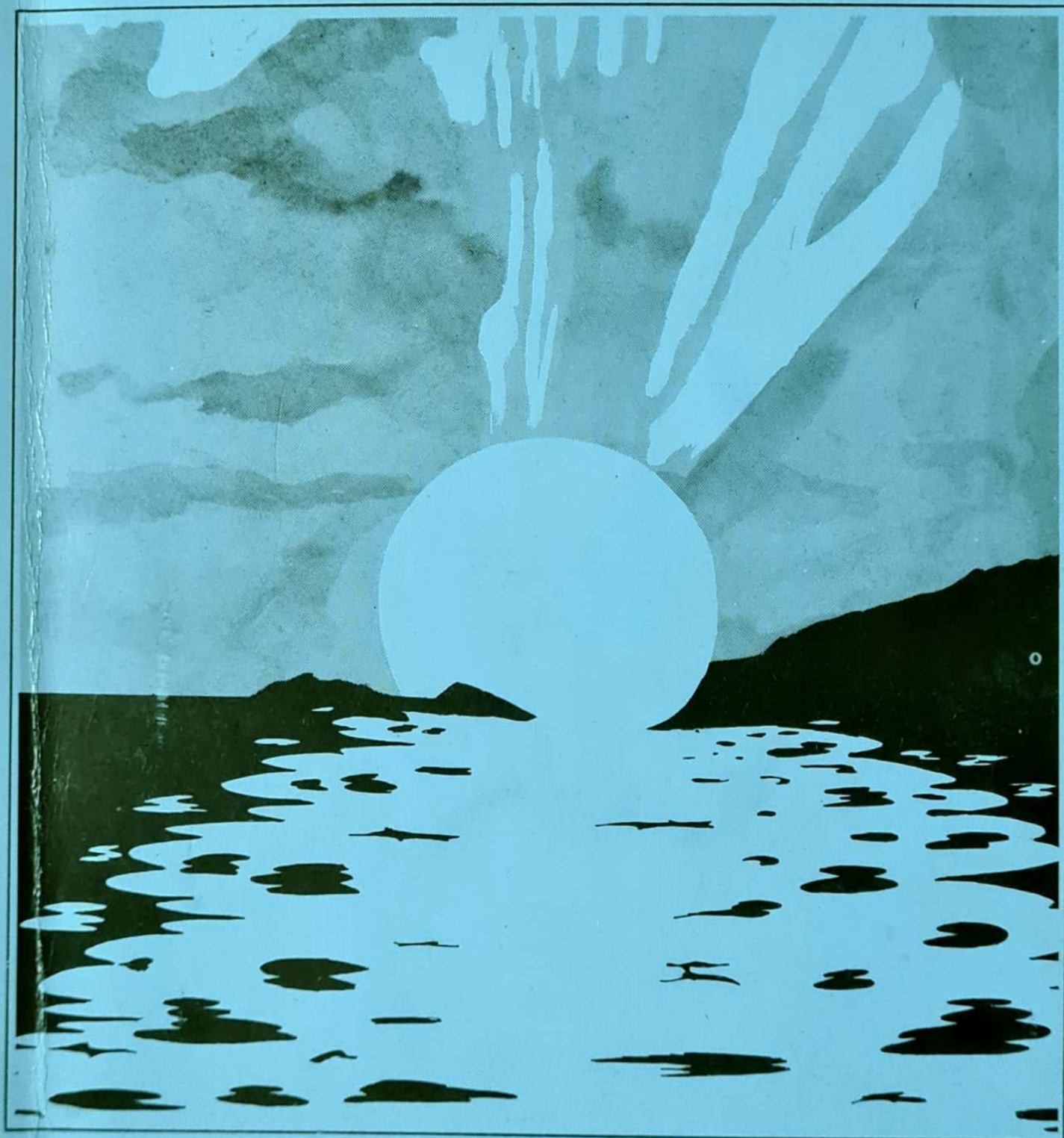


**FOR**

# **YOUNG PEOPLE**



**BY A. R. WRIGHT**



# FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

by

REV. A. R. WRIGHT, B.A.

minister of

BALLYLAGGAN  
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1934 — 1971



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*Rev. A. R. Wright, B.A.*



# Foreword

Writing religious articles for children is not an easy task, and yet there can scarcely be anything more satisfying and rewarding, if what one has written makes Christ more real to them. It requires an awareness of what children can understand and what will appeal to them; it requires a determination not to talk down to them; above all, it requires a manifest love for them. Because all these requirements—and many more—are met in this volume of addresses by A. R. Wright, I am very happy to commend it to what I am confident will be a wide circle of readers, not only those who are children in years, but all who are young in heart.

For over thirty years A. R. Wright contributed a section for young people to the pages of *The Covenanters*, the magazine of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. In those most attractive articles he drew memorable lessons for children from the Bible, from his wide reading, and from the common things of every day. It had often been suggested that a selection of them should be made available for the children of a new generation, and J. A. Lyons Wright has paid a worthy tribute to his brother and has rendered an inestimable service to a new generation of children by arranging for the publication of this book. It cannot have been easy to choose from the wealth of material that was available, but the selection which has been made underlines precisely the things which were A. R. Wright's primary concern—the Bible, the Lord Jesus Christ, the amazing variety of Christian experience, and the Christian life.

Writing almost one hundred years ago in the first issue of *The Morning Watch*, a magazine for children, published by J. P. Struthers of Greenock, the author said, "We shall count ourselves happy if we can help any who may read our little paper to make God's thoughts their thoughts, and His ways their ways; to believe that there is simply nothing God will not do for them, and nothing they may not do for Him, if only they seek the glory of His Son, standing with their loins girt and their lamps burning, patient, brave, and cheerful, waiting, looking for the Lord." A. R. Wright in what he wrote for God would have sought no greater happiness than that.

HUGH J. BLAIR,

Ballymoney.

December, 1984.



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# PART I

# THE BIBLE





# **The Bible -- A Book**

A happy New Year to you all! May it bring you joy and strength and good success. And remember, if you are to be truly successful, you must take Jesus as your Saviour and friend, and the Bible as your guide. John Bunyan pictures his pilgrim starting out with the Bible in his hand. Charles Dickens put the Bible on the top of his boy's trunk as the lad was leaving home for the first time. As you set out upon the New Year see that you take your Bible with you, and consult it constantly.

During the year we plan to speak of the Bible under different figures, and this month we take the most familiar, namely "The Bible—a Book". Perhaps the simplest way to treat our subject would be in the form of an acrostic. The Bible is:

## **I. THE BEST BOOK**

The word Bible means Book, and so when we speak of the Bible we mean **THE** Book. The Bible is the best Book in the world.

According to Luther the Bible is the only Book, to which all the books of the world are but waste paper in comparison. When Sir Walter Scott was on his death bed, he said to his son-in-law Lockhart, "Bring me the Book, sir". "What book?" asked Lockhart. "THE Book, the Bible", said Sir Walter, "there is only one". Sir Walter had written many books himself, his library was packed with the world's best books, but he regarded the Bible as the best book of all.

The Bible is the best Book because it has "God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter". The Bible is given by inspiration of God; in other words it is God-breathed, and so distinct from all other books. In it we have God's message to a needy world. It answers authoritatively our great questions, "Where have I come from?" "Why am I here?" "Where am I going?"

## **II. THE INTERESTING BOOK**

Where can we find such interesting stories as those which we have in the Bible? "Oh do tell me the name of the book with these stories, and I will get my mother to buy it for us", said a boy to a friend, who was telling some stories to a group of children.

"Oh!" she cried, "it's the Bible". His face fell, for he thought the Bible was a dull, dry, old book for old people. Now, far from being so, the Bible is the best story book in the world. A present day writer has said "Why! there is no story book like the Bible, and I'm ever so glad that parents and teachers made me commit so many of its sentences, and paragraphs, and poems to memory. I can repeat them now, and sometimes when I remember them I feel as strong as Samson against temptation, I feel as brave as Daniel for the right".



The Bible then is most interesting for children, and as you grow in years you will find that it grows in interest. Indeed the person who is "in Christ", has a new love for the Bible because he is then wedded to the author. Lady Jane Grey, being asked on one occasion, in a tone of surprise, how it was she did not join in the pleasures of hunting but preferred to sit at home and read the Bible, replied, smiling, "All amusements of that description are but a shadow of the pleasure which I enjoy in reading this Book". Like the Psalmist she found God's Word most interesting.

### **III. THE BIG BOOK**

Some of you may have received as a prize "The Big Book for Boys", or "The Big Book for Girls". I think we might speak of the Bible as "The Big Book for Boys and Girls".

The Bible is big in regard to contents. It contains 66 Books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New, and is a library in itself. It took nearly 1,500 years to write it, and God used over 30 different people in the writing.

Again, the Bible is big in regard to themes. It speaks with authority on such big subjects as God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, man, sin, salvation, and the future life. It shows us that we are all sinners, and that God in His infinite mercy has made provision whereby sinners can be saved. From beginning to end the Bible points us to Christ as our only hope of salvation; He is the centre and core of the whole Book.

Again the Bible is big in regard to influence. Think of its influence upon the world. Someone has written, "The Bible has converted the tomahawk into the wood-axe, and the weapons of barbaric warfare into implements of husbandry; built smiling villages on the sites of miserable encampments; reconciled alien races, and united hostile, ferocious tribes". Think of its influence upon the nation. J. R. Green in describing English life of 300 years ago, said "England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible". Khama, the great and good African king, once asked Queen Victoria the secret of Britain's greatness and by way of reply the Queen handed him a Bible. Think of its influence upon the individual. How often God has used the Bible to convince and convert, to guide and comfort, to revive and empower. Take the case of Augustine. When greatly concerned about his soul he once heard as it were the voice of a child saying "Tolle, lege" (take and read). He opened the Bible at Romans 13 : 13, 14, and the result was that a mother's earnest prayers were answered in his conversion. Henceforth the Bible was the man of his counsel and the guide of his life.

### **IV. THE LASTING BOOK**

Some books are popular for a time, and then they are forgotten. The Bible is a Book which lasts. The Word of the Lord endures for



ever. It has been subjected to the fires of bitter persecution and destructive criticism, but it has been wondrously preserved, and today it is still the world's best seller. It will last as long as this world lasts, and perhaps even longer. J. P. Struthers writes in one of the copies of the Morning Watch, "I think the Covenanters were wrong when, on the scaffold, they used such phrases as 'Farewell sweet Bible'. We are not done with the Word of God when we die, and we never shall be done with it. The Bible, so to speak, is only a few pages taken out of the Books of God that are written in heaven. Parts of it, such as the 2nd and the 22nd and the 40th and the 110th Psalms were spoken to One Another by the Three Persons of the Godhead before time was. All of it, and all else that has ever been written or said or done, that God wishes us to know, will be revealed and explained and talked about hereafter. To say there will be no Bible in heaven is just as ridiculous as to say that we ourselves shall not know one another. The Bible is bound up with our personal history, and it will be no more possible to forget it than it will be to forget our own names and all that God has done for us".

## **V. EVERYBODY'S BOOK**

The Bible is the Book for all kindreds, and nations, and peoples, and tongues—it has been translated into more than 1,000 languages; it is the Book for all classes and conditions—for rich and poor, bond and free, old and young; it is the Book for you boys and girls. Timothy, from childhood, knew the Scriptures. Andrew Hislop, the youthful Covenanter martyr, confronted his murderers with the Bible in his hand. To Mary Jones, the famous Welsh lassie who saved her pennies and half-pennies for six years, and who then walked twenty-five miles to buy a Bible, the Rev. Mr. Charles in handing her a copy said, "Read it carefully, study it diligently, treasure up the sacred words in your memory, and act up to its teaching". Good advice to you for this new year.



# **The Bible -- A Lamp**

Lamps may be divided into two main classes—portable lamps and fixed lamps; lamps which we carry about with us—such as the flashlamp, the hurricane lamp, and the miner's lamp, and lamps which remain fixed in one place—such as the street lamp, and the beacon lamp. It is interesting to note that the Bible is compared to both these kinds of lamps. In the Book of Psalms we read "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet"; here the reference obviously is to a lamp which we carry with us to show us the way. In II Peter we read "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light (R.V. lamp) that shineth in a dark place"; here the reference is rather to a fixed lamp which shines in a dark world.

The Bible as a lamp is:

## **I. A PLEASANT COMPANION**

There is an old saying that "a light is a pleasant companion". A lamp cannot talk to us or listen to us, but it is a very pleasant companion on a dark night—whether inside or outside the home. In the "black-out" days—or rather nights! during the war—we always felt happy when we had our torch with us.

And the Bible is a pleasant companion to those who are familiar with its promises and precepts. We often speak of books as our silent companions, and the greatest of these silent companions is the Bible. Happy are those who have it with them throughout life—in the bright days and in the dark days; and happy are those who have it with them when life draws to a close. What a comfort to the dying—whether young or old—is the 23rd Psalm.

To you boys and girls setting out in life I would say, "Take the Bible as your constant companion. Don't be ashamed to be seen with it in your hand. See to it that you have it in your head. Above all, lay it up in your heart and practise it in your life".

## **II. A POWERFUL PROTECTOR**

Lamps are a good protection against danger. During the war, search-lamps were used as protectors against enemy raiders. The bicycle lamp and the signal lamp protect against road and rail accidents; the miner's lamp (known as the safety lamp) protects against coal-gas; the beacon lamp protects against dangerous waters.

And the Bible is a lamp which protects. It warns us of the presence of danger, and is one of the great means of keeping us from the paths of the destroyer. You remember how our Lord Himself used this weapon when He was tempted of the devil. Three times He flashed the lamp of truth in the devil's face; three times He cried out



"It is written"; and at last He drove His foeman from the field. And today we too have our dangers and temptations, and if we are to stand firm against the enemy we must use the lamp of God's Word. When tempted to do the wrong thing we should be able to repel the assault of the evil one with the words, "It is written". We should be so familiar with the Bible warnings that, when temptation comes, the appropriate one will flash before our minds. Here, for example, is a young lad who goes to a situation where he is daily handling his employer's money. One day he is tempted to take some for himself. The devil whispers, "Take only a little, it will never be missed". And then the warning flash comes from the safety lamp "Thou shalt not steal", and the temptation is overcome.

Young people, give earnest heed to the warnings of the Bible. The "Thou shalt nots" are very important and they are not given by a "kill joy" but by One who wants you to have the happiest life possible.

### III. A PERFECT GUIDE

The lamp which we carry with us acts as a guide. It lightens the darkened path, and shows us where we are to go. And the Bible is a perfect Guide. It guides us, without fail, along the Way which leads to Heaven. It sheds light upon the entrance to the Way. It shows that we can only enter by grace and through faith in Jesus Christ, and that the best time to enter is in the days of our youth. It sheds light upon the Way itself—it shows us the right paths and the wrong paths, and leads us forward one step at a time. It sheds light upon the end of the Way—it leads us safely across the river of death into the Heavenly Home.

Let me close with a story told many years ago. Young Harry was sent on an errand one wintry evening. After giving him his message his mother said, "Be sure you take the lantern with you, Harry". "Bother the lantern!" answered the boy, gruffly and disrespectfully; and he started, muttering to himself, "What do I want with a lantern? I guess I know the way well enough". Very soon Master Harry, in crossing the street, stumbled into a hole which had been made by recent rain. By his fall he knocked the flesh from his shin-bone, and covered his clothes with mud. On his way back he forgot the fence running along at the edge of the ravine. As he groped his way along the bank he fell over and went sprawling to the bottom of the ravine. With much ado and after many bruises he got into the road once more, but when he finally reached his mother's door he looked more like a scarecrow than a living boy. The lantern would have saved him all this. Was he not a very foolish boy not to take it? And what shall we say to those boys and girls who know the Bible to be the only lamp which can guide their feet safely to the Heavenly Home, and yet refuse to carry it? Are they not even more foolish? Are they not likely to suffer infinitely more than that boy suffered? I trust that you will not be one of them. Take the Bible as your lamp. It will lead you to Christ; it will light you Home.



# The Bible -- A Sword

Some children are very fond of playing with toy swords, and occasionally these crude weapons prove rather dangerous! Of course the toy sword is nothing to the real thing, and I expect some of the boys at any rate have seen and handled a real sword. The sword used to be a very important weapon of war, and no doubt some of the older young people are familiar with some of the famous swords of the past. You have, of course, read about the sword of Goliath regarding which David said, "There is none like that"; you may have heard of the sword of Damocles, which was suspended over the head of the person of that name, tied only by a horse hair, when he sat upon the throne of his tyrannical master, Dionysius of Sicily; certainly some of you will have read of "Excalibur", the sword associated with that great legendary figure, King Arthur. All these are famous swords, but just now I wish to write to you regarding the most famous sword of all—the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

I hope you are familiar with the name of Edward VI—the Josiah of British history. When he was being crowned King, three swords were brought to him, signs that he was King over three countries. He was not satisfied however. "There is one yet wanting", he said. And when the nobles about him asked what that was, he answered, "THE BIBLE". "That book", he added, "is the Sword of the Spirit, and to be preferred before these swords". He then commanded a Bible to be brought and reverently carried before him. Those of you who have read the history of his short reign know how he tried to rule according to the Bible's teaching.

