James chapter one and verse thirteen, we are made very conscious of the fact that God never tempts a man. This, of course, could not be, as evil is contrary to the very nature and character of God. He does, however, permit Satan to tempt us, and He permits and sometimes brings us face to face with testings and trials to prove either the reality or the depth of our Christian witness of Christian character. Let us ever remember that we are in the school of experience, and after having been taught a series of lessons, God may permit a test to come, and how we meet the test may determine whether or not He can lead

us on into deeper experiences with Himself or whether He can trust us with greater responsibility.

Abraham's faith had to be tested in order that he might not stagger at the greater promise he would yet receive. It was necessary for Joseph to pass the tests that were his ere he could assume the great position to which he was elevated. Moses responsibility of leading the people from Egypt to Canaan was predicated upon the manner in which he passed his testings. David's testings were many and grievous before he ascended the throne of Israel. Even so it is today, we must be faithful in little things before God can favour us with greater responsibilities.

James points this out in Chapter one, verse 26, "If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue." Control of that little member is of vital importance to the spiritual progress of any child of God. How can an older man do the work of an overseer if he has never learned to control his tongue? Matters of very delicate and private nature are sometimes revealed to the elders of an assembly of God's people, therefore, a gossip who cannot control that little member, the tongue, must be disqualified from being an elder. Such control does not develop over night, but rather must be learned in the younger years. So it is with many other things; character is formed in early life by our reaction to circumstances and experiences.

To return more expressly to the subject at hand; James again makes it plain that when a man is tempted, he is "drawn away of his own lust." In other words, we fall into temptation when we permit the evil principle of the

flesh to become active in our members, and, unfortunately, all too often we enjoy the experience.

Much of this is occasioned by the attitude which is often prevalent and expressed by the age-old question, “What’s wrong with it?” Far better were we to reverse the query and ask, “What’s good about it?” or “Will it glorify God or bring honour to our Lord Jesus Christ?” These would be much more profitable questions. A most delightful expression is used concerning Job. The Spirit of God records that Job was one “who feared God and eschewed evil.” Too often we are one-sided. We fear God all right, but we do not hate evil as the word eschews implies.

It is unfortunate that we spend so much of our lives wondering if there is anything wrong with certain practices. Instead, we should turn away from that which is negative or perhaps questionable, and seek to live in a positive manner and find out what we can do for the good and blessing of others as well as for the glory of God.

The supreme example, of course, of all this is our blessed Lord Himself. In Psalm one, He is described as the “Blessed Man,” and although the negative side of things is presented in verse one, the positive side of His life is presented in verse two with the glorious results displayed in verse three. How wonderful to live a life like this instead of groveling in those things about which we must constantly ask, “Is there anything wrong with it?”

Temptation will come; how then are we to pass the test? Our Master and Lord is our perfect example. When Satan tempted, He, the Holy Spotless Son of God, relied

upon the infallible Word of God. Rend again Luke chapter four, verses one to thirteen, and note that when Satan departed it was only for a season. Undoubtedly, the devil tried time and time again to reach our Lord Jesus Christ, but the Holy Scriptures would constantly be the armour and sword which He would use to defeat him. How important then it is for us to read, and read, and be constantly reading our Bibles! “Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.” “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.”

We are not going to be judged, however, primarily on how near we came to, or how far we remained away from sin and temptation, but rather we are going to be judged by the “perfect law of liberty” (Jas. 1:25; 2-12). The fruitful Christian life is not negative but positive. In other words, we are not to be bound or kept under bondage by a list of do’s and don’ts or a kind of New Testament decalogue, but, rather, we have been set at liberty. For what purpose? To use it for our pleasure? No indeed! Having been set at liberty, we are now free to serve the Living and the True God and to wait for His Son from Heaven.

