Articles by John Hay Ritchie

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According to the Scriptures (Mar 1959)

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J. Hay Ritchie

Active in serving the Lord while employed for over 30 years in Argentina, Mr. Ritchie was recently transferred to the head office of his bank in Montreal, where already the Lord's people have come to appreciate his Christ-exalting ministry of God's Word.

"Christ died for our sins… He was buried … He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

The Resurrection of our Lord is indeed the corner stone of the gospel. One of the best attested facts of all history, it is discussed throughout the Scriptures.

A moment's reflection will bring to mind the place it receives in the entire New Testament and in the apostles' ministry. It is the essence and climax of the four Gospels. The apostles revelled in the preaching of a resurrected Lord. Indeed, the Apostle Paul saw the Lord in resurrection glory and never forgot the experience. Eliminate the glorious fact of the resurrection, and then reflect on the hopeless void that remains: a faith which is vain, leaving us miserable and perishing in our sins (1 Cor. 15:1-19).

The importance of the resurrection is even more pronounced when we reflect on the fact that a consideration of the resurrection of our Lord necessarily involves us in a consideration of His atoning death; for

to speak of His resurrection is to point directly to His death. If we fail to realize this, we fail to understand the deep and beautiful significance of His resurrection; and our study will be barren and void if it leads our hearts to anything short of a humble worship of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

As we consider our Lord in death upon the cross, we must bow our hearts in deepest humility, and prostrate our souls in the dust. Our proud fleshly hearts are brought to nought when we behold God's Holy One baring His bosom to the overwhelming billows of God's wrath — not upon His sin, but upon ours, upon mine. And the marvel and mystery of it all is that "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief" (Isa. 53:10). Small wonder that Peter exclaims in triumph, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24).

Consequently, while we rightly bow our hearts in humiliation before His cross, nevertheless a song of praise and worship wells up within us, and we praise God for His unspeakable gift; for His wonderful salvation through the blood of His Son; for the glorious and triumphant assurance He has given us in the resurrection of His Son from the dead; and for the eternal blessings covenanted to us as a consequence. He Who once was dead is alive for evermore. Well might we exclaim with worshipful hearts, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28)!

Again, the resurrection of our Lord constitutes the basis of all our service for Him. What brought thousands into a personal knowledge of the Lord as Saviour in the days

of the apostles? Was it not the mighty preaching of the resurrected Christ? To preach Christ in resurrection is to preach the wonder of His death and all that the death of the Son of God signifies. Never let us overlook the Holy Spirit's record of the thousands added to the Church by such preaching.

The Resurrection in the Old Testament

On the first page of man's history, we are brought face to face with his need of a Saviour and God's abundant provision of One Who was to be not only a Saviour, but also an all-powerful and triumphant Saviour.

Genesis three records the story of man's fall and the reaction of a loving seeking God. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (or He) shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruide His heel" (Gen. 3:15). Here we have a complete statement from God Himself as to His benevolent purposes for sinful man: the keynote is not only a Saviour, but a resurrected Saviour in power.

Satan has ever directed his power towards the destruction of the "seed royal"; and strangely enough, he was allowed to do his worst through man when the Lord Jesus was nailed to the cross; but this was the sacrifice required by the holy justice of God as a basis for man's salvation.

A beautiful type of the Lord in His humble submission to death is seen in Isaac. Abraham received his son again as one risen from the dead, "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11:19).

In Psalm 22, we see our Lord in the depths of His physical, mental, and spiritual sufferings on the cross; forsaken of God as He hung there in the darkness and anguish of the pit of our iniquities. Yet the fruit of such a sacrifice is surely the song of resurrection in Psalm 23, which finishes with the words, “and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

This, in turn, gives place to the still nobler heights of Psalm 24: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle” (Ps. 24:7-8).

And is not the essence of such mighty words found in the depths of Psalm 22? Indeed, neither the blessings of Psalm 23 nor the glories of Psalm 24 are possible apart from the suffering depicted in Psalm 22. If we pause too soon in the latter Psalm, dismay and consternation fill the soul. Read on and rejoice: “I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee” (Ps. 22:22). This is resurrection language indeed; with praise and power and strength on resurrection ground.