Two main points call for our attention. The Bible is:

## I. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

This tried and trustworthy blade has been made and fashioned by the Holy Spirit, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." God, the Holy Spirit, is the designer and producer of this wonderful Sword, and so it is perfect and eminently fitted for its purpose.

Again this weapon is constantly used by the Holy Spirit. He uses it to pierce the conscience, to convict of sin. You remember how Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, preached the Word on the day of Pentecost, and the result was that his hearers were "pricked in their heart". They realised their sinfulness, and cried out "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And since then many a one has been pierced by the sword of the Spirit. Let me tell you about a four-year-old boy called Ronnie. He was fond of blowing soap bubbles, and one evening when he was doing this his mother said, "It's time for bed now, come and I will read you a chapter out of the Bible". As he came, she asked, "Have you taken the soap out of the water?" "Yeth",



said wee Ronnie, for he spoke with a lisp. Then his mother read to him the last chapter in the Bible, and explained that it was about Heaven, and who would be inside and who outside. When she had read vv. 14 and 15, which end up with a reference to the one who "maketh a lie", Ronnie suddenly interrupted her. "Wait a minute, mummy", he said, "I'll go and see about that soap!" You see he had answered yes to his mother's question and without being sure that he was telling the truth, and the Holy Spirit used the sharp sword of the Word to convince him of his fault.

Have you been pierced by the sword of the Spirit? Has the Bible convinced you of your sin, and of your need of a Saviour? Have you confessed your sin and cast yourself upon the mercy of God in Christ? God wounds in order to heal.

## II. THE SWORD OF THE CHRISTIAN

If you are ever in London you will see in Trafalgar Square a statue of that famous Christian soldier, General Gordon. In one way it is rather a surprising statue. Instead of wearing a sword or weapon of any kind, Gordon is represented as carrying only the famous cane with which, in China, he led his soldiers to victory, while in his left hand he firmly grasps a Bible. As a Christian, Gordon was a great lover of God's Word; this was a sword which he could wield skilfully and effectively.

And today we are to use this weapon in the Christian conflict. Having been pierced by the sword of the Spirit, having been persuaded and enabled to join up on the side of Christ, we are to take the sword of the Spirit as our own sword.

As soldiers of Jesus Christ we must know this weapon. Young people, you cannot know your Bible too well. Dr. Stalker in his "Imago Christi" writes, "But often when temptation comes, there is no time to search the Word to meet it; everything depends on being already armed with sword in hand. This shows how necessary it is to fill the memory, while it is plastic, with stores of texts; we do not know what use we may get of them in future days of trial and weakness".

And then we must use, as well as know, our weapon. You remember how our Lord used it in the wilderness? You remember how Christian used it in the fight with Apollyon? Today you are to do likewise. You must practise the use of this powerful sword. You must use it in attack—you must take the offensive and seek to destroy such enemies as Giant Selfishness, Giant Laziness, Giant Bad Temper. And then you must also use it in defence. When tempted to do the wrong thing, be able to repel the assault with the words "It is written".

Let me close with a story—"What's wrong wi ye noo? I thocht ye were a'right", said a ragged boy—himself rejoicing in the Saviour



—to another, who a few nights before, professed to be able to trust Jesus, but who had again begun to doubt. “Man, I’m no richt yet”, replied the other, “for Satan’s aye tempting me”. “And what dae ye then?” asked his friend. “I try”, said he “to sing a hymn”. “And does that no’ send him awa?” “No, I’m as bad as ever”. “Weel”, said the other, “When he tempts you again try him wi’ a text; he canna staun that”.

“Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”



# The Bible -- A Packet

Boys and girls are generally interested in packets. When one comes from the shop they are always curious to know what is inside. And here we have the Bible likened to a packet. A packet of what? I seem to hear you ask.

In one of his books F. W. Boreham tells us that, as a boy, he was often sent to what was known as "the Magic Shop". This was a very queer, very old, very dusty little shop at the far end of the town; and the odd little man who kept it was as queer and as old and as dusty as the shop itself. And yet the boys were rather fond of him, for they knew instinctively that he was a good man. On the desk at the far end of the counter he kept a well-worn Bible, and often on wet days he would chat to them regarding its truths. He was a seedsman (now the cat is coming out of the bag!) and sometimes he would say to his customers as he poured the seed into the packets that they were to carry home, "I sell magic. It's all alive; indeed it's life itself! You drop it into the ground, and it will multiply itself a hundred-fold; you can't do that with the parcels that you get from the grocer, or the butcher, or the draper! This is the Magic Shop, boys, the Magic Shop! You've come to the Miracle Counter! I'm selling miracles all the time!" This was all true, and Mr. Boreham found himself later on connecting the thought of the Seed in the old man's boxes with the Bible on the old man's desk, and with the Life that the old man lived.

And today we have no difficulty in connecting the Bible with a packet of seed. "The seed", says Christ, "is the Word of God". The Bible is full of precious truths, which are as seed to be sown in our minds and hearts. May we all have the honest and good heart to receive them, and may we seek to sow them in the hearts of others.

And now let us look more closely at this precious packet. The Bible is a packet of

## I. GOOD SEED

Sometimes we notice on packets of seed the words, "Seeds that grow". The seed is guaranteed to be good, and to give good results. And all the seed that we have in the Bible is good seed. There are, alas, many books in the world today which contain bad seed, seed which, when sown in the minds of young people, yields vice instead of virtue; avoid such as you would a plague. The seed of the Bible, however, is of the finest quality. It has been brought to earth from heavenly gardens, and like its Maker is perfect. Parts of the Bible are thousands of years old, but age has not diminished the quality of the seed. Arthur Mee in his *Children's Encyclopaedia* asks the question, "Will a seed grow after thousands of years?" and answers it in the negative. "It is quite certain", he says, "that seeds retain their capacity of growth only for a few years—the so-called mummy seeds



which are supposed to have grown after thousands of years have, whenever the cases have been examined by scientists, always turned out to be fresh seeds, which have been sold by fraudulent people—if the wheat is ancient it does not grow; if it grows it is not ancient”. How different it is with the Bible! The seed contained in it is ancient, but it is as good today as when the Bible first came into being, and, given the right circumstances, it will always grow.

## II. MIXED SEED

Just recently I bought a packet of Sweet Pea seed. On the front of the packet there was a variety of beautiful blooms, and underneath the words, “Sweet Peas, Superb Varieties, Mixed”.

In the Bible packet there is seed that will produce all the superb varieties of the Christian virtues, and the better world which we so ardently desire. This seed is mixed. It is not sorted out into distinct packets of e.g. faith-seed, hope-seed, love-seed. On the contrary, it is scattered throughout the different books of the Bible, and as we search the Scriptures, one seed here, and another there, is firmly planted in our mind. Psalm 89 : 7 is a seed which will produce reverence; Proverbs 12 : 22 a seed which will produce truth; I Corinthians 13 : 13 a seed which will produce love. Other seeds, when planted, will lead to courage, and patience, and hope; still others to “Honesty”, “Forget-me-not”, “Sweet William” and “Sweet Mary”.

## III. LIVING SEED

There is a great difference between a seed and a stone. A stone is a dead thing. You may plant it in the garden, but it will still be a stone. A seed, on the other hand, is a living thing. It is a storehouse of energy. The great oak lies latent in the acorn.

And the Bible is like the seed in this respect. It is living and powerful. Christ’s words are spirit and life.

The Bible, as seed, can beget life. An unbelieving German Countess, when dying, ordered that her grave be covered with a solid granite slab; that around this should be placed solid rocks; that the entire mass should be fastened together by strong iron clamps, and that this inscription be cut on the stone: “This burial-place, purchased to all eternity, must never be opened”. A little seed, however, sprouted inside the covering, and a tiny head pushed its way up between the slabs, and grew and grew until it burst the iron clamps and lifted the immense block so that the entire structure became broken, confused stones, among which, in verdure and beauty, grew the great oak which had caused the destruction. And this is a faint illustration of the power of the seed of the Word when planted by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who are spiritually dead. The clamps are burst asunder, there is a spiritual resurrection, new life is begotten. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever”.



And then the Bible, as seed, can not only beget life, it can also beautify character. A number of Christian girls were once attending a meeting in Japan. The subject for discussion was "How to glorify Christ by our lives". One of the girls said "It seems to me like this. One spring my mother got some flower seeds, little, ugly, black things, and planted them; they grew and blossomed beautifully. One day a neighbour coming in and seeing those flowers said, 'O, how beautiful! I must have some too; won't you please give me some seed?' Now, if this neighbour had only just seen the flower seed she wouldn't have called for them; it was only when she saw how beautiful was the blossom that she wanted them. And so with Christianity; when we speak to our friends of the truths of the Bible they seem to them hard and uninteresting, and they say, 'We don't care to hear about these things; they are not as interesting as our own stories'. But when they see these same truths blossoming out in our lives into kindly words and good acts, then they say, 'How beautiful these lives! What makes them different from other lives?' When they hear that it is the Jesus teaching, then they say, 'We must have it too'. And so by our lives, more than by our tongues, we can preach Christ to our unbelieving friends".

In closing I would stress the fact that this good seed is no use unless it is sown, and sown upon prepared soil. I trust that the hearts of all you young people will be prepared for the reception of the seed of the Word, that the seed, when received, will grow and blossom into beautiful Christian character, and that you yourselves, having received the seed, will become sowers.

"That man who bearing precious seed  
in going forth doth mourn,  
He doubtless, bringing back his sheaves,  
rejoicing shall return".



# **The Bible -- A Food**

Last month we were thinking of the Bible as a packet—a packet of seed. Many seeds can be used as food, and this is certainly true regarding the Bible.

Just recently I was reading an interesting article for young people entitled “A Baked Bible”! Long ago, in Austria, a Christian family in a certain village had a copy of the Bible which they read daily and prized very highly. It was a time when Protestants were bitterly persecuted, and one day soldiers were ordered to search all houses and destroy all discovered Bibles. The mother of this family wondered how she could save the Book which meant so much to them, and then suddenly an idea flashed into her mind. It was her baking day, and so, wrapping up the Bible, she placed it inside the dough for one of the loaves, and then put it in the oven. When the soldiers came they searched everywhere, even in the oven, but they never guessed that a Bible lay hidden in one of the crisp loaves of bread. Well, the members of that family would not of course eat the baked Bible as they did the loaves, but when it was removed from its safe hiding place they would certainly feed upon it spiritually, for the Bible is God’s food for the soul. It is:

## **I. A HEAVENLY FOOD**

There is a sense in which ordinary food is Heavenly food. Take for example the loaf of bread. You may say, “Do we not get it from the baker? And does not the baker get the flour from the miller? And does the miller not get his grain from the farmer? Is it not the farmer who ploughs the fields, and sows the seed, and reaps the harvest?” This is all true, but, who is it who sends the rain and sunshine apart from which there would be no harvest? Who is it who gives strength and skill to the farmer, and miller, and baker? Is it not God who does all this? Yes, ordinary food is heavenly food. It is God’s gift to our bodies, and hence our daily prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread”.

And the Bible is Heavenly food in a special sense. It is the very Word of God. It came down from Heaven. It was prepared by Him who sits in the heavens, and all its ingredients are heavenly in their nature, and so all very good. Our Confession of Faith, in referring to the Scriptures, speaks of the heavenliness of the matter.

## **II. A NECESSARY FOOD**

We all know how essential ordinary food is for the nourishment of the body. As I write this article there is a great out-cry regarding the world food shortage. Many are gravely concerned about the multitudes who will perish with hunger if no steps are taken to provide a remedy. Our own nation actually offered to ration bread



if only America would do likewise. Such unselfish concern for the material needs of others is certainly most praiseworthy. We who have should do what we can for those who have not.

We should remember, however, that man does not live by bread alone. We should remember that man has a soul as well as a body, and that food for the former is even more important than food for the latter. The Bible as a food is absolutely necessary for the well-being of the soul. Unlike ordinary food it is necessary for the begetting of spiritual life, and like ordinary food it is necessary for the sustaining of spiritual life. As J. R. Miller has said in one of his books, "One of the secrets of a strong Christian life is daily feeding upon the Word of God. The Bible contains God's bread for God's children. Bible-fed Christians are god-like men and women".

O that there was as great a concern today for those who are perishing through lack of the spiritual as there is for those who are perishing through lack of the material! There are millions of heathen abroad who have never heard of the Bible, and there are multitudes of heathen at home who make no use of it. And yet how few there are who care for their souls! Do we care?

Alister MacLean in his "High Country" refers to Julian Hernandez, the man who was responsible for bringing the New Testament to Spain in the 16th century. He was "a great warrior of the Holy Ghost", "a man who loved Jesus as a mother her first born". One day he was taken prisoner. A Spanish court tried and promptly burned him. At the trial his judge had said, "I fear you are throwing yourself into the fire, and for what?" The martyr's reply was "For the joy of bringing food to the perishing: water to the thirsty: light to those that sit in darkness: rest to the weary and heavy-laden. Sir, I have counted the cost, and I will pay the price willingly". Hernandez knew how much the Bible was needed in Spain.

### III. A SATISFYING FOOD

We all know what it is for the body to be satisfied with ordinary food. We come in hungry, sit down to a good meal, and by and by sit back with a very comfortable feeling inside; we are satisfied. And the Bible, as a food, brings even greater satisfaction to the soul, provided we have a keen desire for it, and partake of it.

It is all important that we should have a good appetite for the Word of God. Such an appetite should be acquired through personal acquaintance with God, through prayer, through persistent Bible reading and through a resolute refusal of all soul-destroying foods. A certain minister was once preaching in a neighbouring parish. Next day he was met by one of the resident landowners, who explained that he had not gone to hear him on the Sabbath afternoon, as he felt he could not digest more than one sermon. "I rather think" said the minister, "that the appetite is more at fault than the digestion".



And then it is also most important that we partake of the Word of God. The proof of the pudding is in the eating; we need to taste and see that God is good. We should partake regularly, treating our souls no less carefully than we do our bodies; we should also partake slowly, getting the benefit out of each morsel.

Let me close with a story told by Dr. Newton in his Bible Models. "Where have you been reading in the Bible this morning, Uncle?" asked little Sandy. "Well Sandy" said the old man, "I have been getting a wonderful feast yesterday and today, out of the last two verses of the eighth chapter of Romans". "And haven't you read any more than those two verses in two days?" asked Sandy in surprise. "Oh, you see, Sandy", said the old man, "there's a mine of golden treasure in these verses, and I've been trying to dig down to the bottom of it. I've been doing wi' these verses as I do wi' the sugar plums your Aunt Mary makes me, when I've a sore throat. Now and then she puts one of them in her mouth. But she just gies it a chew or two, and then it's done with. But I lay mine in my cheek, and let it lie there, and slowly melt away, and do me good for half a day. And there's jist the same difference in the way folks use God's blessed Word. Some gallop through a Chapter, and turn away and forget it. But that's naw my way. I like to tak' a sweet, wee bit of a verse, and do wi' it just as I do wi' the sugar plums. I let it lie in my soul as the plums do in my mouth, and melt slowly away; and so it fills my soul wi' sweetness, for a day, or a week, or a month at a time. This is what I call—feasting on the Word of God".

"They more than gold, yea, much fine gold,  
to be desired are:  
Than honey, honey from the comb  
that droppeth, sweeter far."



# The Bible -- A Fire

From earliest times man has had experience of fire. At times fire has been man's enemy—burning, consuming, destroying; more often, however, it has been his friend—warming, cheering, encouraging.

John Oxenham has given us these beautiful lines:

“Kneel always when you light a fire!  
Kneel reverently, and thankful be  
For God's unfailing charity,  
And on the ascending flame inspire  
A little prayer, that shall upbear  
The incense of your thankfulness  
For this sweet grace  
Of warmth and light”.

We should always be thankful to God for the blessing of a fire, and we should be especially thankful for the fire of His Word. “Is not my word like as a fire?” saith the Lord.

On 29th January 1692, Mrs. Savage, sister of Matthew Henry, the commentator, wrote in her journal:

I. “Get into the sun, that is Christ. Under the beams of this blessed Sun of Righteousness there are warmth and comfort”.