Let the believer in the early days of his Christian experience set aside the questions, “May I do this?” or “What’s wrong with it?” and substitute it for the prayer, “Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?” He will never lead us into temptation, but contrariwise He will lead us onward and upward to greater and more wonderful experiences for Himself. Those experiences may not necessarily be spectacular or occupy the limelight, so to speak, but they will be pleasing to Him if we are doing His will. A cup of cold water given in His Name cannot

escape His notice. How wonderful to be privileged to go through life just proffering cups of refreshing water to our fellow-believers instead of tasting of the broken cisterns while constantly being plagued by the question, “Is there anything wrong with this?” When we must ask this question, it is because we want to use something for our own enjoyment and pleasure without hurt, if possible, to our consciences. In other words, we want whatever it is to minister to our comfort, convenience or amusement. Remember that our Lord Jesus Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

We may never be called upon to lay down our lives as martyrs, but we can make our lives a sweet sacrifice to God by laying it down for Him moment by moment of each day. If we are occupied with the service of our God, time will not permit the dabbling in those things that are questionable. When Sanballat and Tobiah could not frighten or ridicule Nehemiah out of building the wall, they proposed a compromise with a “tempting” offer to sit down together. Nehemiah’s reply is classic, “I am doing a great work so that I cannot come down” (Neh. 6:3). There was no need to ask, “Is there anything wrong with it?” He was doing the will and work of God. May the Lord of the Harvest give us spiritual discernment and energy to be occupied with His work, and surely if we are thus occupied, He will keep us from evil and temptation.

# Matthew’s Mountains (Part 1) (Feb 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 2, Feb 1964.

George Sharp

Throughout the Gospel of Matthew we find a number of mountain scenes, seven in all, from which several lessons and applications can be drawn. We will look at these and in particular seek to derive in the main the practical lessons of each experience. These are lofty experiences, not only because they are found in mountain heights, but because in every one we find our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, to be the central figure. This must always be so; not that He must occupy a mere place of prominence but that in all things He must have the preeminence.

The first of these scenes is to be found in Matthew chapter 4, and the mountain is described as “an exceeding high mountain.” This is the starting point in our climbing of this range of hills and each will rise higher and higher as we explore the teaching for ourselves. Satan would get our Lord Jesus up to a height where he could show Him “all the kingdoms of the world.” He wanted to show Him how much he would give for so little. Just “bow down” is all Satan requests and “all these things will I give Thee.” Satan is undoubtedly at this point a most desperate being. Had he not sought from the time of Adam’s fall to destroy the woman’s seed, so that the One who was to bruise his head could not appear upon the scene? Indeed, had he not thirty years prior to this time caused the slaughter of

the innocents as recorded in Matthew chapter two, in order to destroy this Blessed One in whose presence he now stood? Surely he remembered the Words of God regarding his fate, but he cannot be sure by what method God would bruise his head. Certainly he never anticipated that Calvary would be the means to that end else he never would have entered into Judas and caused the death of the Holy One. Unable to frustrate God's purposes by preventing the coming of Christ, the devil now seeks to do so by destroying His usefulness by having Him bow down to him. The burning desire of his heart that had lingered down the long stretches from a past eternity until the present moment now manifests itself. He yearned to be acknowledged by God as god, to have ascribed to him deity by Deity, and to be worshipped by the one whom David called "his Lord" although in point of time He was great David's greater Son. To get this he is willing to exchange the kingdoms of this world. As he shows them to our Lord 'he is tacitly reminding Him that they do not belong to Christ, that they had come into Satan's control. We may even suggest that he knows that the reason Jesus has come 'is to get them back again and he is offering Him the "easy" way. When Satan tempted our first parents, he offered them so much for so little. Just eat of the forbidden fruit and they would become as gods, knowing good and evil. This was true in a measure, but true to his character he withheld more truth than he revealed. He did not tell them that in the knowing the evil they would be powerless to resist it. This is the sad record of the history of man. Do we not hear this same groan from the heart of Paul some 4000 years later as he cries out when he recognizes the evil principal working within his breast (Romans 7:19), "The good that I would I do not:

but the evil which I would not, that I do." Satan did not ask them to worship him for that would have given him only little satisfaction, suffice at that time for him to spoil the handiwork of God. Now, however, he presses hard the desire of his evil heart; first of all, to receive the worship of the Lord of Glory; and second, to, once and forever on this occasion, thwart the purposes of God in the person of His Own Beloved Son. How ignorant he was of the pure and holy and fragrant character of the One whom he sought thus to tempt! This One whose character was such that the Father 'Himself had broken the silence of Heaven and cried out before the temptation, not afterward, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and yet One whose sole dependence was upon God and His Word and therefore refers His adversary to it, by saying "it is written." He who created this being and who had the power and authority to destroy him, displays the characteristics of the blessed man of Psalm one, whose delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law doth he meditate day and night. What an example He thus becomes for His people; The lessons for us are so patent that they hardly need to be recited but let us briefly review them.