The Resurrection in the New Testament

In spite of the Old Testament references and the Lord’s own teaching, His death and resurrection were a mystery to His disciples. Every indication points to the fact that they were much more preoccupied with the establishment of His kingdom and their position therein. They were very similar to disciples today: not sufficiently occupied with the King and His Person; hence their dismay at the events of the night of the last passover.

Recall those awful days and nights when their Lord was seized and mocked and crucified: what could the disciples have thought as they witnessed such proceedings? They saw Him struggling under the weight of a cross, literally hounded to Calvary's hill, as if the forces of hell itself were bent upon destroying for ever the "royal seed" from which was to spring salvation and hope.

Bewildered and sorrowful, they made their way homeward with the cry which rent the heavens still ringing in their ears, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:36). Their Master was gone, an apparent failure, and they were left alone.

But came the dawn of the third day, "the first day of the week." And with the dawn, came the astounding report that the stone was rolled away, the tomb was empty. An angel had declared that Jesus was alive, intending to see His disciples in Galilee.

Peter and John ran to the sepulchre and verified the women's report. John entered the tomb; he saw, and believed. He realized the stupendous truth which the Lord had often taught them: He had indeed risen from the dead the third day according to the Scriptures. From that moment, John was a changed man.

The news spread rapidly; terror was dispelled from the disciples' breasts; they could speak of no one but their risen Lord. The Jews did all they could to frustrate the power of such glad tidings. The city was agog with the news, never heard of before or since.

And the Lord appeared often to His own, and to them alone; comforting and confirming their hearts with His message of peace.

Now we, as disciples of the Lord, require above all else to be more occupied with His Person and the power of His resurrection. It is essential for us first to get to know God, His presence, His holiness and majesty, His power and glory. This is possible, for through Jesus Christ our Lord, we have the unspeakable privilege of knowing the eternal God as our heavenly Father. And these experiences will have a most sobering effect upon our hearts and lives, even as they did in the service of the disciples.

Fearlessly, faithfully, and unceasingly, they proclaimed their message — the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, the only basis of eternal salvation.

What a wonderful message! What a wonderful Saviour! He is the only gleam of hope in the world today. Let us adjust our pattern of service to the example set by the apostles. Then, differences and difficulties will fade in the light of a common purpose, and we will experience the same kind of rich and bountiful harvest.

Let us gather around His glorious Person, with the sole purpose of heeding His teaching concerning Himself.

Let us attribute to Him all glory, praise, and honour, for He alone is worthy.

* * *

Faith says not, “I see that it is good for me, so God must have sent it,” but, “God sent it, and so it must be good for me.”

Emmanuel or God With Us (Dec 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 12, Dec 1959.

J. Hay Ritchie

Every year at Christmas time, the thoughts of men around the world are focussed on one of life's most commonplace events — the birth of a child.

Nevertheless, perhaps only a few appreciate the real significance of Christmas day, for its importance centres, not in the event itself, nor in its exact date, but solely in the Child Himself!

And although man's attitude towards the Christ-child might be careless and indifferent, it is still remarkable that the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour should be the occasion of the world's most widely celebrated feast day.

Undoubtedly Christmas is a most unique day — a day never to be repeated. But unique it is, most of all, because on that day many could say in truth, "Emmanuel — God with us!!" (Matt. 1:23).

The Manner of His Birth

No other child was ever born as He was; the manner of His birth and the nature of His person were unique.

The Scriptures commence with a detailed account of the Godhead's activity in creation. "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

Then follows the description of the creation of the elements, the heavenly bodies, the seas and the earth, vegetation and animal life. Finally, God created man in

His own image. What a wonderful series of acts demonstrating the creative power of the eternal God!

However, when we analyze the Scriptures dealing with the Lord's advent into this world, there is no addition whatsoever of the creation of another being, nor of the addition of another link in the human chain. We are confronted with this stupendous yet fundamental fact — a fact both beautiful and perfect: the manifestation in human form of that which already had existed eternally!

No other event in the history of mankind has been accompanied by more evidences of its supreme importance and uniqueness as has the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Scripture record of His coming, not an essential detail is omitted; each detail zealously safeguards the doctrine of His deity —for He is God while at the same time perfect Man. "The Word was God … and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth—(John 1:1, 14). Perfectly human, yet in complete contrast with the sons of men, He was entirely without sin, for He was fully divine!

His birth was also unique inasmuch as He was born of a virgin. This is one of the Bible's closely guarded truths, one which has been attacked time and again by the enemy.