II. “Walk to the fire, that is, the Word of God. ‘Is not My Word like as a fire?’ How many warming, comforting passages are there!”

III. “Keep in motion and in action. Stirring up ourselves, and the gift and grace of God that is in us”.

IV. “Christian converse and communion. ‘How can one be warm alone?’ ”

There we have good directions for cold days, and indeed for every day, because every day we tend to become spiritually cold.

Let us think then of the Bible as a fire. Perhaps we might make use of an acrostic. The Bible is:

## **I. A FIRE WHICH FUSES**

The verb “to fuse” means “to melt”, “to liquefy by heat”, and the noun “fusion” means “act of melting”, “a close union of things, as if melted together”. We can see then that ordinary fire fuses things; it brings things together and binds them into one whole; it first of all melts, and then solders, welds, unites.

And we can easily apply this to the fire of God's Word. How often the Holy Spirit has used it to soften the hard heart and to unite the individual to Christ, and to fellow-believers!



There are children throughout the world today—white, black, yellow and red—who through the fire of the Gospel have become one in Christ Jesus. Even elements that seem absolutely irreconcilable have been so united; amongst the disciples of Jesus there was Simon the zealot—an extreme nationalist; and Matthew the tax-gatherer—one who was ready to help the hated Roman oppressor.

## **II. A FIRE WHICH IMPARTS**

Fire is a great benefactor. It imparts HEAT, and how acceptable this is on a cold wintry night! The Bible warms also. It warms the sinner, setting his cold heart on fire with love to the Saviour, and it warms the Christian, deepening his affection for the things that matter most. You remember the two on the way to Emmaus said, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way?" The fire of Christ's Words had warmed and comforted them. Fire also imparts ENERGY. It is a great driving force. When controlled and directed it drives our steamships and railway trains, and lifts the aeroplane into the clouds. And the Bible is even more powerful. It can change men's lives and give them a new direction; it can, for example, change the cannibal into the humble follower of Jesus Christ. I remember hearing a missionary saying regarding one of the converts in the South Sea Islands, "Once Judah was out to get skulls, now he is out to save souls". And it was the Bible which wrought the change.

And then in addition to imparting heat and energy, the Bible also provides NOURISHMENT, and GUIDANCE, and PROTECTION. How could mother bake bread and prepare the meals if she had no fire? And as we saw last month the Bible provides daily food for the soul. How often fire has been used as a guide! You remember the pillar of fire which guided the Israelites? It is not so very long since flaming torches were carried by boys to guide people through the streets. And of course all our lamps are really a flame of fire. And the Bible as a fire guides our footsteps and lights us along the narrow way. Fire is also a means of protection. In the Scripture God is spoken of as a wall of fire round about his people. You have no doubt read of travellers protecting themselves from wild beasts by means of fires. You have perhaps also read of Indians protecting their wigwams from the oncoming fire by burning the grass around them; the fire could not come where the fire had already been (that explains our safety at the foot of the Cross). Yes, and does not the fire in our homes protect us from cold, and damp, and disease? And the Bible as fire is our great protector. Through it we can defend ourselves against all our spiritual foes.

## **III A FIRE WHICH REFINES**

Metals are often put into the fire to be refined and purified from dross. The rough ore is melted down and the impurities removed. And when we become Christians we are like the rough ore. We need



refining and purifying, and this work goes on throughout life. The Holy Spirit is the great Refiner. Sometimes He uses the fire of affliction; those who receive the hard things of life in the spirit of strong faith, and gentle submission, and good courage, inevitably grow in Christian character. At other times, and more frequently, He uses the fire of the Word. Through this fire our lives are put to the test. The dross, the unworthy things, are revealed and purged away. Unworthy standards, unworthy fears, unworthy motives, the unworthy spirit—envious, covetous, selfish, unforgiving, bad-tempered, for instance—these are sooner or later BURNED UP, and the pattern of Christlikeness — “love, joy, peace, long-suffering . . .” this is gradually BURNED IN. The Bible is thus a consuming fire, and a beautifying fire. It consumes the bad and beautifies the good. It purifies individual, and social, and national life. O that it were more often applied!

#### IV. A FIRE WHICH EXTENDS

It extends in regard to SPACE. The ordinary fire spreads very rapidly and often covers large areas. Just recently we were hearing about a fire in Co. Derry which covered hundreds of acres, and of course the bush and prairie fires are much more extensive than this. The bounds of the ordinary fire are, however, fortunately limited—limited by material which refuses to burn. The fire of the Word, on the contrary, is fortunately not bound. It crosses water; it extends to the uttermost ends of the earth.

It also extends in regard to TIME. There is a time limit to many ordinary fires. They burn for a time and then go out. This is not so with the fire of the Word. It endures; it lasts for all time; like the fire on the altar of burnt-offering, it never goes out.

“Thy Word for ever is, O Lord,  
in Heaven settled fast;  
Unto all generations  
thy faithfulness does last.”

P.S.—May the fire of the Word kindle a flame in our hearts, which by God's grace, will never be put out!



# The Bible -- A Hammer

The hammer is a tool which is found in practically every home. It is probably the most ancient of all tools, being originally a stone held in the hand. It is most useful, and is a fitting emblem of industry. You are no doubt familiar with the fact that the hammer appears on the Russian flag. Would that the time were here when that hammer was replaced by the hammer of the Word! Russia needs the Bible.

Many things have been likened to a hammer in history. Sometimes a NATION is called a hammer. In Jeremiah 50 Babylon is spoken of as the hammer of the whole earth—a hammer now to be broken by another. Sometimes a STRONG MAN is regarded as a hammer. In the second century B.C. there lived a famous Jewish soldier called Judas. He gained many victories over the Jews' enemies, and was known as Judas Maccabaeus—that is, Judas the Hammer. Another great soldier was Charles Martel who, as leader of the Franks, defeated the Moors at Tours in 732 A.D. It was a victory of the Cross over the Crescent, of Christianity, over Mohammedanism, and Charles Martel the victor was known as the Hammer of God. Still another great soldier was King Edward I of England. His great ambition was to subdue the Scottish nation and annex it to his own dominions. He was called the Hammer of the Scots. And then last but not least, the Bible is likened to a hammer. In Jeremiah 23 : 29 we find God saying, "Is not my Word like a hammer?" The Bible is:

## I. A HAMMER WHICH BREAKS

The stone-hammer does this, and it is the stone-hammer to which reference is made in Jeremiah 23. "Is not My Word like a hammer that BREAKETH THE ROCK IN PIECES?"

Not so long ago a common sight along the roads was a man wearing a peculiar pair of glasses, and wielding a hammer. His job was to break up large pieces of stone into small pieces suitable for mending the roads. Now-a-days this work is usually done by machinery. You may have heard of the famous steam-hammer invented in 1842 by James Nasmyth. It is used in mining and manufacturing operations, and can be so adjusted as to crush the largest mass of rock, or crack the smallest nut.

And the Bible is a hammer which breaks, a powerful hammer wielded by almighty God Himself. It breaks HARD HEARTS—in the sense of softening them. The sinner's heart is hard and stony, but God can break it through the hammer of the Word. With this powerful weapon He can violently crush the rocky heart of a Philipplan jailer, and gently break the listening heart of a Lydia. "A broken and a contrite heart" He will not despise. And then this hammer also breaks BAD INSTITUTIONS—in the sense of destroying them. It has broken up slavery in the British Empire, it has overthrown



many systems of cruelty and idolatry in heathen lands, and today its destructive influence is still needed. It is needed in regard to the drink traffic, in regard to betting and gambling, and in regard to Romanism. Sir David Lyndsay, tutor of King James V of Scotland, and one who did much to prepare for the Protestant Reformation, is represented in an old picture as breaking the keys of Rome with a hammer. Martin Luther, who died 400 years ago, was known as "the monk that shook the world", and he shook it with the hammer of God's Word. With that hammer he broke up much of the error and superstition of the Church of Rome; today it needs to be applied once more.

## **II. A HAMMER WHICH DRIVES**

The ordinary hammer does this—it drives nails into wood. Perhaps you have read the old lines:

"Drive the nail aright boys,  
hit it on the head".

And perhaps in trying to obey you have hit the wrong nail! And just as the ordinary hammer, when properly wielded, drives the nail into the wood, so the hammer of God's Word when used by the Holy Spirit drives the truth into the mind and heart. As we read the Bible, or listen to the Word being preached, its great truths regarding God, sin, salvation, the future life, find a lodging place in our inward parts; they are "as nails well fastened". And once we have received the truth ourselves we can assist in driving it into the minds of others. The Saviour when on earth was constantly quoting Scripture for His purpose. "It is written", "Have ye never read?"

And then a hammer not only DRIVES IN the good, it also DRAWS OUT the bad, and the hammer of God's Word not only drives in the truth, it also draws out the error. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures".

## **III. A HAMMER WHICH JOINS**

The ordinary hammer as it drives in the nail joins things together, and the Bible hammer is a great joiner. F. W. Boreham, in one of his essays, tells us of a peculiar dream that he once had. In his dream he found himself in a strange and foreign city. Men and women of all nationalities jostled each other on the crowded pavement. As he watched them his attention was suddenly arrested by the tapping of a hammer. "Tick-tack! Tick-tack!" Following the direction of the sound he saw a carpenter at work under the shade of a spreading plane-tree. "His face seemed strangely familiar—a face of exquisite nobleness and beauty." In His hand He held a broken globe, the remaining fragments of which lay on the ground at His feet. On one of them could be seen the tail-end of South America, on another a part of Africa, on a third some of the South



Sea Islands. Mr. Boreham asked the carpenter what He was doing and He replied with a look of infinite satisfaction and delight, "I am restoring the pieces that have been broken off; I am riveting My world together".

It was a strange dream, and yet Mr. Boreham in his journeyings round the world saw it all coming true. He saw the British and Foreign Bible Society issuing the Scriptures in nearly 600 languages; he saw the broken parts of the world being joined together by the Carpenter of Nazareth using the hammer of the Word. And today this good work is still going on. The world that has been broken through sin is being repaired by Christ; peoples of the world, who have been separated through sin, are being united in Christ; and the hammer used is the Bible.

#### **IV. A HAMMER WHICH SHAPES**

The Bible not only joins individuals to Christ, it also shapes them, moulds them, fashions them, so that gradually they become like Christ. With his hammer the blacksmith shapes the metal according to his will; with his hammer the stone mason shapes the stone for its place in the building; with his hammer the sculptor fashions the shapeless block of marble into a thing of beauty; and with the hammer of the Word God can fashion us—when united to Christ—into the Divine likeness.



# The Bible -- A Well

A little boy, very fond of riddles and conundrums, ran to a Christian gentleman one day and said, "Have you heard the story of the three wells?" The gentleman replied that he had not, whereupon the boy said, "Well! Well! Well!" and seemed very pleased with himself. That was the beginning and end of the story.

Well, I am sure you boys and girls have all heard or read stories about wells. You know the Nursery Rhyme about Pussy being in the well. Some of you perhaps have read Aesop's fable of the fox and the bear, the fox tricking the bear to go down a well for a big cheese which was really the reflection of the moon; others may have read the odd story told by the dormouse to Alice in Wonderland. "Once upon a time there were three little sisters, and their names were Elsie, Lacie and Tillie, and they lived at the bottom of a well". Coming to reality I hope you young people will one day read the life story of John G. Paton, the famous missionary. It is a real "thriller", and one of the most interesting passages is that which deals with the sinking of a well. The natives were amazed to see water coming up from below. The best stories about wells, however, are found in the Bible. Hagar saw a well when God opened her eyes; Rebekah drew water at a well; David longed for a drink from the well at Bethlehem; our Lord Himself sat on a well and dealt with a seeking soul. And the Bible not only gives us these stories about wells, it is also a well itself, and what a wonderful well it is!

Dr. Newton in his "Bible Blessings" tells the story of a lady traveller who stopped for a few days at a little village among the beautiful mountains in Wales. The people in the village had to bring all their water from a well in the centre of the village. One day this lady met a little girl returning from the well with a pail of water in her hand. She said to her, "I see a great many people going to that well for water, my little girl; does the well ever run dry?" "Oh yes, ma'am; very often in hot weather". "And where do you go for water then?" "We go to the spring a little way out of town". "But what do you do if that dries up?" "Then we go to the spring far up on the side of the mountain—that is the best water of all". "And what do you do if that dries up?" "Oh, ma'am, that spring is the same winter and summer. It never dries up!"

And the Bible is a well which never dries up, a well with abundant provision for thirsty souls. We might speak of it as:

## I. A WELL OF ENGLISH

This is the phrase of the poet Chaucer. He describes the Bible as "the well of English undefiled", and the description is certainly true. One of the most important subjects for examinations today is "English", and if you young people wish to be proficient in this subject, you should study the English Bible, the "masterpiece of



English literature", and the source of what is best in our English literature. Many experts, Christian and non-Christian, have testified to the Bible's literary beauty. Take a few illustrations—Lord Macaulay, "That stupendous work the English Bible, a book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power". J. R. Green, "The English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue—the standard of our language". John Ruskin, "My mother forced me, by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart . . . to that I owe not only a knowledge of the book . . . but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature". G. K. Chesterton, "The English of the English Bible is not merely splendid about splendid things; it is splendid about everything". Thomas Huxley, "It (the Bible) is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary form".

Yes, the Bible is certainly a well of English. It is written in the best English style—simple, majestic, even sublime; it embodies the best poetry and the best prose, the best stories, the best character studies, the best drama.

## **II. A WELL OF TRUTH**

The poet Shelley once said to a friend, "I always like to reach the bottom of the well. Truth lies there". Now the Bible is a well of truth, and there is not only truth at the bottom of the well, there is also truth at the top, yes, and truth in between. "Sanctify them through thy truth", says Christ, "Thy word is truth". The Bible is God's Word to man, and the Bible—as our archaeologists have helped to demonstrate, is true. It gives us the truth regarding the things that matter most; it answers such important questions as "Where have I come from?" "Why am I here?" "Where am I going?"

J. P. Struthers tells the following incident. "An old gentleman of 84, a Unitarian, disputing and unable to agree with one of 92 said at last, 'Well, at least we are both in pursuit of truth'. 'Pursuit of truth!' repeated 92. 'My dear sir, we would need to have got it by this time!'"

It is all important that you boys and girls get the truth in the days of your youth, and you will get it by studying the Bible. There you will find the truth about God and about yourselves; there you will see your need.

## **III. A WELL OF SALVATION**

This is the most important point of all. Chrysostom, one of the early Christian fathers, said on one occasion, "The Bible is the fountain for watering the soul". It is a well which provides the water of the Father's love, the son's merit, and the Spirit's grace—in short, all that is needed for the sinner's salvation.



The Bible is a well which cleanses. We all know how ordinary water cleanses the body, and the water of the Word can cleanse the mind and soul (Psalm 119 : 9; Ephesians 5 : 26). The story is told of an Arab chieftain who once said, "My son, hasten to the spring, and bring me a basket of water". The boy went, but always before he got back the water had leaked out. At last he came to his father and said—"Although I repeatedly filled the basket, the water would not stay". Then the father, taking the basket, replied, "My son, what you say is true. The water did not stay, but see how clean and pure is the basket. So it will be with your heart. You may not be able to remember all the precepts you hear, but keep trying to treasure them; they will make your heart pure and fit for heavenly uses". And how true this is of the water of the Word! The Word read or heard may at times leak out and be forgotten, but it does its work of cleansing.

The Bible is also a well which satisfies. We know how a cup of cold water satisfies our physical thirst, and the water of the Word satisfies the spiritual thirst of sinner and saint. A dying soldier said to his mate—"Comrade, give me a drop!" The comrade shook up the flask and said "There isn't a drop of water in it". "Oh", said the dying soldier, "that is not what I want; feel in my knapsack for my Bible". His friend found the Bible, and read him a few of the gracious promises, and the dying soldier said, "Ah, that's what I want. There isn't anything like the Bible for a dying soldier, is there, my comrade?" And today the Bible still satisfies our thirsty souls, satisfies them while we live, and satisfies them when we come to die.

Let us each one resolve then that we will draw water daily from this great well. Let us read the Bible, and so improve our English; let us search the Scriptures and so learn the truth; let us study God's Word and so become wise unto salvation.

"Let thy sweet mercies also come  
and visit me, O Lord;  
Ev'n thy benign salvation,  
according to thy Word."



# The Bible -- A Mine

Most children are born treasure-hunters. They enjoy reading stories about the finding of hidden treasure. A book like R. L. Stevenson's "Treasure Island" is always sure to make a great appeal. Now I would like you boys and girls to think of the Bible, not as a dry dustheap, but as a rich mine which yields treasure to those who dig deep, and search diligently.