Satan is a doomed being whose purposes are still to spoil God's workmanship and he constantly attacks us in one form or another. He is still making his spurious offers of so much for so little. Large portions of this world are offered for just a little neglect. What a victory he gains if he can succeed in getting us so involved with the world systems, whether commercial, social, political or even religious. Success, ease, pleasure, fame or whatever else may be of interest to us are all offered by Satan if we are willing to meet his terms. Failing this, he

will be satisfied just to have us unyielding or uncommitted to the claims of Christ. So often we are satisfied if we can say we are not doing anything wrong, when actually our failure is due to the fact that we aren't doing anything either right or wrong. Like the unprofitable steward we wrap up our talent in a napkin which is the slave's sweat cloth, the symbol of servanthood, and we just do nothing but take care of ourselves. Note the Scripture quoted by our Lord, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve." Serving was the keynote of our Lord's life, both toward God and toward man. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many." The servant is not greater than his master and what characterized Him should mark out His servants. Service, not at our convenience or choosing, but service born of a deep sense of gratitude to Him who loved us unto death even the death of the cross.

Service may take several forms such as working and witnessing, but also there is a service to God which includes devotion which produces worship of God, communion with God, intercession for His people and the shepherding of His people. God is jealous and would have all of us, and not just part of us. "A living sacrifice," says Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit. Let us be sure that it is He only whom we serve, and Satan will be defeated; we will be blessed, and God will be glorified.

Matthew four takes us up into an exceeding high mountain through which we learn lofty lessons from the example of our blessed Lord.

# Matthew’s Mountains (Part 2) (Mar 1964)

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George Sharp

If the mountain of chapter 4 is described as an exceeding high mountain, what shall we say of the mountains of chapters 5, 6, and 7? In chapter 4 we are confronted with the kingdoms of this world, but in these three chapters we are brought face to face with a loftier theme for we are introduced to the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, so high is this mountain that too many of us suffer from the altitude and quickly descend to relegate the teachings of the mountain to a vague and indefinite time area and indistinct people by saying that this is “Kingdom teaching” and therefore not for us. We cannot, however, escape the fact that we are in His Kingdom, having been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God’s dear Son. The fabric of our Christian character therefore must be interwoven with the moral characteristics of the Kingdom of God.

Let us consider just a few of these characteristics as outlined for us in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Blessed are the meek,” says the One who displayed this principle in infinite perfection as a human being. Our response, if not in word certainly in attitude, is simply that the theory is too idealistic to work in the world in which we live. How shall the believer be meek in this competitive age that is grasping and pushing for the better things of life such as better homes, better jobs, greater comforts and conveniences or whatever else is

available? Unless we approach the accumulation of these things in the same spirit as the world, it will pass us by and we will miss these things that loom so large in our thinking. How little we discern the mind of God and how little we know of the Word of God, for it will not be long ere this world in the truest sense of the word will belong completely to Christ, and we shall inherit all of it not just parts of it. We shall inherit all that He possesses and we are assured of this by the Word of God for did not our Lord Jesus die in order to make these truths available to us. Heirs of salvation we are and joint heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed are the meek definitely applies to us and we are reminded of it in the Epistles as indeed meekness is included in the fruit of the spirit as outlined to us in Galatians, chapter five.

“Blessed are the pure in heart.” What an opportunity is afforded each believer to display this phase of moral beauty in a world filled with and blasted by impurity, immorality, evil and corruption on every hand! In high places and low places, among the rich and among the poor, in the business world, the social world, and all other branches of society, declension is obvious. This truth also is not confined to Matthew’s Gospel, but is iterated and reiterated throughout the New Testament. “Whatsoever things are pure,… think on these things” (Phil. 4:8). “Unto the pure all things are pure” (Titus 1:15). And “every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3).