God led His prophets to foretell it, however; some 700 years before the actual event, it was given as a special sign to the Jewish nation. "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall call His name, Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14. Cf. Matt. 1:23).

This was a unique circumstance and, humanly speaking, an impossible one. Yet in the opening chapters of Luke's Gospel, we find that the Holy Spirit chooses a physician to fulfil the task of explaining in a perfectly natural way, the delicate details of our Saviour's birth. He tells us that the angel who was sent to Mary explained what was about to happen, and while the virgin Mary declared her consternation (Luke 1:34), "the angel answered and said unto her, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God'" (Luke 1:35). "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37).

The course of events as recorded by Luke shows clearly how assiduously God guards the details concerning the advent of His only begotten Son into the world. Furthermore, the historical validity of Luke's writings has been strikingly demonstrated in recent years, so that no reflection can ever be cast upon the narrator and his record, nor upon the circumstances and instrument through whom the Christ-child came, nor upon the Child Himself Who was brought forth under such unique conditions. God wrought a miracle, aptly summed up by Paul, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).

Thus it came to pass that while Mary and Joseph were in the town of Bethlehem, she gave birth to her firstborn child, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger. In further accordance with all that the Scriptures had foretold, His name was called Jesus.

This unique event was heralded by “a multitude of the heavenly host” who appeared to shepherds in the fields while they watched their flocks. Suddenly they were surrounded by the shining glory of the Lord, and an angel said unto them, “Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:9-11). “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:19-20).

Not only so, but a specially bright star appeared in the eastern sky; and wise men, attracted by its brilliance and enquiring into its significance, followed its course and came 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” (Matt. 2:2).

Directed towards Bethlehem, the star went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw Him with Mary His mother, they fell down and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts — gold, acknowledging His deity; frankincense, indicating the fragrance of His perfect life; and myrrh, portraying His bitter sufferings in the bearing of man’s sin (Matt. 2:1-11).

All Jerusalem was in consternation at the news of His birth. King Herod — undoubtedly energized by Satan — tried to exterminate the seed royal. Satan had attempted to do this ever since the days in Eden’s garden, when God promised a Saviour for fallen man. Now the

promised Saviour had come, and so cruel and wicked was the hatred burning in Herod's heart, that he commanded that all children in Bethlehem under two years of age should be slain. And still another remarkable prophecy was then fulfilled, "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not" (Jer. 31:15. Matt 2:18).

Other more intricate details are associated with this wonderful event; for example, the inexplicable presence of numerical and literary phenomena in the order of the names mentioned in the genealogy of the Lord as given in Matthew, chapter one. Also, throughout the discourses of the angel with Mary, a miraculous design of perfection as symbolized by the number seven and its multiples leaves puny man aghast and proves beyond doubt the wonders of the handiwork of God.

Sonship and the Incarnation

Our Lord did not become the only begotten Son as a result of His birth; otherwise God's gift would be of less value — from both a divine and a human standpoint. "Unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given" (Isa. 9:6). Thus it is clear that the gift was a Son. And it is equally clear that the manifestation of the Son was in the Child born. But nowhere does God say that a Son was born!

God's matchless love declared His gift to be the eternal Son of His bosom. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Oh! the wonder of it!

The Lord Himself asserts, “I came down from heaven” (John 6:38). The Father says, “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee” (Heb. 1:5).

It was surely the will of the Father that the Son be given to earth, to man. And it was the delight of the Son ever to make effective that holy will (Ps.40:7). God gave; the Son came. What other gift equals this? Like the wise men, we do well to fall at His feet in humble worship, presenting our best gifts to Him alone!

The Purpose of His Incarnation

The incarnation was a necessity for the fulfilment of God’s purposes for our salvation and future glory. He wants all men to be saved, as does Christ Who delights in His Father’s will. While the Lord Jesus did not delight in the cross nor in death, He did nevertheless delight in accomplishing His Father’s will, that sinners might be without excuse in the light of the sacrifice of the Son.

Every attribute of God is made known in His Son, for He is the image of God. “No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1:18). Thus, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and He now commendeth His love toward us.

God spared not His Son. God’s love for us cannot therefore be measured in human terms. The proof and measure of His love is embodied in His Son, the man Christ Jesus, Him Who was sent, Him Who was given. He lived, He died, He rose, and He ascended. Soon He will return to complete His work of love in the redemption of all creation, and we shall reign with Him forevermore.

“Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Rev. 5:13).

All things New (Jan 1961)

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J. Hay Richie

J. Hay Ritchie is a banker who spent many years in Argentine. Since his transfer to Canada, his spiritual ministry has been a blessing to God's people.

God declares in His Word that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Such is the blessed experience of the child of God: quickened by the Holy Spirit, he is called upon to enter into the joy and power of a life which has been given him by God. In effect, only the Christian can enter into the real significance of that which is new, that which is completely unknown to the natural man.

After exhaustive inquiry in quest of satisfaction from the things of this world, Solomon, the wise king, stated, "There is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? … Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 1:9-14).

Before considering several of the new elements to which the child of God is called, it would be useful to note the biblical use of the word, "new." Mr. W. E. Vine in his Expository Dictionary explains that its use in Scripture denotes: first, something of a different nature. For example, the "new" tongues of Mark 16:17, and the "other" tongues of Acts 2:4. It does not denote that these languages had never been heard before, or that they were new to the hearers, but that they were new to

the speakers, different from those they were accustomed to speak. Second, this word denotes that which is new in respect of time. thus, the “new” man of Ephesians 2:15, is new by differing in character, but the “new” man of Colossians 3:10, stresses the fact of the believer’s new experience recently begun, and still proceeding. The old man in him dates as far back as Adam. A “new” man has been born and is therefore fitly so called. The “new” covenant in Hebrews 12:24, is new compared with the Mosaic covenant which is old in character and ineffective.

We draw attention, then, to the three “new” things to which the believer is brought by the power of the Gospel. These are for his present obedience and realization, and constitute a new creation, a new service, and a new Heaven and a new Earth. This third one is definitely future in character.

A New Creation

The Scriptures are quite significant in this respect: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17). “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal. 6:15). “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:23-24).

It is evident that the force of the word in these passages does not suggest the addition of another unit or the reformation of something already in existence. The stress is obviously placed on the creation of something entirely different in origin and nature: something of

God: a new life whose resources are in God Himself: life everlasting implanted by the Holy Ghost through faith. Humanly speaking, no explanation of this blessed experience can be given; it is an experience known only to the true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he who is born of God. Man has nothing to do with the imparting of this new life. That fact is an untold blessing in itself, for were this life the produce of fleshly man in any degree, it could not be of God. While, like Nicodemus, our finite minds fail to grasp the mystery, we know that everlasting life is our portion because God has declared it thus, and faith appropriates the blessing. “I know,” said the Apostle Paul, “whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12).

Now, this new creation will give evidence of its presence. John chapter three teaches that we do not know from where the wind comes nor to where it goes, but we do hear the sound thereof, and feel its effects and its power. These are the evidences of its presence. In like manner, this new creation, the new man, will give evidence of the new life by manifesting new desires and new customs, and by engaging in a new service.

A New Service

Christian service is a very practical evidence of the New Creation. Nowhere in Scripture are we called upon to give up immediately our secular employment to serve the Lord either at home or on the foreign field. The Lord might eventually lead us into such service, but immediately on conversion, God calls to new service.

In writing to the Thessalonians the Apostle Paul declares, “Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living

and true God; And to wait for His Son from Heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9-10). The attitude of the believer should ever be one of service.

It is significant to note the number of exhortations given in the epistles to servants and masters. God would have it understood that the first great opportunity of service is the manifestation of the New Creation within us, precisely in the faithful performance of our daily duties. Consequently, we find that the most menial tasks can be performed as service to God and to His glory, or otherwise. This is decidedly something new. Man has been trying to bring about a reformation in the labour world for some generations. Notwithstanding his efforts, conditions are further from a satisfactory state than they ever were. This New Creation of God, however, offered in the Gospels solves the most complex relations between capital and labour. The Christian is called to serve God in his secular work. When this is undertaken in that light, a perpetual motive is provided for waiting on our heavenly Master in regard to guidance and wisdom. Thus may His name be exalted.

"Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:9-10).

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will

doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. 6:5-7).

Alternatively, in this same chapter, exhortations are given to masters that consideration be shown to servants and that justice be practised for the sake of the Master in Heaven. Only God could produce such a life, such a service. New, indeed, it is never even thought of by men.