We are told that in the Dresden gallery of royal gems there is a wonderful silver egg. Touch a spring and the egg opens, disclosing a golden chicken; touch the crown, and it opens, disclosing a magnificent diamond ring. So it is with the Bible; as we study it we touch successive springs, disclosing inexhaustible treasure.

In one of the copies of "The Morning Watch", J. P. Struthers tells the story of a great Indian missionary called Bartholomew Ziegenbalg. Bartholomew, when only six years old, lost his father; and a year or two later his dear mother passed away also. "My children", she said to the sorrowful girls and boys weeping about her bed, "I have laid up a great treasure for you". "Dearest mother", said Gretchen, the eldest girl, "Where can you have gathered treasure?" for she knew how poor they were. And the answer came, "Seek it in the Bible; you will find it there; I have marked every leaf with my tears".

And today the same treasure is laid up for us.

"Thy Word is like a deep-deep mine,  
and jewels rich and rare  
Are hidden in its mighty depths  
for every searcher there."

The Bible is:

## I. A MINE TO BE DISCOVERED

Did it ever strike you that some of the most precious things we possess came from mines? The coal we burn, the metal utensils and implements we use, the salt we eat, the coins we spend, the jewels we wear—these all, in their original form, came from mines. Now these mines, before they could be of any service, had to be discovered. And what a thrill there often has been in connection with the discovery of a mine, especially of one containing precious metal!

A slave was one day climbing a mountain when his foot slipped, and he fell. To break his fall he caught a sapling but it gave way, and he and sapling rolled down to the bottom. When he got up he noticed some curious white particles sticking to the roots of the sapling. They looked like silver. He hastened back to the spot where the young tree had grown, commenced digging and lo! he had discovered the famous silver mines of Potosi. Prior to that discovery



the owners of "the Silver Mountain" as it is now called were poor men. They owned the mountain but they didn't possess its hidden wealth, simply because they hadn't discovered it.

And it is possible for us to be like those owners. We all own Bibles, I expect, but do we know that the Bible is a mine? Have we discovered that there is treasure in it? It is a great thing when a boy or girl discovers that the Bible contains the best stories; it is an even greater thing when they discover that it contains the best news, news of a Saviour who has come to seek and to save that which was lost, and who invites them to come to Him for pardon and peace and joy. Have you made that discovery? Have you responded to the Saviour's invitation to come to Him? Have you found in Him the pearl of great price? If so, the Bible will become really precious to you, and you will naturally go to make other discoveries there—the discovery of precious commands, precious promises, precious truths.

## **II. A MINE TO BE WORKED**

When a mine has been discovered it must be worked if it is to yield up its treasure. Machinery must be set up, workers must be employed, pits must be sunk; there can be no gain without labour.

And when we have discovered the Bible mine, we must commence working it. There was a time when young boys were forced to work in British coal mines. This was a very wrong practice; it often ruined physical health, and is now rightly forbidden. Needless to say it is not wrong for boys and girls to work in the Bible mine; in fact to do so is one of the great helps towards spiritual health. And how should we work the mine?

Well, we should work it **DILIGENTLY**. The mines of a country only yield their resources to laborious toil, the treasures of knowledge can only be gained through hard work, and the precious things of Scripture can only become ours through diligent search. As one has said, "The finest gold lies deep, and has to be dug for. It is hidden in the rocks and has to be quarried out. We can never get the best the Bible has to give us, until we learn to search through its chapters as the miner searches with pick and hammer, with shovel and lamp, in the dark mines, for the precious treasure that is concealed there". I trust that you young people will discover some precious gems of truth from the Bible mine.

Again we should work this mine **EXTENSIVELY**. We should not confine our attention to certain books which appeal to us; we should go right through the Bible. And sometimes in what seem to be the duller portions, precious jewels are to be found. For example, the opening Chapters of I Chronicles are mainly lists of names, and yet these names have their special purpose, and embedded amongst them there are some bright gems of spiritual teaching. Where can we find anything more beautiful than the prayer of Jabez in Chapter 4, and the expression of Amasai's loyalty in Chapter 12?



Further, we should work this mine **CONSTANTLY**. We should be exploring it seven days in the week, and at the end of a long life—if God so spares us—we should not have commenced to exhaust its riches. The longer we study it, the more we will be amazed at the wealth which it contains. When someone remarked of a certain clergyman that he had confessed that he knew next to nothing of the Word of God, a friend remarked significantly “He must be an aged minister, for it takes many years and much study to learn that lesson”. The Bible mine is inexhaustible.

### **III. A MINE TO BE ENJOYED**

When owners of mines work them and see the precious ore being produced, the result is joy to themselves and to others; and the same is true regarding the mine of God’s Word.

There is joy when we discover in this mine the **PRECIOUS SAVIOUR**. Many years ago a young man called at the Bible Society’s branch at Montreal, and, producing a Bible, asked the Clerk how much it was worth. “About fifty cents”, was the answer. “You could not buy it from me for five hundred dollars”, replied the young man, and then went on to say that the Bible had belonged to his father, and that he had, by a strange coincidence, discovered it in a room of a hotel, some twelve years after his father’s death. Inside the fly-leaf were written a few lines, which said that a careful study of the Book would be amply rewarded. Struck by the find, the young man replaced the Bible by another, and, acting on the advice given, began to study it carefully, with the result that before long he had the joy of finding the Pearl of Great Price.

And then there is also joy when we discover in the mine **PRECIOUS TRUTHS AND PROMISES**. The Psalmist says “I rejoice at Thy word, as one that findeth great spoil,” and “Rabbi” Duncan the famous Hebrew Professor in New College, Edinburgh, once remarked, “I remember when that tenth chapter of Genesis gave me a fortnight’s joy”. To us it may seem, at first sight, a list of names, but to Rabbi Duncan it was a mine of precious truth, the discovery of which meant joy which lasted for a whole fortnight. May we each one know something of this joy, as we explore the Bible, and make discoveries ourselves.

“Dig deep in this precious golden mine,  
Toil, and its richest ore is thine;  
Search, and the Saviour will lend His aid  
To draw its wealth from its mystic shade;  
Strive, and His Spirit will give thee light  
To work in this heavenly mine aright.  
Pray without ceasing, in Him confide,  
Into all truth His light will guide.”



# The Bible -- A Rock

Where is the boy or girl who does not enjoy clambering over rocks? Rocks have a strange fascination for the young, and also for some who are not so young! Though admittedly a source of danger, they are of infinite pleasure and delight to the child as well as to the geologist. In addition to this they are a real benefit to a country.

You will have noticed, I am sure, that there are many references to rocks in the Scriptures. Canaan was a rocky country, and the rocks served many useful purposes. They provided protection—in time of danger “the munition of rocks” was the best security: they also provided rest in time of weariness, and nourishment in time of hunger and thirst. We can easily see how fitting it was that God should be spoken of as the Rock of His people, and we can, I think, apply the same figure to His Word. W. E. Gladstone, the famous statesman, once wrote a book in defence of the Bible, and he called it “The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture”.

The Bible is:

## I. A ROCK FOR FOUNDATION

We all know the importance of a good foundation. You remember our Lord likened the person who heard His sayings and did them to a wise man who built his house upon a rock. A foundation of rock is firm and secure, and the Bible is such a foundation.

It is on the rock of the Bible that true individual greatness is founded. Many individuals have owed their success in the material sphere to the Scriptures—thus proving the truth of Joshua 1 : 8. A story is told of a youth who was seeking employment in New York City. On enquiring at a counting room if they needed a clerk, he was told that they did not. He then spoke of the testimonials he had, one of which was from a highly respectable citizen. In turning over his carpet bag to find them, a book rolled out on the floor. “What book is that?” said the merchant. “It is the Bible, sir”, was the reply. “And what are you going to do with that Book in New York?” The lad looked seriously into the merchant’s face and replied, “I promised my mother that I would read it every day, and I shall do so”. The merchant at once took him into his service, and in due time he became a partner in the firm, most respected and prosperous.

And then every individual owes his success in the spiritual sphere to the Scriptures. The Bible—with Christ at its centre—is the great foundation for Christian character as well as the great plan for building the same. When young people have a good knowledge of the Scriptures through the influence of the home and Sabbath School and pulpit, and are then led to saving faith in Jesus Christ, they have a good foundation; they will not be easily moved from the truth; they will stand fast in the faith; they will go on from strength to strength.



Further, it is on the rock of the Bible that true national greatness is founded.

Just recently I had the privilege of viewing, in one of our manses, a very striking picture. It came from America and was entitled "Undermining our National Foundations". It portrayed a rather curious structure representing Civilisation. The three main pillars were the home, the church and the school, and all rested on the one foundation—the Bible. A number of puny men with queer looking, ineffective machines, were endeavouring to undermine the foundation. The main man of the operations stood in the foreground and was saying to one beside him, "We'll soon rid the world of this superstition".

The picture presents the great truth that the Bible is the foundation of national greatness. On it rest the home, the church, the school, the three great things which go to make a nation truly great. Queen Victoria spoke the truth when she referred to the Bible as the secret of Britain's greatness, and today Britain needs to get back to the Bible, and especially to that great Biblical principle, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people".

## II. A ROCK FOR REFRESHMENT

How many references there are in the Scriptures to refreshment provided by rocks! We read of rocks providing water for the thirsty. On two memorable occasions the Israelites murmured for want of water, and Moses, at the command of God, smote the rock and the waters gushed forth, and the thirsty drank and were refreshed. Today water still comes from rocks, although not in the same miraculous fashion. I remember well the well in the old home from which we got our drinking water. It never ran dry, and it was called the "Rock Well". And the Bible as a rock provides refreshing water for thirsty souls, water which satisfies, water which is always accessible.

Again we read in the Bible of rocks providing food for the hungry. In Deuteronomy 32 we have the words, "He made him to suck honey out of the rock", and in Psalm 81 we find the people being told what would have happened if only they had trusted God more simply, and obeyed Him more implicitly. Then "with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee". In the cracks, the crannies, and crevices among the rocks, the bees found their homes, and stored up their honey, and often the hungry traveller found the food and his hunger was appeased. And the Bible, as a rock, provides food for the hungry soul. Its words nourish and sustain, and they are sweet to the believer's taste.

Further, we read in the Bible of rocks providing rest for the weary. You remember those beautiful words in Isaiah, "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land". To the weary traveller, out in the barren desert, exposed to the heat of the noon-day sun, the shadow of the great rock provides much needed rest. And how often weary



pilgrims on the way to Mount Zion find rest and recuperation as they read and meditate upon God's Word.

### III. A ROCK FOR STABILITY

How firm and stable the rock is! What a fortress the Castle of Edinburgh was in days gone by! How strong is the Gibraltar Rock today! The rock of which we are now speaking, however, is stronger than either, the Bible rock has never been taken by the enemy, although the natural fortresses of Edinburgh and Gibraltar have. Man may try to undermine it, the waves of modern criticism and the billows of natural enmity may be hurled against it, but all will be in vain, for God's Word is "settled for ever in Heaven", it is indeed "the Impregnable rock of Holy Scripture".

Let me close with some verses from a poem entitled "Is the Book we call the Bible, true?" The first two verses speak of the inspiration of the Bible, and then the poem continues:

"But some great and brilliant scholars  
Say 'tis 'old and out of date',  
That its stories are but legends,  
And its doctrines stir their hate;  
When it names great men as sinners,  
Says they must be 'born again',  
And that through 'the blood of Jesus',  
They must life and glory gain.

That is just the very reason  
Men rebel against the Lord,  
Set their 'intellect' and 'reason'  
To despise His Holy Word:  
But while men of pride reject it,  
And refuse to own its claim,  
Sinners take the great salvation,  
It makes known in Jesus' Name.

As the waves of angry ocean  
Beat against the mighty rock,  
But unmoved and undiminished,  
It repels their every shock!  
So the Word of God remaineth,  
While its enemies have fled,  
And it lives, and shall for ever,  
While they lie among the dead".

N.B.—Be like the limpet; stick to the Rock.



# The Bible -- A Staff

This month I had to choose between "The Bible—a Staff", and "The Bible—a Trumpet". The choice was not easy. The Bible is a trumpet which—with no uncertain sound—summons us to "Worship" and to "War", and we need to give earnest heed to its clarion call in these days when worship of God is so sadly neglected, and when evils abound in heart and home, in church and state. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins".

In the end, however, I laid aside the "trumpet" with regret, and took up the "staff" with delight. The word staff—in our sense is not much used now-a-days; we are more familiar with the walking stick, or the rod! There are many references to the staff in the Bible, however, and we all know its meaning. Jacob set out from the old home with his staff in his hand; David went to meet Goliath with his sling and his staff; the disciples were sent forth on their missionary journey with only a staff in their hand; and, as we set out on the journey of life, with all its dangers and perils, it is all important that we take with us the most wonderful staff of all—the Bible.

The Bible is:

## I. A STAFF FOR ALL

When we think of a staff we usually think of the aged. In Zechariah we have the beautiful picture of the aged leaning on their staves, watching the children playing at their games, and today some of you boys and girls doubtless know something about grandpa's stick. Staves are mainly for the old; children have little real use for them.

How different it is with the staff of the Bible! It is for the aged—it is very precious to grandpa and grandma—but it is for the young also. David, as a young lad, needed his shepherd's staff, and you young people need the staff of the Bible if you are to journey safely through life; you cannot take it with you too soon.

## II. A STAFF FOR USE

Some staves are more for ornament than use. Their owners take them with them just for the sake of appearance. I expect you have sometimes seen a well-dressed young man walking jauntily along, whirling a beautiful walking stick in his hand: The stick is of no real use to him; it is merely for show.

And it is, alas, sadly possible to treat the Bible in this way. It is possible for young people to carry it with them on the Sabbath just for the sake of appearance; it is possible for them to have it in the home merely as a kind of ornament. I am persuaded better things of



you young people. I trust that you will all learn to use and to love the Bible in the days of your youth. It is important that you take good care of this "staff", but this does not mean that you are to keep it in a glass case; the well-thumbed Bible tells its own story, a story of something put to its proper use. You remember, in "the Killing Times", young Andrew Hislop confronted his murderers with the Bible in his hand. Needless to say it was not there for show; even in the moment of death he was using it.

### **III. A STAFF FOR PROTECTION**

In Biblical times the staff was used for protection. People carried it as a means of defence against animal and human attack. David, the shepherd lad, had his rod and his staff, and these were a great comfort to him as he kept his father's flocks on the lonely hills of Bethlehem; they were his protection against the lion, and bear, and human robber. And today there are times when we are glad to have a stick in our hands. When you have to bring in the cows—and the bull! or when you have to go to a house where they keep a rather fierce dog—well it is a comfort to have a good stout blackthorn!

And the Bible is a great protection against evil. There have been times when it has protected from physical harm. Dr. Newton in one of his books tells how a family were saved from being murdered through the influence of a Bible. The robber, bent on murder, was actually hidden in the room where the family were assembled. Before retiring they brought out the Bible, read the 71st Psalm, and prayed. The words of the Psalm had a wonderful effect on the robber and restrained him from a foul crime. He left his weapon, and took the Bible with him. Later on it made him wise unto salvation, and then the family learned of their great deliverance.

And how often the Bible protects from spiritual harm! It is the staff with which we can overcome the devil as he goes about like the roaring lion; the staff which the Saviour Himself used to such good effect in the wilderness. Every time our Lord said "It is written" he gave the devil a resounding blow with the Bible staff, and at length He drove His foeman from the field.

### **IV. A STAFF FOR CORRECTION**

The Shepherd often uses his staff for correcting the wandering sheep, the father occasionally uses the rod for correcting the disobedient child, the school-teacher at times is compelled to use the cane to correct the unruly pupil, and God, the great Shepherd, the great Father, the great Teacher, frequently uses the staff of the Bible for purposes of correction. The Bible is profitable "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness". As we read it carefully and prayerfully it reproves and corrects. When we go astray it leads us to see our sin and folly, causes mental pain and distress, and brings us back to the straight path. Have we ever been



corrected as we read thoughtfully Exodus 20; Psalm 15; Matthew 5-7; I Corinthians 13; Galatians 5; Ephesians 4? Remember it is not the amount you read which counts, it is what you take in and apply to your own life.

## V. A STAFF FOR SUPPORT

One of the most striking pictures that we have in the Bible is that of Jacob, the aged, blessing both the sons of Joseph and worshipping, leaning upon the top of his staff. If that staff could have spoken what a tale it could have told! With it in his hand he had left the old home to escape his brother's anger, and since then it had been his boon companion. Now in old age it is his comfort and support. And today we can still see the aged saint leaning heavily on his staff; and as we grow older we should lean more and more upon the Bible, lean upon it for guidance and comfort. This is no broken reed which will one day let us down, it is a stout and trusty staff which will support us through life, and when life draws to a close. Psalm 23 : 4.