“Love thine enemies.” This imperative embraces a line of things which we pass over in a hurry. Perhaps we do not feel too uncomfortable if we consider our enemies as those who live thousands of miles from us, but it is quite another thing if the enemy is an obnoxious neighbour, or

a difficult fellow-worker in the office or factory, or some other extremely difficult association. Under such conditions our impulse is not to love such, but rather to “tell them off” and let them know in no uncertain terms that there is no love lost between us and themselves. How unlike our Blessed Saviour we are for He suffered the contradiction of sinners! He loved us not when we were on our best behaviour but when we were yet sinners He died for us. Yes, the examples of the peerless One are high and holy, and yet this same blessed One has given us the power and grace to follow in His footsteps.

These chapters are pregnant with the very highest teaching, dealing with such things as praying in secret, giving unobtrusively, fasting effectively, laying up treasures in Heaven, carefree dependence upon God and so many other things which we do well to dwell upon to learn something of the character of the Kingdom into which we have been brought. Let us search them out and then let them search us out so that there will be produced in us some reflection of the moral characteristics of the Kingdom of God. Mountain scenes in Scripture speak of power, authority and glory. In chapter four we saw something of the glory of the Son of Man as He used the authority of the Word of God as His power in gaining victory over Satan. In these three chapters 5,6, and 7, we have the glorious opportunity of bowing to the authority of the words of our Lord Jesus and having the power of His words mould our lives to His own praise and glory.

# Matthew’s Mountains (Part 3) (Apr 1964)

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George Sharp

Matthew guides us up into a very high and holy mountain (chap. 14:2). There we find the Son of God praying, and Scripture records that He was there alone. A consideration of this mountain will reveal a number of lessons which were meant for our benefit. One of these lessons is relevant to the present ministry of the Lord Jesus. On that mountain He was alone in the presence of the Father, yet He was at the same time fully aware of what was happening to His disciples and their ship as they were tossed in the midst of the sea, buffetted by a contrary wind. How it strengthens and encourages the believer to know that Christ has gone into the presence of God! As a man He was received up into glory where He is the token and pledge of the wonderful hope that we also shall soon be there.

Our hearts are stirred as we realize that He is present there on our behalf. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:201. Notice those last two words, hug them to your bosom, bask in their warmth, He is there for us. Blessed be His wonderful name! Again, let us refer to our lesson and notice with assurance that He watches over His own carefully and comes to them in the hour of their greatest anxiety and need. He appeared to His disciples; He spoke to them;

He demonstrated His power and authority, and then entered their ship to share their experiences and sail with them. Thank God, He is just the same today!

This scene also illustrates some dispensational teaching. We can think of our Lord appearing to His chosen people Israel in the hour of their great tribulation, being then recognized and acknowledged by them. Contrary to what is being suggested by some, we firmly believe that the Word of God teaches that there will be a time of sore tribulation for Israel and that she will be tossed on the sea of the nations. We believe that the Bible teaches a literal future for the Jew.

What a glorious deliverance will be experienced by Israel when their long rejected Messiah returns! That event is shadowed in verse 34, “And when they were gone over….” How could it be otherwise? Will an omniscient God be defeated in the nation upon which He has set His affection and for whom He has charted a destiny? Never can such a thought be anticipated. God has a future for Israel which will redound to His own praises.

The lesson, however, that we would fix in our own hearts is if the blessed, holy, spotless Son of God needed to be alone with God in prayer, we, His needy, failing followers likewise need seasons alone with God. How can we discern the mind of the Lord, learn His perfect will, appreciate the fellowship into which we have been brought, unless we find ourselves in His presence alone? How shall we see other Christians in a heavenly light if we fail to abide in the light of Heaven? How shall we have a sympathetic understanding of the problems and weaknesses of others if we do not find opportunity to be

alone with our sympathizing High Priest? In order to effectually succour one another we must experience this ourselves in the presence of the Lord. How easy it is to sing,

“Oh the pure delight of a single hour

Which before Thy throne we spend,”

and yet seldom prepare a single hour in which to be alone with our Master and Friend! God is jealous and wants us for Himself.