Then again, take the labourer called of God to evangelize in foreign lands. He looks to the Lord, and to Him alone to supply all his needs. Definitely this is a new form of service. Without this impulse of the New Creation of God, man could not conceive such a life of faith in God alone. By man's measure, it is the utmost folly. But how wonderfully beautiful it all is, because it is divine, it is new, the Creation of God.

Every Christian is called to this service. It is to be performed in all places at all times. Many of God's servants who have been privileged to be used of God in remarkable ways in world-wide service, have passed through the school of humble service first. It is not so much what we do, but how we do it. At our best we have to confess that we are unworthy servants, and that only by His grace are we sustained in such a high calling. May we stir ourselves to serve the Lord in His own way.

A New Heaven and a New Earth

The Apostle John wrote: "And I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth for the first Heaven and the first Earth were passed away" (Rev. 21:1). This is the future environment into which God has called His children. At present, in the body, they are beset by many hindrances. An

analysis of this situation reveals that their greatest problem lies within their fleshly hearts. The believer who has not yet made this discovery, is, indeed, ignorant. However, it will not always be so for there is a time to come in which he will be loosed from all the ties of earth which hinder him. The Holy Spirit directs the attention of the Christian forward into the unsullied presence of God where his soul will find unlimited satisfaction and joy in perfect service. God will provide a new Heaven and a new Earth in which the New Creation within him, and the new service to which he has been called, will express themselves within the intimacy of the Father's house.

We, God's beloved people, then shall be in our own element; an element suited to the new nature begotten in us by the power of the Holy Spirit, and now made perfect. While we have good reason to lament all the grief caused today, it will not be thus in Heaven. The presence of God there will be really visible. Nothing will veil His glory from our eyes. There will be perfect and eternal satisfaction, joy, and peace in that new state to which we actually belong. All former things will have passed away, and all new things will be of God.

As if to give us the assurance of this future bliss, God places His seal upon the description given by John; He says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 21:6). He cannot fail! The Eternal is the fullest revelation of God! Eventually, we shall be with Him, and like Him. In Him we shall inherit all things; the new Heaven and the new Earth will be ours, and God shall be all in all.

The Power of His Resurrection (Apr 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 4, Apr 1961.

The Apostle Paul first came to know the Lord in a most remarkable way; God's dealings with him were unique. They were necessary to prove to him the marvels of the power of God manifest in His Son, His Perfect Servant upon earth. Before Saul could be brought low enough for God to save and use him, he required a vision of the Resurrected Lord as the Head of His Church.

The Power of Christ's Resurrection and Humility

Apart from his conversion to God, the greatest effect of this heavenly vision upon Saul was the demonstration of the puny futility of man, of himself. Consequently, Paul longed to acquire a deeper knowledge of Christ. He knew this to be his daily, his hourly need, in order that the Saul in him be kept mortified, and that his Lord have the wielding of that resurrection power in his life. He was brought down into the very dust, which is every man's rightful place, when the glory of the Resurrected Lord shone about him.

Such an experience is a primary and constant need in the life of the Christian. The Christian must know Christ not only as Saviour but as Lord and Master. When it is otherwise, and the believer allows matters to follow their natural course, then what is called spiritual power is merely a display of his own prowess, and often nothing but a show of vain traditions. A state resulting

from such carnality is disastrous to Christian testimony and service. The key note of the truth of resurrection means that we ourselves, our wills, must be reduced to inactivity, actually to death, so that Christ in resurrection power may be made manifest in us.

In the Old Testament it is recorded that the Lord used this same principle in the lives of his servants. Moses had an experience at the beginning of his career in the school of God: “The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed …. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses, and he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Ex. 3:2-6).

This experience was the turning point in Moses’ life; he became the meekest man in all the earth, but one of the mightiest in his exploits for God. What was needed to thus change Moses was a foresight of the presence and the glory of the Holy God; it was this that caused him to hide himself.

Isaiah, the evangelical prophet relates a similar experience, one so vivid that he mentions the very date on which it occured: “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings: with twain he

covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory …. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts…. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:1-8).

Isaiah as a man sent by God was useless without this manifestation of the power and glory of God, and the purifying and humbling effect of it upon his life. This vision of power and majesty prepared him for the special and difficult, albeit, thankless task God had for him.