S. D. Gordon in one of his books tells of an aged saint of God who for many long years had served her Lord faithfully. She knew the Bible almost by heart, and could repeat long passages from memory. By and by, however, her strength began to weaken, and her memory to fail. She seemed to lose almost wholly the power to recall what she had stored away. One precious verse remained nevertheless. She would sit by the big sunny window of the sitting room repeating it over and over "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day". (II Timothy 1 : 12). At length part of it left her, and she would quietly repeat the words, "That which I have committed unto Him". As she drew towards the end of her earthly pilgrimage her feebleness increased. Her loved ones would notice her lips moving, and, thinking she might be needing some creature comfort, they would go over and bend down to listen to her request. And time and again they found the old saint repeating to herself over and over again one word, "Him", "Him", "Him". She had lost the whole Bible but one word, and yet she really had the whole Bible in that one Word.

She was worshipping, leaning on the very top of the staff!



# The Bible -- A Mirror

Mr. Struthers, in one of the copies of the "Morning Watch" pictures a little girl looking into a mirror and saying "Is 'oo anuzzer me?" Thousands of years have passed since girls—and no doubt boys too!—first looked into mirrors. The word mirror is said to come from a Latin word meaning to admire, and we know for certain that mirrors were used in very early times by people anxious to look their best.

In the days of Moses we read of the women giving up their mirrors for a praiseworthy purpose. These mirrors were made, not of glass, but of polished metal. Looking glasses, or mirrors made of glass with quick-silver rubbed on the back, were made first at Venice in 1300, and in London in 1673.

There are many references to mirrors in literature. Readers of Chaucer will remember how the Squire among the Pilgrims told the story of a mirror which warned the owner of the approach of misfortune, and readers of Tennyson will recall the important part played by the mirror in "The Lady of Shalott". Oliver Goldsmith imagined a mirror which showed not only the face, but also the mind behind it, and Sir John Davies, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, described a mirror which was supposed to show past, present and future.

Just now we wish to talk about a mirror which is even more wonderful than those created by human imagination. That the Bible is God's mirror for our use is shown very clearly in the 1st Chapter of the Epistle of James. We should be constantly looking into this mirror because it will reveal to us our past progress, our present position and our future provision.

The Bible is:

## I. A MIRROR WHICH SHOWS US OUR SIN

John Bunyan, in the Second Part of the Pilgrim's Progress, tells us that when the pilgrims visited the home of the Shepherds, the thing which chiefly interested Mercy was the looking-glass in the dining room. She longed to have it for her own. And what a wonderful glass it was! It was "one of a thousand", and viewed from one angle it showed the pilgrim "with his own features exactly".

And how true this is of the Bible mirror! When we look into it it gives a true picture of ourselves. It does not flatter; it shows our follies and weaknesses, our sins and failures.

Some time ago the little girl in our home received several books from a friend. Being still youthful in spirit I glanced through one of them, and was struck by a story entitled "The Enchanted Mirror". It was about an Inspector who visited a certain school and brought with



him a wonderful mirror. He told the pupils that he was going to show them what they were really like, and so he invited them to come up one by one, and look into the mirror. And what a revelation! Fat little Johnny came up and saw a nice fat piggy dressed in coat and knicker-bockers! "I'm afraid you must be a bit greedy", whispered the Inspector. Shy little Lucy saw a rabbit dressed in her frock with big startled eyes. "I think you must be too afraid of things", said the Inspector kindly, "You must stand up for yourself, you know". Lazy Jack saw a little grey donkey with big ears, its head sticking out of Jack's red jersey. "You needn't be a little donkey, you know", whispered the Inspector, "You've got plenty of brains". Spiteful Betty saw a snarling, spitting kitten with claws outstretched. "Keep your claws in, Betty", said the Inspector, "Don't be catty". Honest, trustworthy Rita saw herself there, more beautiful than she had imagined, for she was not pretty. "Keep as you are. Do not change yourself, Rita", said the Inspector. We cannot give details regarding the others. Cowardly, bullying Benny saw a mean little rat; sturdy, fearless Harry a lion; chatter-box Jenny a parrot; fussy Nora a hen; and trustworthy Ronnie a big faithful dog.

It's only a story of course, but it gives us some idea of what we may expect to see in the Bible mirror. It shows us exactly as we are. It pictures us not as we see ourselves, or "as others see us", but as God sees us. It reveals what we are inwardly. It shows that our heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, that we are all sinners by nature, and that even when we become Christians there are still blots and blemishes which call for daily cleansing.

Have you ever prayed, "Lord, show me myself"?

## **II. A MIRROR WHICH SHOWS US OUR SAVIOUR**

Viewed from one angle the looking-glass, which interested Mercy so much, showed the pilgrim "with his own features exactly", but viewed from another angle it showed "the very face and similitude of the Prince of Pilgrims Himself". As we look into the ordinary mirror we see our own face, but sometimes we see another face, perhaps the beautiful face of our dear mother standing near us. And as we look into the mirror of God's Word we not only see ourselves in all our sinfulness, we also see the Lord Jesus in all His beauty.

We see Him as our Saviour. Speaking of the looking-glass in the Shepherd's home, Bunyan says, "Yea I have talked with them that have seen the very crown of thorns by looking in that glass, they have also seen the holes in His hands, in His feet, and His side". And as we look into the Bible mirror we see the Son of God dying in the place of sinners, rising from the dead, and, as the living Christ, holding out the nail-pierced hands and inviting us to come to him for pardon and cleansing. His blood cleanses us from all sin, and is always available for those who come and put their trust in Him.

We see Him also as our Example. We see His sinlessness, we see



the beauty of His holiness, we see His glory, and we behold this glory, we are changed into the same likeness, from one degree of glory to another, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. We tend to grow like the things we see or look at, and the more we behold the Son of God in the mirror of the Word, the more we shall be transformed into His likeness. One day we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Have you ever prayed, "Lord, show me Thyself"?

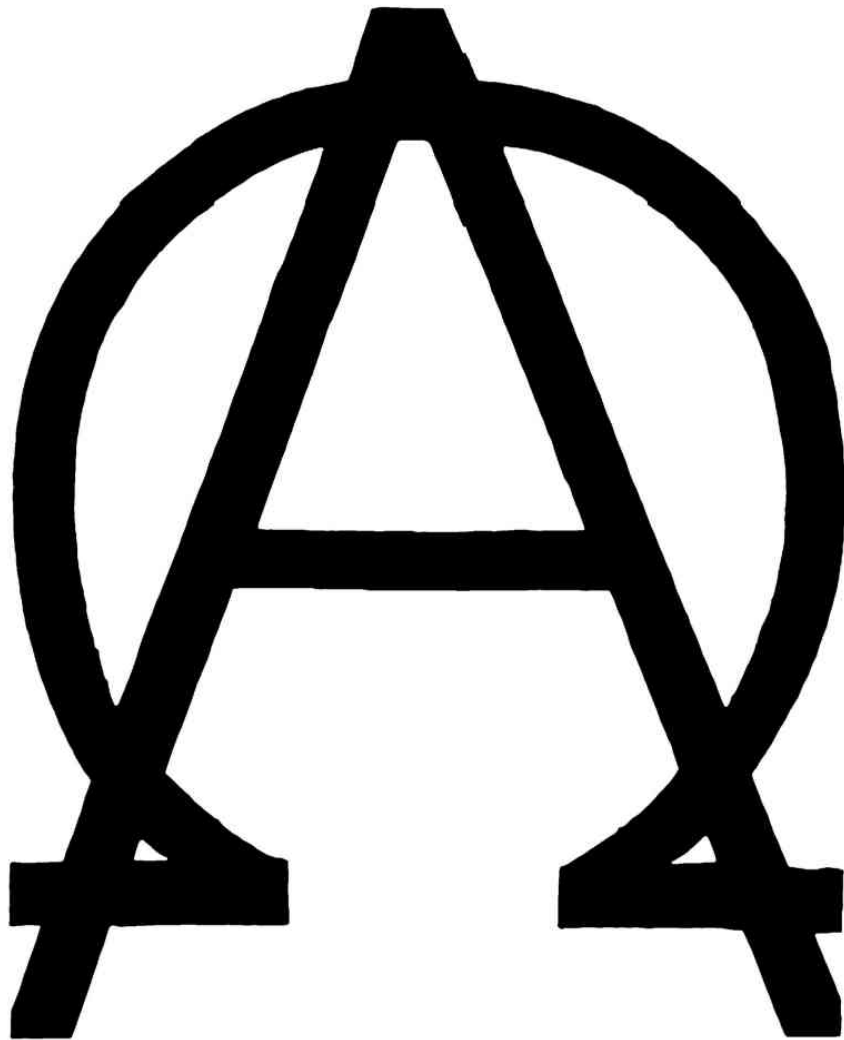
Let me close with a story which I noticed in "The Christian Banner". It was about a little girl called Laura Grey. For fully ten minutes she stood in front of the mirror in the family sittingroom, before starting off to school one morning. She twined her curls over her finger, arranged her neck-tie, turned her head this way and that to notice the effect, and finally climbed on the table to get a near view of her pretty face. If she had not been so absorbed she might have heard the door open and a surprised "Phew"! from the lips of her Uncle Roger. When at last she did turn to get down from the table and found him watching her, the little girl's face flushed. She expected the rebuke which she knew she deserved, and was not a little surprised when he said, "What a useful thing a looking-glass is to be sure! I did not know you appreciated its value so well". "He is just making fun of me", Laura thought and felt very cross, though she said nothing. Her uncle then went on, "I have been intending for some time, my dear, to make you a present of a looking-glass. I will get one for you this very day". That evening when Laura went upstairs to bed she found on her bureau a nicely bound Bible with her name on the fly-leaf, in Uncle Roger's well-known writing. Under the name were these texts—"The King's daughter is all glorious within", and "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, this man shall be blessed in his deed". Then Laura understood her uncle's meaning about the looking-glass, and felt thoroughly ashamed of her silly vanity. It is only fair to add that she commenced the practice of daily examining her heart by the mirror of God's Word, with the hope of becoming one of the King's daughters. I trust that she not only saw herself, but that she saw her Saviour too, and fell into His out-stretched arms in simple faith.

N.B.—You can do this too: the Holy Spirit says, "TODAY".



## PART II

# JESUS





# Jesus The Alpha

Those who have read "Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush", by Ian Maclaren, will recall the words of the dying mother to her son. "If God calls ye to the ministry ye'll no refuse, an the first day ye preach in yir ain kirk, speak a gude word for Jesus Christ". Now this is what we intend doing in these pages during the coming year. Our subjects will all be about Jesus Christ, and this month we begin with "Jesus the Alpha".

In the book of Revelation we find Christ saying on several occasions, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end". The alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and so Christ, like this letter, should always find His place at the beginning.

## **I. HE SHOULD FIND HIS PLACE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY**

As children and young people we should always begin the day with Christ. Every morning, when we get up, we should have fellowship with the Saviour. We should seek to realise that He is present, that He is near at hand, and we should seek to talk with Him as friend talketh with friend. We should ask Him to preserve us from all physical and spiritual danger, and to guide us aright in all our decisions. Wasn't it Robert Murray McCheyne who always made a point of seeing the face of God every morning before seeing the face of man?

## **II. JESUS SHOULD FIND HIS PLACE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR**

We have now come to the beginning of another year, to a new stage of the journey of life. We do not know what lies ahead for each one of us, we have not passed this way before. But this we do know—if we take Jesus with us, if we commence the year with Him, then we shall be enabled to walk successfully. The New Year is a time for good resolutions and one of the best things that we can do at the beginning of the year is to receive Christ afresh as Saviour, and Guide and Friend, and to resolve to be true and faithful to Him throughout it. Begin this year with Christ.

## **III. JESUS SHOULD FIND HIS PLACE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE LIFE**

It is a fine thing to see sinners, hardened in sin and vice, weeping their way to the Cross, but it is a far finer thing to see the boys and girls coming to Christ early in life, before they have fallen into gross sin. Let us not think that we must wait until we are fifteen or sixteen



before we decide for Christ. Josiah sought after God when he was eight years old, and it is possible for us to trust in Christ at a very early age.

Rabbi Duncan—a famous Scottish preacher and professor—once said to his students, “Many will be wishing you a happy New Year at this time: Gentlemen, I wish you a happy Eternity”.

This is my New Year wish for all my youthful readers.



# Jesus The Saviour

Some years ago I heard a story which impressed me so deeply that I made a note of it. It was about two brothers who were entirely different in disposition and character. The elder was good, pious, religious, the younger was bad, wild, dissolute. Often the elder pleaded with the younger to change his way of living, but all to no avail; he only went from bad to worse.

One night the younger brother was out with some of his ungodly companions. He was away longer than usual and the brother in the home was anxiously waiting his return. At last he heard a hurried knock at the door and on opening it he found the young prodigal standing breathless and panic-stricken, and crying out "Save me, save me, I've killed a man and the police are after me". The elder brother had not much time to think, but he hurriedly changed his own clothes for the blood-stained clothes of his brother, told the latter to go and hide, and calmly awaited results. Soon the police were at the door, and seeing the blood on his clothes they immediately concluded that he was the murderer. He was arrested, tried, found guilty and sentenced to be executed. The day before the execution he sent for the governor of the prison and demanded, as a last request, writing materials and sealing wax. He then wrote a letter to his brother, sealed it, and asked the governor to deliver it after his death. The next morning he was led out and executed. An hour later his last message was delivered to his brother. It read as follows: "I, in your clothes, have died for you. I ask that you, in my clothes, will repent and live a better life". The prodigal, for the first time, was completely overcome with grief. Hastening to the governor he showed him the message and asked to be slain as he was the real murderer. The governor informed the judge, and the judge replied, "Your brother has paid the penalty for you, and so you are free from the law".

Young people, that story illustrates what Jesus has done for us. As sinners we are all guilty, we are all liable to punishment but then Jesus, our great Elder Brother, has lived for us and died for us in our sin-stained garments, and when we put our trust in Him then we are safe. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus".

Jesus is the only Saviour, the all-powerful Saviour, the willing Saviour. Is he my Saviour? Am I trusting in Him alone for Salvation?



# Jesus The Shepherd

In order to understand the meaning and significance of this title of our Lord we ought to be familiar with the close relationship which existed, and which still exists, between the Eastern shepherd and his flock. When Christ styled Himself "the good Shepherd of the sheep", He used a most suitable figure for conveying to the minds of His audience the thought of His watchfulness and care over his people.

Let us notice very briefly one or two points regarding Jesus as Shepherd.

## I. HE OWNS HIS SHEEP

The Eastern shepherd very often owns his sheep. Sometimes he employs a hireling, a paid servant, to look after them, but, of course, this paid servant does not take the same interest in the flock as he himself does. The hireling is more concerned about his pay than about the flock. Now Jesus Christ is no hireling. He is the owner of His flock, and as such, loves them and cares for them. You remember Paul says, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price". As Christians we belong to Christ and it is our duty to recognise His ownership and to surrender ourselves entirely to His claims. One is your Master, even Christ.

## II. HE KNOWS HIS SHEEP

The Eastern shepherd has a very extensive knowledge of his sheep. He has names for them, and knows them not only as a flock but also as individual members. As someone has said, "He knows all the particulars of each of his sheep; its genealogy, defects, temper, and tastes, and embodies some one of these in the name he gives it". And so it is with Jesus the good Shepherd. He knows His sheep most intimately. "I am the good Shepherd, and know My sheep." Christ knows all about us. He knows our name, our character, our circumstances, our need. D. L. Moody used to tell of a little girl who was very ill. Her mother sang to her, and spoke to her, and shifted her, but still she tossed and fretted. At last the mother stooped down and took her in her arms, and the child whispered, "Ah mother, that's what I want". Even a mother, with all her love, can never be sure what her little girl is wanting, but every want, every need, every trial of those who are trusting in Christ—they are all known to Him.

## III. HE FEEDS HIS SHEEP

The Eastern shepherd feeds his flock. They are entirely dependent upon him for provision. He seeks out the best pasture-lands and water-courses. He makes them to lie down in green pastures and leads them beside the still waters. And Jesus, the good Shepherd, makes provision for the needs of His flock. He supplies their physical



needs—He gives them their daily bread. And He also supplies their spiritual needs. He bestows upon them the gifts of pardon and peace and reconciliation, justification, adoption and sanctification. He feeds them with His ordinances, the Word, Sacraments and Prayer. He feeds them here on earth; He will also feed them hereafter. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them". In Christ there are unlimited resources, if only we would appropriate them.