The resulting joy of our having been with the Lord will be readily detected by others. We may not be conscious of any special virtue in ourselves, but others will be aware “that we have been with Jesus,” and will thereby be blessed. Our Lord delighted to take His disciples away from the multitudes in order to teach them. He rejoiced in the intimacy of the home in Bethany, and He has not changed. He is still the same, and desires that we too may scale this very high mountain, this very holy mountain, and find the secret of His presence, and there learn the secret of His power.

This mountain is indeed very high, it takes effort and time to climb it. Some may indicate by their attitude that the effort is too great, others that there is just not time enough; let us not be guilty of either. Let us take the fullest advantage of the blessing afforded in the precincts of the Lord, breathing out the soul in prayer and listening to His voice, and then let us come down to minister to others even as did Christ our divine example.

# Matthew’s Mountains (Part 4) (May 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 5, May 1964.

George C. Sharp

If Matthew in chapter 14 of his Gospel conducts us into a mountain which we may call the mountain of prayer, in chapter 15:29 he leads us up into one which we shall call the mountain of provision. On this occasion great multitudes came to the Lord Jesus and He healed them. He was able to meet every physical need, every physical need of every one present. The very reading of His remarkable benevolence on this mountain bows our hearts in adoring worship and praise. We are constrained to cry out to Him, “How great Thou art; how great Thou art!”

The world needs such a deliverer as He. Shortly He will reign for that is His right. Blessed be His wondrous name! Notice, too, that this One is very God and very Man, a truly compassionate Man. This attitude is here reported by His own words, “I have compassion on the multitude.” For three days they had not eaten, and He will not send them away hungry lest they faint. Not a word did He speak of His personal need which, of course, would have been as real as theirs. Self-denial was characteristic of His entire life and ministry; He constantly thought only of others. However, it is one thing to be sympathetic under such circumstances but quite another to provide that which would meet the need. Christ was capable of both, and in the exercise of His providential care displayed this beautiful facet of His

character. In His grace He included in this ministry of compassion and love His hesitating, faithless disciples, men so very much like ourselves.

In the performing of the miracle by which the multitude was fed, Christ asked the disciples what bread they had with them, and upon an understanding of the meagreness of their supply, took what they had, gave thanks, broke it, placed it in their hands instructing them to distribute it among the people. There was not only enough to allay hunger but sufficient to satisfy them; furthermore, such was the abundance that there was more at the end than at the beginning. How like the Lord to take what we have, even although what we may possess was first of all given by Him, and to bless it. Our hearts might well melt in His presence and exclaim with the Apostle Paul, "'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" An experience like this is a lofty one, and should result in a firm determination to serve the Lord Christ wholeheartedly.

The truth this mountain illustrates requires that we place all that we have in His omnipotent hands, that we present our bodies as living sacrifices, holding nothing in reserve. Think of the rebuke it would have been that day to any disciple who would have withheld even one loaf, or one small fish. No doubt the multitude would have been fed, but the disciple would have been the loser.

## Matthew’s Mountains (June 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 10 No. 6, June 1964.

George Sharp

In Matthew chapter 17 we are taken up into a mountain which is described by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God as both high and holy. Matthew records in verse one of this chapter that it is a high mountain and Peter refers to it in his second Epistle, chapter 1:18 as a holy mountain, and indeed it fits both these descriptions. Peter speaks of the occasion as a time of the revealing of our Lord’s majesty and the time of His receiving honour and glory from His Father who spoke to Him from the excellent Glory. Matthew is relating the experience of others, but led by the Spirit of God he writes of how Jesus was transfigured before them. They had never seen anything like this before, simple fishermen that they were, but here they are given a glimpse of the effulgent brightness of the Son (Heb. 1:3), and what a sight for human eye to behold!