Job passed through the fiery trials of faith, and his testimony on realizing something of the power and glory of God was: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

We may range through all the Scriptures and find similar instances. It is essential that man become cognizant of the power, glory, and holiness of God before he will humble himself. The Apostle Paul strove to attain and to retain that knowledge of His Lord. He expressed this longing, "That I might know Him." To know and have Him constantly before us in the glorious might of His resurrection is to know His grace in taking us from the vile base pit of sin and elevating us to sit with Him in the heavenly places.

The Power of His Resurrection and Introspection

The Apostle Paul expresses this deep desire as belonging to the heart of all of God's people: "That I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (Phil. 3:10). Here we have a challenge based on the resurrection of the Lord, a challenge of self-examination. What part does this glory and triumph of the resurrection of Christ play in my Christian life and experience?

In Book of Acts the central theme is expressed thus: "Him (the Lord Jesus) hath God raised from the dead." Why would the Apostle base his desire so decidedly upon this, the knowledge of the resurrection of Christ?

The Power of His Resurrection and Stability

First of all, it was the resurrection of the Lord that gave overwhelming proof of His Deity. He is indeed the very Son of God. Up to this point there was considerable instability in the belief and behaviour of the disciples. It is true that Peter confessed Him as the Son of God at Caesarea Philippi, but we all know how far short of this he fell when he denied Him with oaths and curses.

Furthermore, the Scriptures record that the body of men that Christ chose to be with Him "all forsook Him and fled" during the hour of His humiliation. Immediately following the crucifixion they manifested fear, fear of the Jews.

A great change in these very men is seen after the first day on which the Lord Jesus arose. The historical fact of the resurrection poured light and power into their

hearts and lives. From that time on, the disciples gave every evidence that they not only knew Christ, but they possessed the very power that had raised Him from among the dead.

The Apostle prays on behalf of the Ephesians, “That the God of our Lord Jesus, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: … And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:17-20).

The power manifested in His resurrection therefore is that for which the Apostle strives through a deeper knowledge of the Lord. This power is nothing less than that which operated in Christ when God raised Him physically from the tomb. Can anyone measure this? Paul does not see this as something to be believed only, but something to be earnestly sought in order that confidence in God be more firmly established.

We recall the grace and silence of the entire Godhead when the Lord was crucified at the hands of men. He submitted to the worst that men and Satan could do. He, the blessed Son of God was put to death. Man and Satan thought that the end had been accomplished, but God forthwith manifested His power. By His mighty power He raised the body of His Son from the grave, and seated Him at His own right hand in glory “far above all principalities and powers.” The victor is not man, not death, not Satan; the Victor is Christ enthroned far above those evil powers against which we wrestle (Eph.

6:12). They have been completely overcome by the power of the resurrection of our Lord. Can this power be thwarted by Satan and all his hosts? Never! This has been proved by the passing of the Victor right through the very heart of their domains, and by His being set far above them in glory and honour. This is the power to which Paul makes reference; this is the power he strives to know.

The Power of His Resurrection and Testimony

In the second place, the resurrection of the Lord signifies the character and purpose of His death. He who died was the Son of God incarnate. Why did He die such a death? Was God, who displayed His mighty power in the resurrection of His Son, devoid of such power when He died on the cross? Here it is well to pause and ponder. Here self and its so-called rights must be placed out of sight. Here is the reason why we are called upon to live in the power of His resurrection. “For,” says Paul, “He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

This fact keeps the flesh in the place of death and humility. It is the flesh in its multitudinous aspects that even in handing the Word of God weakens assembly testimony today. Divisions and dissensions among God’s people are the stark proofs that the power of the resurrection of our Lord is not present with us. It is the subtle power of man, and the devil makes him believe that it is spiritual power. The power of the resurrection causes us to cover our lips and our faces because of the holiness of God; it causes us to remove our shoes off our feet for the ground on which we stand is holy. It brings

us to the dust and ashes of true repentance. Moreover, it blinds our fondest ambition and zeal by the brightness of its glory. It draws from the surrendered heart the cry, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

The power of His resurrection in the heart and life is the crying need among God’s people today, especially among the assemblies which gather in His name alone. Is its lack because we do not seek it, or want it? Are we ignorant of its lack in our individual and collective testimonies? Let us face realities. Let us stop dreaming that we possess that which we have actually lost. Let us seek it assiduously. It is to be found only in a closer communion and more intimate fellowship with Him whom God hath raised from among the dead and given glory.