#### **IV. HE LEADS HIS SHEEP**

The Eastern shepherd does not drive his sheep. He goes before them, and calls them by name, and the sheep follow him. And so it is with our Shepherd. He leads us and we should endeavour to follow wherever He leads. He leads us by past example. It is a beautiful thought to think that the good Shepherd does not permit us to go along a path which He Himself has not trodden and in which He has not had previous experience. There is only one exception to this—the experience of sin. With this single exception He was tempted in all points like as we are. However difficult our path may be, if only we look closely enough, we will see the footprints of the Master; and where He has gone before we need not fear to follow. Again He leads us by present guidance. He has not only passed through every experience of human life—sin excepted—but He is today the invisible Leader of His people. He goes before every child who humbly sets out on the Christian pilgrimage. He leads us safely through life with all its trials and difficulties, and then when death comes He leads us safely over the river.

#### **V. HE KEEPS HIS SHEEP**

The Eastern Shepherd protects his sheep from wild beasts and human robbers. You all remember how David slew the lion and the bear whilst keeping his father's flock on the hills of Bethlehem. And Jesus the good Shepherd protects His sheep. He guards them from physical danger and more especially from spiritual danger. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. We remember the familiar words of Psalm 121:

"The Lord shall keep thy soul; He shall  
preserve thee from all ill.  
Henceforth thy going out and in  
God keep for ever will".

Just one more thought and I have finished. The good Shepherd cares for the sheep; He also cares for the little lambs. He loves little children and I hope that you young people love Him in return. I hope that you can say with humility and yet with assurance, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall have no lack".



# Jesus The Physician

As we read the Gospel story we naturally think of Christ as the great Physician. We find Him going about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and disease. He was the Physician of the body—"I will; be thou clean"; He was also the Physician of the soul—"Thy sins be forgiven thee". "Go in peace". And today He is still the same. He still heals the body, blessing the human instruments that are used, and He still heals the soul by means of His Word and Spirit. At this time we wish to think of Him exclusively as the Physician of the soul, dwelling upon three simple points.

## I. THE DISEASE

If there were no disease the Physician would not be required. The Bible, however, shows us plainly that we are all—even the youngest of us—spiritually diseased, smitten with the leprosy of sin—"There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". We may all differ in many respects, but there is one thing common to all and that is the disease of sin. We are all familiar with the disease of leprosy so often referred to in the Bible. It is an eminent type of the disease of sin. It is loathsome, polluting, destructive of happiness, practically incurable. And so it is in regard to sin. It pollutes the human soul, it destroys real joy, and it is incurable by human means. If this disease is to be healed we require a divine Physician, and this brings us to our second point.

## II. THE PHYSICIAN

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. Thanks be unto God for One who is pre-eminently suited for healing the disease of the soul. In Christ we have an omnipotent Physician. Ordinary physicians may fail, but He is all-powerful. He is able to heal all those who come unto God through Him. In Christ we have an omniscient Physician. Ordinary physicians are limited in knowledge, but He is all-wise. He never makes a mistake in diagnosing a disease. He knows all about us, and He is able to suit His treatment to our case. In Christ we have an omnipresent Physician. Sometimes we have difficulty in obtaining the ordinary physician, but we have no such difficulty in regard to the great Physician. He is everywhere present by His spirit. He is always near at hand when we call upon Him. He is a very present help in times of trouble.

## III. THE REMEDY

What is the remedy which the great Physician prescribes? In a word it is His blood. "By His stripes we are healed". This remedy is free; we can have it without money and without price. We must bear in mind, however, that it is of no use until it is applied. And how is it



applied? It is applied by the Holy Spirit, through faith. The Holy Spirit convinces us of our sin and enables us to see that we are sick and need the Physician. Conscious of our need we go to Christ, put our case in His hands, and look to Him to heal us. That is faith—looking to Christ to cure us, putting ourselves entirely under His care. When we are enabled to do this the remedy is applied. Our sins are washed away, and we have joy and peace in believing. And then we should always remember that one visit to the Physician is not sufficient. We need to visit Him continually. We need daily pardon and cleansing.

Surely, as young people, we should be thankful for such a Physician. We should join in the words of the Psalmist:

“Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God,  
and not forgetful be  
Of all His gracious benefits  
he hath bestowed on thee.  
All thine iniquities who doth  
most graciously forgive:  
Who thy diseases all and pains  
doth heal, and thee relieve”.



# Jesus The Friend

When Charles Kingsley was asked what was the secret of his success, he replied in the significant words, "I had a friend". It is a great matter to have an earthly friend, but it is an infinitely greater matter to have the Heavenly Friend—Jesus Christ the greatest of all friends. We propose dealing with this subject in the form of an acrostic. That is to say we intend taking the letters of the word friend, and using them to form the initial letters of adjectives descriptive of Jesus as Friend.

## I. HE IS A FAITHFUL FRIEND

There have been many so-called friends in the past, who in the hour of need have proved unfaithful. Jesus Christ, however, is ever faithful and true to His people. He was faithful to them in eternity when He entered into covenant on their behalf; He was faithful to them on the Cross when He sealed that covenant with His blood; He is faithful to them throughout life with all its trials and temptations; He is faithful to them in death so that they need have no fear. Earthly friends may forsake; Jesus never forsakes. When President Edwards was on his death-bed his last words after bidding his relations farewell were, "Now where is Jesus of Nazareth my true and never-failing friend?" And when these words were uttered he passed away. See Psalm 23 : 4.

## II. HE IS A RICH FRIEND

You all know how pleasant it is to have a friend who is rich and generous. And how true this is of our Heavenly Friend. He has infinite resources, and He loves His children to come to Him in prayer and receive the gifts which He offers. Think of some of these gifts—pardon for sin, provision in time of need, protection in the hour of danger. He gives at all times—not merely at Christmas—and His gifts have to do with the future life as well as with the present life. When our friends die they sometimes leave us an inheritance; when we ourselves die Jesus gives us an inheritance. As children we are heirs. We may be poor materially, but we are not poor spiritually—we are rich spiritually: Christ gives us a title to the Heavenly Home.

## III. HE IS AN INVISIBLE FRIEND

When He was here on earth He was visible, but now He is invisible. We cannot see Him, and yet He is none the less real. We cannot see the wind, and yet we know that it is there; we cannot see such things as faith, courage and love, and yet we know that these virtues are very real. And so although we cannot see Christ yet we shall endeavour to realise that He is always present, we should



endeavour "to practise His abiding presence". We should seek to be conscious of His presence when we are going about our daily tasks as well as when we are worshipping Him in the sanctuary.

#### **IV. HE IS AN EMINENT FRIEND**

How often we speak of eminent men in history—eminent poets, eminent statesmen, eminent leaders. There have been eminent men in the past, but never was there one so eminent as Jesus Christ. He remains distinct from all men. He was eminent as a man—He was entirely sinless. And then He was not only Man, He was also God, truly human, truly divine. In all these talks about the Saviour we never overlook the fact that He was, and is, God as well as Man.

#### **V. HE IS A NEAR FRIEND**

Many of our earthly friends are far away. Perhaps some of them live in lands across the sea, and so in our hour of need they are of very little service. Jesus Christ, however, is everywhere present and always near at hand. He is a very present help at all times and especially in times of trouble. He is always accessible, always by our side.

"He's near to all that call on Him,  
Who call in truth on Him alone".

#### **VI. HE IS A DEAR FRIEND**

We have all, no doubt, many whom we call our friends, but there are always a select few whom we call dear friends. Now Christ, to the true believer, is the dearest of all friends, the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely One. Read the Letters of Samuel Rutherford, and you will see how dear Christ was to that eminent saint of God. "Unto you therefore which believe He is precious."

Young people, we have been talking about Jesus as Friend. Have we been introduced to Him? Are we trusting in Him? If so we shall love to be in His company, to serve Him, to obey Him. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."



# Jesus The Prophet

According to Scripture usage a prophet is one who speaks for another. Aaron was called a prophet because he spoke for Moses. Jesus Christ is called a Prophet because He spoke for God. He declared the Father to men, and He revealed the Father's will for men. This He did directly when He was here on earth, and this He does indirectly today through His Word and Spirit.

Perhaps we could speak more simply if we used the term Teacher instead of the term Prophet. In Scripture these two terms are often used differently, but as applied to Christ they practically imply one and the same thing. Jesus the Prophet is Jesus the Teacher. And we all know something about Christ as Teacher. He taught simply. "The common people heard Him gladly"; He taught boldly—"Lo He speaketh boldly"; He taught powerfully—"His word was with power"; and He taught graciously—"They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth". He was the world's greatest Teacher—Mohammed and Confucius and Buddha are not to be compared with Him—and today His teaching is still suitable for us. Let us notice one or two points regarding His teaching.

## I. HIS TEACHING HAD TO DO WITH THE PAST

As you read the Gospel story you see plainly that Christ honoured the past in His teaching. How often we find Him referring to the law and the prophets—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil". And how often we find Him quoting from the Old Testament and referring to incidents in the Old Testament. Christ was a Biblical Teacher. He knew His Bible well, and He seems to have been especially fond of the Psalms. He did not regard them as being Jewish and old-fashioned as many do today. He showed that they spoke of Himself and that they were suitable for every age. He regarded Himself as the Messiah of the Old Testament.

## II. HIS TEACHING HAD TO DO WITH THE PRESENT

His subject matter was often drawn from the past but it was always suitable for the present. He always suited His message to the needs of His audience, and His words were always practical. His great subject was the Kingdom of Heaven. He showed that this Kingdom was spiritual and not material, that it consisted of those who were trusting in Himself and doing the Father's will. How often we find Him inviting sinners—old and young—to come to Himself for rest and life and satisfaction. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." "Suffer the little children to come unto me." And how often we find Him setting forth the duties that are binding upon men—the duty of brotherly love, the duty of for-



givenness, the duty of giving, and the duty of prayer. These duties He taught in His "Sermon on the Mount", in His parables, and especially by His own example. And today His words are still appropriate for us. They are suitable for all classes of men and they are suitable for all ages. His teaching is never out of date.

### **III. HIS TEACHING HAD TO DO WITH THE FUTURE**

The prophets in Old Testament times looked forward to a time when the Messiah would come, and Jesus Christ in the New Testament times looked forward to a time when His Kingdom would be established upon the earth, and when the end of the world would come. How often we find Him speaking of Heaven and Hell, and of that Great Day when all men shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body. Christ spoke much about the awful reality of Hell—always speaking tenderly and in love for the purpose of warning men of their danger. And then He also spoke much about the blessed reality of Heaven, about the happiness of those who inhabit the many-mansioned Home. And you remember He said regarding that Home, "I am the Way".

Young people, if you want to live the Christian life, and to be prepared for the Future life, and ready to meet your Maker, then read the Gospels carefully and prayerfully, and apply the Saviour's teaching to your own souls.

It all amounts to this—trust and obey.



# Jesus The Priest

When we think of the term priest, our thoughts often turn to the Church of Rome. Her spiritual leaders are called priests. These are regarded as having peculiar powers—the power to forgive sin, the power to mediate between God and man, the power to offer up a sacrifice similar in nature to that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such teaching we believe to be openly contradictory to the plain teaching of God's Word. The Bible teaches that in regard to the offering of the sacrifice of prayer and praise every believer is a priest, and it also teaches that in regard to the forgiveness of sins, and the offering up of a sacrifice for sin, Jesus Christ is the only Priest. There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. Let us note several characteristics of Jesus as Priest.

## I. HE IS A SACRIFICIAL PRIEST

When we speak of a priest we immediately think of a sacrifice. We might as well speak of a king without a kingdom, or a general without an army, as of a priest without a sacrifice. Accordingly we read in Scripture: "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins".

The priests under the Old Testament dispensation had the right to offer up sacrifices for the sins of the people. These sacrifices were typical—they pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ. On Calvary's Cross He, as our Priest, offered himself up as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God. That sacrifice was a unique sacrifice and it was "once and for all time". "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Christ as our Priest, has died in our room and stead, he has made peace by the blood of His Cross, he has reconciled God and Man. And now the message for us is "Receive the reconciliation". Be ye reconciled to God by saving faith. Look to Christ as your only hope.

## II. HE IS A SINLESS PRIEST

All the priests of the Old Testament dispensation were imperfect. Even the high priest had first of all to make an atonement for his own sins, before he could do so for the sins of the people. Christ, however, was and is sinless, and in this fact consists the perfection of his atoning sacrifice. That sacrifice was the sacrifice of a Divine Person—a Person who was entirely free from sin. "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up Himself". Had Christ not been Divine, had he not been sinless, then His sacrifice would not have availed for sin.



### **III. HE IS A SYMPATHETIC PRIEST**

He is a Divine Person, and in that sense He is very far removed from any of us, but then He has a human nature and so he is able to sympathise with us. In the fullness of time he assumed our nature, He was made bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He lived our life and entered into all our experiences, sin excepted. Thus He knows all about us, and has sympathy for us. When we are in great trouble and distress, it is always a comfort to have a friend who has had the same trying experience, and who can sympathise with us. Now Jesus Christ is such a friend. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Our great High Priest understands our trials and temptations, and inasmuch as He himself was tempted, He is able to succour those who are tempted.

### **IV. HE IS AN INTERCEDING PRIEST**

His work as Priest consists of two main parts—the sacrificial part and the intercessory part. As under the Old Testament dispensation, the high priest first of all offered up sacrifice, and then passed within the veil to pray for the people, so Jesus Christ first of all offered up his sacrifice on the Cross, and then passed into heaven to intercede for us. We often think of the Saviour praying by the Jordan, on the mountain top, in the garden, on the Cross—but do we ever think of him praying in Heaven? He is now alive for evermore, and He is continually praying for His people, pleading his merits on their behalf. We often think of Christ dying for us, let us also think of him praying for us. He prayed for Peter, and today He still prays for us. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."



# Jesus The King

Of all the titles which are applied to Christ in Scripture, perhaps that of King is the one which makes most appeal to Covenanters. Our Covenanting forefathers laid great stress upon the Kingship of Christ. They regarded Him as King of the individual, King of the Church, King of the nation. They wanted Him in all things to have the pre-eminence. Their motto was—"For Christ's Crown and Covenant". And today we follow in their footsteps. We say to church and nation—"Behold your King".

Let us think of certain characteristics of Jesus as King.

## I. HE IS A GOOD KING

There have been many bad kings in history. In the Bible we have such names as Pharaoh, and Manasseh and Herod, and in ordinary history we have such names as John and Charles II, of England and Charles IX, of France. But then there have been good kings as well as bad kings. You could mention, I am sure, some of the good kings of the Bible—David and Hezekiah and Josiah; and you could also mention some of the good kings of history—Alfred and Edward VI—yes, and our late King George V. It is a well-known fact that he was a good king in the Christian sense of the term. He honoured the Bible and the Sabbath and Public Worship. In 1831 he promised his mother that he would read a chapter of the Bible daily, and we are assured that he kept his promise to the end.

But then we must remember that there is only one King who is absolutely good, namely, Jesus Christ. All earthly kings have had their faults and imperfections. Christ is perfect. He is absolutely sinless. He is good in Himself, and good in His dealings with His people.

## II. CHRIST IS A GENTLE KING

By this we do not mean that He is weak and frail and unfitted for His Kingly duties, for Christ is strong and all-powerful. Neither do we mean that Christ deals tenderly with all men alike—for there is such a thing as "the wrath of the Lamb". No, when we say that Christ is a gentle King we mean that He rules by love and not by force. Many earthly kingdoms have been won by the power of the sword, but Christ's Kingdom is won by the power of love.

Napoleon on one occasion said: "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I, have founded great empires. But upon what did these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded an Empire upon love and to this day millions would die for Him". Yes, Christ's Kingdom is founded upon love. He draws His people gently into the Kingdom, and He deals gently with them when they become His subjects. "A bruised reed shall He not break."



### III. HE IS A GENEROUS KING

There have been many kings in the world who have been anything but generous. Instead of being generous they have been grasping. We think, for example, of Charles I who was always thinking of self, and inflicting such heavy taxation upon his people that at last they rose in arms against him. But then there have been generous kings as well. We think, for example, of Alfred the Great, whose one great aim was not to advance the interests of self, but to advance the interests of his country.

However, when we desire to think of real generosity on the part of kings we have to turn to our Lord Himself. Think of what He gave to us. He gave Himself. He died in our room and stead. And today He offers to us all the benefits which He purchased for us on the Cross—provision for the needs of the body and the needs of the soul. He freely offers—we receive.

### IV. HE IS A GREAT KING

There have been great kings in the past—Alfred, and Alexander and Napoleon—but the greatest of all kings is Jesus Christ.