Note that He was not transformed, He was still the same person whose moral glory they had continually witnessed, but He was transfigured. So that His inherent brightness is at least seen in part. Those who appeared unto them with our Lord were Moses and Elias — the law and the prophets. Peter would build tabernacles for each one as though their ministry and persons paralleled each other. He was so wrong, and as another has well said, the only thing Peter did right on this occasion was to give Jesus first place. This, however, will not do, He is not merely first and foremost, but uniquely He stands alone for He is before all things. It is not only

that there is none to equal Him, but that there is none like Him whatsoever. He stands alone as Creator and Sustainer of all things. He stands alone in His blessed relationship to God the Father, as the eternal Son, and as a Man as well, How jealous God is of His Son and how quickly He corrects Peter's error!

Out of the excellent glory God focused their attention on the altogether Worthy One, His beloved Son. Oh, how He delights to use this significant expression, and how it delights our hearts to know that there is One who ever pleases God!

With the same complacency with which God rests in Christ, we too can rest, and say with another, "God is satisfied with Jesus, we are satisfied as well."

What a delight it is to turn from mortal men, no matter how noble in character, and meditate upon Christ in His various glories! The glory of His creative power, the glory of His wisdom, of His sonship, His humanity, His humility, His redemption, His resurrection, His ascension, His present place and occupation. His coming glory, the glory of His judgments, His reign and the glory of His grace. Truly "our meditation of Him shall be sweet." Notice, if you will, the subject of the conversation on this mountain between our Lord and Moses and Elias.

Luke tells us in his Evangel, chapter 9:31, that they spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. To the natural man death is a defeat, but our Lord's death was an accomplishment.

# Matthew’s Mountains (Part 5) (Aug-Sept 1964)

From Food for the Flock, Aug-Sept 1964.

George Sharp

We leave the high and holy mountain of Chapter 17 and climb another mountain which is also high and holy. It is Calvary’s mountain and is delineated in Matthew chapter 27. The people and their rulers, both religious and political, regarded Calvary as neither high nor holy. Nevertheless, that which took place there became the centre of all Eternity for all look with rapt adoring eyes onward and backward to it. Says one of our poets:

“Oh cross of Christ, Oh glorious tree,

What place can be compared with thee;

Where God’s own Son was crucified,

And for our sins a ransom died.”

At Calvary man sank to his lowest depths for there he manifested the wickedness of his heart in crucifying the Prince of Life; in denying the Holy One and the Just and in desiring a murderer instead.

Multitudes arrived at Jerusalem for the holiday and all were in a festive mood. The soldiers seemed to catch the temper of the people, and after the arrest of our Lord Jesus they blindfolded Him and taunted Him to prophesy, and smashed their cruel fists mercilessly against His blessed face. The hairs were plucked from His cheeks; His back was furrowed as a plowed field by the Roman lash. They mocked Him as they stripped Him

and put on Him a purple robe, and as they placed a reed in His hand and knelt before Him, they hailed Him as King of the Jews. So much physical torment was thus heaped upon Him that Pilate as he presented Him to the people, cried, “Behold the Man,” Isaiah’s prophecy had come to pass, “As many were astonied at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” Pitilessly the people cried, “Away with Him, crucify Him.” Bearing His cross He was led away to be crucified. Note that it is called “His cross.” It was really ours, was it not? We were guilty, not He! We deserved to die, not He! He took the cross willingly as His own. How strange it must have seemed to the soldiers who had undoubtedly crucified others as they resisted with oaths and screams to the very end, to find One whom they could lead as a lamb to the slaughter. No resistance, no recriminations, only a continous prayer, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

He was laid upon the cross and nailed through the hands and feet. Excruciating pain racked this Wonderful Person who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. Why? For you and for me! Let it grip each heart afresh in a real and personal way. It was for me.

The cross was lifted from the ground and dropped into the hole digged for it with a sickening thud. The words of the Psalmist come to mind, “All my bones are out of joint.” Much of this might move our hearts; we are only reviewing the physical suffering and shame and He despised the shame.

Furthermore, there is the other phase of His suffering, “He endured the cross.” Others had endured crosses,

but their crosses had exhausted them and they had died as a result of their suffering and exhaustion. This Blessed One endured His cross and exhausted it and all for which it stood, both in relation to God and to man. First, let us remember that the Holy Trinity is here working in unison for the Glory of God and for the good and blessing of the creature. We read in Hebrews 9:14 that Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. Notice how all three persons of the Godhead are active agents in the cross work of our Lord. Second, far greater than any physical suffering was His spiritual suffering, “He was made sin for us.” If we as sinful mortals find sin to be ugly, what must it have meant to the Holy One who knew no sin to be made sin for us? We cannot comprehend it. Last, the scene was so holy and so terrible that God enshrouded it with darkness for three hours. What a darkness while God dealt with Christ as the Sin Bearer! We can only meagrely measure the agony, the desolation, the judgment as the silence is broken and we hear Him cry out from the depths of His Holy Being, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? In view of all this we say, “Blessed be His Holy Name for the cross did not exhaust Him, but rather He endured and exhausted it. He emerged from the darkness a mighty Conqueror in fullest consciousness of all that had been fulfilled. Triumphantly He cried, “IT IS FINISHED.” He had endured the cross and instead of dying in weakness and exhaustion, in the exercises of his own will, He dismisses His Spirit.

Truly, the scenes on this mountain both melt our hearts to tears and bow them in adoring worship. Oh, how seldom we climb this mountain to be reminded of the

riches of His grace, of the majesty of His Person, of the glorious effect of His accomplishment! There we see the actual outpouring of the life and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God as a lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.

# Matthew’s Mountains (Part 7) (Oct 1964)

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George Sharp

We follow Matthew in spirit and climb a glorious mountain as we read chapter 28:16-20 of his Gospel. The cross for Christ is passed, and His sufferings forever finished, and He is now ready to be received up into glory to take His rightful place again at the Father’s right hand. How we like to sing in this regard:

“Lord, we rejoice that Thou art gone

To sit upon Thy Father’s throne;

Thy path of shame and suffering o’er;

Thy heart shall grieve and mourn no more.”

Christ had appointed a meeting in this mountain with His beloved disciples. When they met Him there, they worshipped Him. Is it not always thus when the eyes of the heart see Him? Worship ensues whether in the corporate company of saints or in the individual.

It was on this mountain that He spoke the wonderful words of comfort, power, and authority: “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.” This statement causes our minds to return to the first mountain in our study, the one we read of in Matthew 4:8-9. As we do so, we recall the poor offer Satan made on that occasion. The devil could only offer the kingdoms of this world for what he asked. As a recompense for the absolute obedience of Christ to His Father’s will, He receives not

only the kingdoms of this world, but as He asserted, “All power is given unto Me in Heaven.” He now possesses power and authority on earth where it is so badly needed, and in Heaven where it is readily acknowledged. Our hearts rejoice at the unfolding of these honours bestowed upon the Man whom the King delighteth to honour. Our understanding of these increases as we examine the Holy Scriptures. After man had done his worst to the Son of God, the Father did His best for we read: “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” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Moreover, in view of the future, we read, “God hath appointed Him Heir of all things.” In His resurrection and ascension the Father saluted Him saying, “Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool.” To this the mighty hosts of Heaven respond crying: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.” The redeemed join in this anthem giving their own peculiar tribute “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.” They also say, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and ‘to open the seals thereof: for Thou vast 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." See Revelation 4 and 5.

"Behold the Lamb with glory crowned!

To Him all power is given;

No place too high for Him is found,

No place too high in Heaven.

He fills the throne — the throne above,

He fills it without wrong;

The object of His Father's love,

The theme of angel's song."

What glory, and yet, what grace! Notice, if you will, that He longs to impart some of this power to His own, those that belong to Him by redemption. Because all power has been committed to Him, He says, "Go ye therfore." What a privilege and at the same time, what a responsibility belong to those who are associated with Him!

This is indeed a lofty mountain, but from it we must descend like those of old to serve Him daily in this poor world. As we thus serve, we must ever remember that not only did He die for us but He now lives for us in the power of an endless life; furthermore, that He is willing to impart that spiritual discernment and energy to live for the glory of the Lord.

God grant that these few thoughts on the mountains mentioned in Matthew's Gospel may stir our hearts to a greater degree of love and devotion to our blessed Lord and to a greater degree of successful service for Him.