He is great as regards POWER. The power of earthly kings is limited, but the power of Christ is unlimited. All authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth. We should never despair as we see evil raising its monster head in the various nations of the world. Christ is greater than the devil. He is all-powerful; and one day He will subdue all enemies under His feet. The forces of Christ will ultimately triumph; the forces of evil will be overthrown. Such is our faith and hope.

Again Christ is great as regards the EXTENT of His dominions. King Edward VIII had great dominions. He was ruler over 450,000,000 people. But Christ is ruler over the whole world, and not only over the world of men, but also over the animal and vegetable world. It is true that His rule is not yet universally acknowledged, but we believe that the time will come when all will know and acknowledge Him as King. See Psalm 72 : 8, 17. Finally Christ is great as regards the LENGTH of His reign. George III reigned for sixty years. Christ reigns for ever. Earthly kingdoms rise and fall, the Kingdom of Christ endures for evermore. He is from everlasting to everlasting.

Young people, we have been talking of Jesus as King. The call for us today is—make Him King of our hearts and lives, crown Him Lord of all. And the call for the nations is precisely the same—Acknowledge Christ as King and Lord, Kiss ye the Son.

Let us never think that the principles of our forefathers are out of date. We believe that what the world needs today is the application of those principles.



# Jesus The Leader

Most of the boys and girls have heard of the game called "Follow your leader". Perhaps some of you have played it at school, though I question if it is played very often nowadays. The idea of the game is as follows. One boy is chosen as leader. He then starts off running, and the others follow him. Whatever he does they must do, and wherever he leads they must follow. The whole interest of the game depends upon the leader. If he is a genius in the art of doing difficult things, the game becomes really exciting.

Now the Christian life may be compared to this game of "Follow the leader". Jesus Christ is the great Leader, and what we have to do is to follow Him wherever He leads. He has given us an example that we should follow in His steps.

We might think of some of the ways in which we should follow Christ as Leader.

## I. WE SHOULD FOLLOW HIM IN THE WAY OF OBEDIENCE

The Saviour, when He was here on earth, was always obedient. He was obedient to His parents. You remember, after they had found Him in the Temple, how we read that He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; and that just means that He obeyed them. And then He not only obeyed Joseph and Mary but He also obeyed His Heavenly Father. He was constantly doing His Father's will, constantly doing those things which were good and well pleasing in His sight. In both these respects He has given us an example. We should always obey our parents—when they ask us to do something we should jump to it immediately. And we should also obey our Father in Heaven. We should listen to His voice speaking to us—through His word, through our pastor, through our conscience. Our attitude should always be like that of Samuel when he said, "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth". And then, having heard, we should obey.

## II. WE SHOULD FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE WAY OF HUMILITY

Christ was always lowly and humble. You remember He said, "I am meek and lowly in heart", and He illustrated the truth of those words when towards the end of His ministry He took the towel and girded Himself and washed the disciples' feet. He was the Lord of glory, and yet He performed the task of a slave.

And we each one as children and young people should follow the Saviour in this respect. We should never be proud or self-willed in our relations with others. We should never look down upon other little girls and little boys, because perhaps they are not so "well off" and so well educated as we are. To use a colloquial phrase we should never be "stuck up". And further when we have been enabled to do



some little service for Christ we should always give the glory to God and not to self. Look up the words of the little shepherd lad in the Pilgrim's Progress, "He that is down . . .".

### **III. WE SHOULD FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE WAY OF SUBMISSION**

The apostle Peter in his first epistle is writing to those who were enduring great trials. Many of them were being put to death for their loyalty to Christ. Peter urges them to be patient and submissive in their hour of trial and in order to encourage them he points them to the example of Christ. "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps". Christ endured His sufferings patiently and submissively, and this is how we ought to act in regard to all our trials and difficulties. They should all be received in the spirit of submission. The story is told of a certain gentleman who visited a deaf and dumb institute. Entering one of the class rooms he wrote upon the board words to this effect, "Why did God make you children deaf and dumb whereas He gave me full possession of all my faculties?" After some time had elapsed one little child went up to the board and wrote, "Even so Father, for it seemed good in Thy sight". What wonderful submission to the Father's will! And that should always be our attitude in face of any burden which is laid upon us.

### **IV. WE SHOULD FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE WAY OF INDUSTRY**

The Saviour, when He was here on earth, was a great worker. He knew what it was to earn His bread by the sweat of His brow. For many a year He toiled in the carpenter's shop and you may be sure He produced no shoddy work. And then when He went out into the world on His Father's business He was still a zealous worker. He was always "on the go", always preaching, praying or healing. So busy was He that at times His own friends accounted Him mad. And in this, as in all other respects, He is our great pattern. We should all be workers, workers in the home, workers in the day-school, workers in the Sabbath-school. The Bible has nothing good to say about idlers. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." "Son, go work today in my vineyard."

Such are some of the paths along which our Leader walked in the days of His flesh. There are many others. Let us seek to find them as we read the Gospel story, and having found them let us follow in the footsteps of the Master. Let our prayer be that of the Psalmist:

"Show me thy ways, O Lord;  
thy paths, O teach thou me:  
And do thou lead me in thy truth,  
therein my teacher be".



# Jesus The Peacemaker

I hope all you boys and girls have a love for history. Many of you, no doubt, could name the kings and queens of England who have reigned up to the present time. Some of them have titles descriptive of their character—Alfred the Great, William the Conqueror, Richard the Lionheart, and Edward the Peacemaker. Now all these titles might be applied to Jesus Christ. He is the only One who can really be called great; He is the One who has conquered sin and Satan and death and the grave; He is the One who has been called the Lion of the tribe of Judah; and He is the One who can make real peace between individuals and nations.

One of the great words which are associated with His name is the word peace. As Milton has said:

“But peaceful was the night  
Wherein the Prince of Light  
His reign of peace upon the earth began”.

At His entrance into the world the first greeting to men as conveyed by the angels was “Peace on earth”; and His own parting words were “Peace be unto you”. Let us then think of Him as the Peacemaker.

## I. HE MAKES PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Perhaps we should rather say He has made peace between God and man. There was a time when God and man were at peace. Our first parents had sweet fellowship with God in Eden. But then sin entered and the result was that the fellowship was broken and God and man were alienated. There was estrangement on the part of God, and enmity on the part of man. The two were separated by sin. But then Jesus Christ has stepped into the breach. He is the great Mediator between God and man. He has lived a life of perfect obedience on earth, and offered Himself up as a sacrifice for sinful men on the Cross. Thus He has satisfied Divine justice and opened up a way whereby God and man can be reconciled, whereby they can be at peace. God is well pleased with the finished work of Christ, and He is willing to receive all those who come unto Him through Christ. Christ has made peace by the blood of His Cross. He is the propitiation for our sins. The Divine estrangement has been removed as a result of what He has done.

## II. JESUS MAKES PEACE BETWEEN MAN AND HIS CONSCIENCE

Man in his natural state is at enmity with God. He has no love for Christ, and no love for the things of God. But then one day he is awakened by the Holy Spirit, perhaps through the reading or preaching of the Word. He sees that he is a sinner in God's sight, and that



as such he is guilty and condemned, deserving eternal punishment. His conscience begins to accuse him regarding his sins, and he feels miserable and wretched. (Read the opening pages of the Pilgrim's Progress.) Then the way of salvation is made plain to him. He hears that Jesus Christ has died in his room and stead and that God is perfectly satisfied with His atoning work. He is informed of the importance of faith, and he is enabled to look to Christ as his only hope and to put his trust in Him alone. The result is peace of conscience. The sinner sees that God is at peace with him as a result of Christ's work and so he becomes at peace with God and his own conscience through trust in Christ. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

### **III. JESUS MAKES PEACE BETWEEN MAN AND HIS CIRCUMSTANCES**

There are some people today who are never at peace with their circumstances. They are never content with their lot in life and with the environment in which they have been placed. Such is not the case with the true child of God. He can say with Paul, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content". He knows that God has placed him in his particular environment for a special purpose. And when trials and afflictions come he receives them in the spirit of meekness, for he knows that God is the great overlord, and that all things—even the hard things—work together for his good. A great professor has said: "Reconciliation to God is not realised unless it includes reconciliation to the order of God's providence and to the circumstances of our life. We are not really reconciled to Him if we are at war with the conditions of human existence and lead a resentful, querulous or despondent life".

### **IV. JESUS MAKES PEACE BETWEEN MAN AND HIS FELLOW-MAN**

There is a great amount of bad feeling amongst individuals at the present time. How many there are today who have their enemies—those to whom they will not speak, those whom they will not forgive. I hope that there are none such amongst my youthful readers. The more we have the spirit of Christ the less will we have the spirit of envy, and hatred and malice. The Christian should be always ready to forgive. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." As young people let us seek to be at peace with our fellows, and let us seek to be the means in Christ's hand of making peace between others. "A little child shall lead them." "Blessed are the peacemakers."

### **V. JESUS MAKES PEACE BETWEEN NATION AND NATION**

At the present time true international peace seems as far away as ever. War clouds are hovering over Europe. All the nations are



re-arming. Everywhere there is suspicion and trouble and unrest. Would that the time were at hand when statesmen would realise the only sure remedy for the world's ills—the spread of the Gospel, and the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as King and Head of nations. We still look forward to the time of the coming of His kingdom, to the time when He shall be universally acknowledged as the Prince of Peace, to the time when “He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more”.



# Jesus The Judge

Some of my youthful readers have perhaps visited a law-court when a case was being tried. Several personages attracted their attention—the prisoner at the bar, the jury, the advocate—but then there was one person who called for special notice, namely, the judge, the one who is really the deciding factor in the case. The jury brought in the verdict, but it was the judge who guided them in their decision.

This month we wish to think of Jesus as Judge. So far we have been dealing with attractive subjects—Jesus the Saviour, Physician, Friend, etc., but then we must not forget that there is a solemn side to our Lord's character. He is not only a God of love, but he is also a God of justice. He is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, but He will by no means clear the guilty. Now He is a loving Saviour, but one day He will be a righteous Judge. There are times when we should think of Hell as well as Heaven, of Jesus the Judge as well as Jesus the Saviour. We like to think of Him hanging on the Cross on our behalf, but we should also think of Him as one day sitting upon the throne of judgment. The Bible makes it perfectly plain that Christ will come again to judge. Let us then ask ourselves one or two simple questions regarding Jesus as Judge.

## I. WHOM WILL HE JUDGE?

We can infer from Scripture that He will judge angels and men. Peter tells us in his second epistle that the angels which sinned were cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. We can conjecture from these words that Christ will judge the angels. And then He will not only judge the angels but He will also judge all men. Scripture tells us that "all nations are to stand before Him" and that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ". There are some criminals who escape the bar of justice on earth, but there are none who can escape the judgment seat of Christ. All must appear before Him in judgment. You must appear; so must I.

## II. WHEN WILL CHRIST JUDGE?

In a certain sense Christ has been acting as Judge from the beginning. He is the Moral Governor of the world, and at times He brings judgments upon people and nations for their sins. To give one illustration, He came in judgment when Jerusalem was destroyed by Rome. And He may come in the same manner today. He may bring temporal judgments upon nations which are today flouting His law and trampling His Cross underfoot. But then there is a special time when Christ will come in judgment, namely, at the end of the



world, and it is this special time which we have in view in these pages. God has appointed A DAY in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained. At the end of the world, when Christ's Church is complete, He will come again, and then there will be a general resurrection, and a general judgment. You and I will appear before Him to give an account of the deeds done in the body. If He should mark iniquities, then which of us could stand before Him? But there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared, and if we have experienced that forgiveness on earth we have no need to fear. That solemn judgment day has no real terrors for those who are redeemed.

### III. HOW WILL CHRIST JUDGE?

The Bible assures us that He will judge righteously. There will be no miscarriage of justice on that great judgment day. Earthly judges may make mistakes. The innocent may be condemned and the guilty set free. But there will be no injustice with Christ.

As Shakespeare has said:

"In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above;  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled,  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults  
To give in evidence".

Christ knows what is in man. He keeps a book of remembrance of man's past deeds, and on that great judgment day this book will be opened. Men will be judged in regard to the deeds done in the body. If they have never repented on earth their sins will come up before them like so many haunting spectres. They will cry to the rocks to fall upon them, but all to no avail. Happy for us if on that day we are trusting in Christ and clothed in the garment of His righteousness. It is only those who have not on the wedding garment—the robe of Christ's imputed righteousness—who will be cast out.

### IV. WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT OF CHRIST'S JUDGING?

One result will be separation. The wheat will be separated from the tares, the godly from the ungodly. Christ will know those who are His, and those who are not His. Another result will be punishment and reward. Those who have rejected Christ on earth will be condemned and punished: Christ will say to them, "Depart from me, ye cursed". Those who have accepted Christ on the other hand will be vindicated and rewarded. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown



of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Young people, this is a solemn subject. You may have yet many years to live on earth, but you all must one day appear before Christ the Judge. Are you prepared to meet Him? Are you trusting in His finished work, and living the life of faith? He delivers those who put their trust in Him.



# Jesus The Omega

You will remember that at the beginning of the year we had as our subject "Jesus the Alpha". We mentioned that the Alpha was the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and that, consequently Christ should always find His place at the beginning. Now that we have come to the close of the year we take as our subject, "Jesus the Omega". The Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet, and so Christ, like this letter, should always find His place at the end.

## I. HE SHOULD FIND HIS PLACE AT THE END OF THE DAY

It is not enough to begin the day with Christ; we should also end the day with Him. Every night, before taking our rest, we should review the day that is almost gone. We should thank God for His sparing mercy and His preserving care, for all the blessings known and unknown which we have received from His bountiful hand. We should confess our sins before Him, and become assured of His pardoning mercy. And then we should put ourselves and all our dear ones into His care and keeping for the night. It is a fine thing when we can retire to our rest with the words of the Psalmist before our minds:

"I will both lay me down in peace,  
and quiet sleep will take;  
Because thou only me to dwell  
in safety, Lord, dost make".

## II. JESUS SHOULD FIND HIS PLACE AT THE END OF THE YEAR

We have now come towards the close of another year. It is usual at such a time to review the past and take stock of our lives. In this review let us think of Christ. Let us ask ourselves several personal questions in regard to Him. Have I kept close to Him throughout the whole year, or have I at times, like Peter, followed afar off? Have I listened to His voice speaking to me through His word and through conscience, or have I turned the deaf ear? Am I more Christ-like at the end of the year or less Christ-like? We all need to examine ourselves at the end of the year and try to find out just where we are in regard to Christ and in regard to sin. And as we all search our hearts I am sure we will all come to the conclusion that we have not followed Christ as closely as we might have. Let us confess our failure to Him, receive His pardoning mercy and resolve to serve Him more faithfully during the year to come. Let our resolution and prayer at the end of the year be that of the Psalmist:

"So henceforth we will not go back,  
nor turn from thee at all:  
Oh do thou quicken us, and we  
upon thy name will call".



### III. JESUS SHOULD FIND HIS PLACE AT THE END OF LIFE

I daresay few of the young people pay very much attention to the end of life. Life with all its joys and possibilities stretches far out before them, and the end is very rarely seen. And yet even the young people should bear their end in mind. Life is very uncertain these days. We know not the day nor the hour when we might be suddenly hurled into Eternity. And hence the importance of keeping close to Christ at all times that we may be ready when the end comes. There are some who keep close to Christ at the beginning of their lives, but then when they leave their Christian homes and go out into the world, and meet with temptation, they drift away from Him into the paths of infidelity. God forbid that such may be the case with any of us. May Christ find His place at the beginning of our lives, may He find His place throughout our lives, and may He find His place at the end of our lives. There is something grand and beautiful and peaceful regarding what we call the death of God's saints. Death has no terrors for them. Christ is all and in all. They can say "I will trust and not be afraid". When David Dickson was lying on his deathbed someone said to him, "What are you doing, brother?" He answered, "I am taking all my bad deeds and all my good deeds, and throwing them into one bundle, and fleeing from both to Christ". Christ finds His place at the end of the lives of the saints and hence their joy and peace.

"Mark thou the perfect, and behold  
the man of uprightness;  
Because that surely of this man  
the latter end is peace."

When we think of the end of the righteous we are constrained to say with Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" But then we must remember that if we are to die the death of the righteous we must live the life of the righteous. This life is the time for preparation. "Now is the accepted time." "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth."



# PART III

# JESUS





# Jesus The Door

A Happy New Year to all readers. We hope, during the year, to consider some of the familiar names ascribed to the Saviour in the Scriptures, and as we do so I trust our love for Him will be deepened and enriched. At the beginning of the year we naturally commence with Jesus the Door—the word January coming from a Latin word meaning a door.

It is interesting to note that in the New Testament our Lord is associated with a door in three different ways. First—He appears on the inside of the door, and can open to those who knock, “Knock and it shall be opened unto you” (see your Pilgrim’s Progress); second—He is outside the door, knocking for admission, “Behold I stand at the door and knock”; third—He declares Himself to be the Door, the means of access, “I am the Door, by Me if any man enter in He shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”.

In the church of Santa Sabina, on the Aventine Hill in Rome, there is a door which is called “The Oldest Door in the World”. The Door about which we wish to speak now, however, is older than any material door. Before the foundations of the world, in the councils of eternity, Jesus the Door was opened wide for sinners.

Some of you, no doubt, have read that queer tale by Lewis Carrol, “Alice in Wonderland”. In it we have the words, “Down, down, down, and at the bottom a narrow passage which opened into a long low hall, lit by rows of lamps, and on either side were doors, doors, doors”. These doors led to many things which seemed very wonderful, but the Door before us now leads to innumerable things which are really wonderful. Jesus the Door leads to such unspeakable blessings as wonderful salvation, wonderful fellowship, wonderful service, and a wonderful home at the end of life’s journey.

Perhaps the simplest way to deal with our subject would be to make use of an acrostic.

## I. JESUS IS A DEFENSIVE DOOR

In bygone days the door of a castle was strong, and acted as a means of defence. Today ordinary doors defend us from draughts, and perhaps, occasionally, from unwelcome visitors. When Jesus spoke of Himself as being the Door, He was referring to the door of the sheep-fold, and it too was defensive. The late Sir George Adam Smith often told how once, when he was travelling in the east, he fell into conversation with a shepherd. Nearby was a simple sheep-fold—a stone enclosure with a gap in the wall as an entrance. Sir George remarked to the shepherd that there was no door to the fold. “Oh”, said the shepherd, “I am the door”. He went on to explain that when the sheep were safe in the fold, he would lie down in the gateway, and so defend them from all harm. In all probability the Saviour had



this in mind when He said, "I am the Door". Just as the eastern shepherd defended the sheep which had entered the fold, so Jesus, the Good Shepherd, defends those who have entered in through Him.

A little boy once said to his father, "Father, is Satan bigger than I am?" "Yes, my boy", said the father. "Is he bigger than you, father?" "Yes, my boy, he is bigger than your father." The laddie looked much surprised, and very thoughtful, and then asked "Is he bigger than Jesus?" "No, Jesus is bigger than he is", answered the father. "Then", said the little fellow, with a smile, "I am not afraid of him".

The devil may go about like a roaring lion, but we have no need to fear him if we are behind Jesus the Door.

## II. JESUS IS AN ONLY DOOR

In every eastern sheep-fold there was one opening through which the sheep could enter in and pass out, and Jesus is the only Door into the spiritual fold. "Neither is there salvation in any other". No one can come to the Father except through Him.

There are many, alas, who try to enter in through other doors. Some try to enter in through the door of baptism. They think that because they are baptised they are necessarily "born again". And yet Simon Magus was baptised and was still in the bond of iniquity, and the penitent thief was never baptised and was with Christ in Paradise. Others try to enter in through the door of birthright. The Pharisees said they had Abraham to their father, and today some are resting upon a Christian parentage. They fail to see that salvation is not a matter of heredity, and that people are spiritually born "not of blood". Others try to enter in through the door of profession. They make a mere profession of faith in Christ, a profession which is not backed up by Christian living. The Saviour was referring to such when He said, "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom". Still others try to enter in through the door of merit. They lay all the stress upon what they are doing, instead of upon what Christ has done.

D. L. Moody tells of a man who thought to get to Heaven in his own way. He did not believe in the Bible or the love of God, and he thought he would get in on account of his good deeds, and especially on account of his liberality. And then one night he had a peculiar dream. He dreamed that he was building a ladder to Heaven, and that every good deed he did put him one rung higher on this ladder. And then, in his dream, he thought he died, and that a mighty voice came rolling down from above, "He that climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber". He awoke from his sleep, and he thought "Now I know that there is only one way to get to heaven".

Let us always remember that the way of merit—which is the way of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, the way of the church of Rome, and



the way of Freemasonry—is not God's way. We are saved by the grace of God and through faith in Christ, not by good works, but to good works. Jesus is the only Door to life everlasting.

### **III. JESUS IS AN OPEN DOOR**

We all know what it is to come to a door, and find that it is closed against us, that there is no admission. Jesus, however, is an open Door, always ready to welcome those who desire to enter.

In olden times cathedrals were regarded as places of sanctuary where criminals and others might take refuge. Over the north porch of Durham Cathedral was a room where two doorkeepers kept watch alternately to admit any who at any time, by day or by night, knocked at the gate and claimed protection. And Jesus is always open and ready to receive all those who come in repentance and faith. "Him that cometh", He says, "I will in no wise cast out". This Door is open to all kindreds, and nations, and peoples, and tongues, and to all classes and conditions of men, young and old, rich and poor.

We need to bear in mind, however that Scripture speaks of a closed door. For many years the door in Noah's ark was open, as Noah pointed to the only means of safety. But the time came when that door was shut and when the opportunity was gone. I trust that you boys and girls will remember your Creator in the days of your youth, that early in life you will hasten to the Ark of safety. To the parent God says, "Come thou, and all thy house into the Ark". The Holy Spirit says Today.

### **IV. JESUS IS A RELIABLE DOOR**

We can rely upon this Door leading us to the right place. The door of the public house or the gambling saloon leads to the place of misery and woe, but Jesus the Door leads to all needed blessing. He leads to safety—"by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved"; He leads to liberty—"and shall go in and out"—in to communion and out to service; He leads to sustenance—"and find pasture".

A sultan once promised to spare the life of his enemy if he gave up his sword. When the disarmed warrior asked for food, the sultan replied, "I promised to save your life. but not to feed you", and left his prisoner to die of starvation. Needless to say the Lord Jesus does not treat those who put their trust in Him in such fashion, He not only protects us from harm, He feeds us also. He satisfies our longing souls. He gives us real joy.

N.B.—If we are to have a Happy New Year in the highest sense of the term we must enter in through Jesus the Door. May God enable us all to do so.



# Jesus The Rock

Who has not heard of the Gibraltar Rock? It is a British possession, and is one of the strongest fortresses in the world. Rooms and galleries are cut through the heart of it, and it is always well defended and provisioned. We can picture some of our troop-transports being attacked in time of war. They are within reach of the fortress, and they make their way there at full speed. Once the ships are in the harbour they are defended by the guns of "the Rock", and once the troops are inside the fortress they are safe. They have something under their feet which cannot be moved; they have something above their head which shelters them from air attack; and they have provisions inside "the Rock" which will last them many days.

And can we not apply all this to ourselves, and to Jesus Christ the great Rock of our Salvation? We are all sinners by nature, we are all exposed to spiritual danger, but there is a Rock, a Fortress which, unlike the Gibraltar Rock, is always accessible, and whosoever flees for refuge to it is safe. Jesus is:

## I. THE ROCK FOR SECURE STANDING

In the Gospels we read of two houses—the one built on sand, and the other on rock. The former fell, when tested, the latter stood securely.

Dr. Newton, in one of his books, tells of a young minister in Wales, who, having to spend a night in a very exposed locality, slept at a farm house, situated on the highest point of land in that part of the country. After he had retired to rest, the wind rose suddenly and blew a tempest. He thought he felt the house rock, as the storm raged in its fury, and he could not sleep, fearing that it might fall any moment. When the family assembled in the morning the minister told of his fears, and expressed his wonder that they could sleep securely amidst the peltings of such a storm. "Why", he said, "I was afraid every moment the house would fall". "Oh", said the farmer, "I never have a fear of the house falling—for I know that it is founded upon the rock".

And this again reminds us of the Rock of our Salvation. If we are to stand securely, both in this life and that which is to come, then our feet must be firmly planted on the Rock, Christ Jesus.

The story is told of a street preacher who was holding forth in London, and who was interrupted by a heckler on the edge of the crowd shouting, "Mr. Preacher, what do you know about the Shamrock?" (No doubt there was Irish blood in his veins!) The question was shouted three times, and then the preacher said clearly and distinctly: "Oh, On Christ, the solid Rock I stand; all other rocks are SHAM-rocks!" We need to remember that in life and in death we must rest upon Christ alone for salvation, and not upon our feelings



or privileges, or morality, or good works. Dr. W. Y. Fullerton, in his book, "God's High Way", tells of a minister who was holding evangelistic services in his church, and who, in the midst of the services, heard of the serious illness of his mother. She knew he could not leave his work to come to her, so, brave woman, she sent the message of assurance: "Tell Jamie I'm barefoot on the Rock". She knew Whom she had believed; her faith grasped her Saviour with "nothing between", and so she had no fear; she stood securely, whatever might happen, on Christ the one foundation.

## **II. THE ROCK FOR SAFE SHELTER**

During the war some air-raid shelters were not safe; when they got a direct hit those inside were destroyed. Those in Gibraltar and Malta were safe, however, because they were hewn out of the solid rock. And when we flee for refuge to Christ, the Rock of Ages, we are safe for time and eternity. "None perish that Him trust."

In an old copy of "The Christian Banner" I discovered the following story. One very cold day in winter, a woman was obliged to cross a mountain with her little baby boy in her arms. When she got to the top she became very cold, and began to fear that she and her little babe would freeze to death; but she resolved to take off some of her own clothing and wrap it around her child and save his life. So she folded her shawl round the infant, and then laid him out of the wind in a cleft of the rock. The next morning she was found dead near by, but the babe in the cleft of the rock was warm and safe. One day, many years after, a minister was telling this story, when a soldier came forward, and with tears in his eyes said, "That was my mother; she died to save my life; she hid me in the cleft of the rock. I love her; but I can never tell how I love my Saviour, who, when I was in danger of dying the 'second death,' said to me, 'I will put thee in the cleft of the rock, and will cover thee'."

I trust that that same Saviour, that same Mother-God, will do the same in regard to all you young people. I trust that He will choose you to be His own, and that you, in response to his sovereign choice, will flee to Him, and find in Him your safe shelter. He is the Rock of Ages who has been cleft for sinners, and He is able and willing to shelter all those who come to Him. He invited the children to come, and anyone who does come will in no wise be cast out.

## **III. THE ROCK FOR SPIRITUAL SATISFACTION**

Christ is not only the Rock upon which we can stand securely and erect the noble edifice of Christian character, and the Rock to which we can flee for safe shelter from the wrath of God, and the terrors of the law, and the pangs of a guilty conscience, and the temptations of the evil one. He is also the Rock which provides abundant satisfaction for all those who are found in Him. This Rock is well stocked with all the spiritual provision which our souls



require. For the one who is inside the promise is: "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure". What a glorious promise for the one who has fled for refuge to Christ! The Rock is all that we need for spiritual satisfaction. The Bible speaks of ordinary rocks providing water for the thirsty, food for hungry, and rest for weary, and, in the spiritual sense, all this is to be found in Jesus the Rock. He is the Rock of our salvation and that word salvation meets all our spiritual need here and hereafter.

And now, in closing, wouldn't it be a fine thing if we each one prayed with the Psalmist "Be thou my strong rock". When we pray that prayer sincerely the Lord Jesus will answer us, and then we shall be able to say with the Psalmist "The Lord is my rock". And when He is our Rock then we shall stand securely on the right foundation, we shall be sheltered safely from the storms of life, and we shall be satisfied spiritually, as we partake of the Divine resources.



# Jesus The Bread

We all know something about bread. It is in every home. We see it, and handle it, and eat it every day. And Jesus, in His love and mercy, has compared Himself to bread. "I am the bread of life", He says in that great chapter in which the Greek word for bread occurs 21 times. What material bread is to the body He is to the soul. Ordinary bread is very common, and in Eastern lands is regarded as having a sanctity all its own; and Jesus Christ the Bread of Life is for all classes and conditions, for all kindreds and nations, and peoples, and tongues, and being the Son of God, being God himself, He should always be treated with reverence and godly fear. He is:

## I. HEAVENLY BREAD

In a certain sense all bread is heavenly bread. If we take the loaf of bread, and go back over the various stages of preparation, we shall find that it has its origin in God. It is God who sends the sunshine and showers, and so blesses the work of the farmer. Bread, then, is in reality the gift of God, and comes down from heaven.

Jesus, however, is heavenly Bread in a very special sense. He speaks of Himself as being "the true bread from heaven". He is God's gift to a needy world. In the fulness of time He left His home in heaven, and came down into this world on our behalf. He left the heights for the depths, that we, poor sinners, might be raised from the depths to the heights; He came from heaven that we might go to heaven.

## II. PREPARED BREAD

All bread is the result of a process of preparation—a rather painful process. The grain has to be reaped, threshed, ground into flour, and baked in an oven before it can become bread for the hungry.

And we can apply this to the Lord Jesus. He is prepared bread. He had to go through the process of painful preparation. He had, as it were, to be ground in the mill of the most intense suffering and anguish, before He could become the food of our souls. "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." All this is vividly brought before us in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The breaking of the bread speaks of His body broken for us, the pouring out of the wine of His blood shed for us. He has been prepared—at infinite cost—for sinners.

## III. NECESSARY BREAD

Bread is an essential article of food. In recent years we have learned that there are some things which we can do without, but



bread is not one of them. It has been called the staff of life. Children need milk and adults strong meat, but all alike use bread. And how true this is of Jesus, the Bread of life! He is absolutely necessary for both sinner and saint. The very name "Bread of life" speaks of this necessity, for our first and greatest need is just spiritual life.

Jesus is the **AUTHOR** of spiritual life. This is one point where the comparison fails. Ordinary bread can never produce life, but Jesus, the bread of life, can do so. As sinners we are dead, spiritually dead, dead to the things which matter most, but in Christ we are made alive. Paul puts it this way, "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins", and the Saviour Himself says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you". Jesus then is the author of spiritual life; "He that hath the Son hath life".

And then He is also the **SUSTAINER** of spiritual life. Just as ordinary bread nourishes and sustains the life of the body, so Jesus, the Bread of life, nourishes and sustains the life of the soul. You remember how Paul, in writing to the Galatians, says "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me". As we look to Christ in faith—through the Word, sacraments and prayer—our spiritual life is renewed and strengthened. We need to feed upon Him continually. No one can afford to neglect this all-important food for the soul.

#### **IV. OFFERED BREAD**

At the institution of the Supper, the Saviour took bread, and offered it to His disciples saying, "Take eat, this is My body . . .". And, today, Jesus the Bread of life, is offered through the Gospel. He is offered **FREELY**—we have to pay for ordinary bread, but this Bread is without money and without price; He is offered to all—to high and low, to rich and poor, to white and black; and He is offered to be **RECEIVED** and to be **USED**. This is a very important point. Ordinary bread is no use to the body unless it is eaten, and Jesus is no use to the soul unless He is partaken. As He Himself has said, "He that **EATETH** Me, even he shall live by Me".

There is a story told of a preacher who was talking to a Lancashire lad about the freeness of the Gospel. He said to him, "Lad, if you were hungry and asked your father for bread he would give it to you, would he not?" "No, he wouldn't", said the boy. "What, do you mean to say that your father is so hard-hearted that he would not give you bread?" "No, I don't mean that. My father wouldn't give me bread. He would tell me, 'Lad, take that knife and help yourself'." And that is how God deals with us. He offers Jesus the Bread of life to us, and we, in response to Divine grace, are to take Him and help ourselves, we are to taste and see that He is good.

#### **V. SATISFYING BREAD**

"I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger." Those words of the Saviour speak of Bread which satisfies. There is



a kind of bread which doesn't satisfy. In Isaiah 55 we have the familiar words, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" There are those who are doing this today. Some are trying to find satisfaction in the pursuit of wealth, others in the pursuit of pleasure, still others in the pursuit of fame. Their strenuous efforts, however, are doomed to disappointment; they are feeding on husks, feeding on ashes, feeding on bread which cannot satisfy.

There is a very pathetic story told regarding the first expedition that set out to cross Australia in 1860. This expedition was led by two men called Burke and Wills. At one critical stage these two men failing to find other food followed the example of the natives, and ate the leaves and roots of a plant called "nardoo". It seemed to satisfy them, but alas they grew weaker and thinner every day. At last one of them perished through starvation, and the other was rescued in dire extremity. On analysis it was found that the nardoo plant lacked an element necessary for the sustenance of Europeans, and so, although it seemed to satisfy, in reality it was providing no nourishment. And that plant is typical of the bread offered by the world to the hungry soul. Such bread gives no real satisfaction; Christ, and Christ alone can do so.

One of our poets tells us how in East London, on a sultry summer day, he met a preacher looking overworked and ill, and asked him how he fared. "Bravely", was the reply, "for I of late have been much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the Living Bread".

May we be much cheered with such thoughts now. May we take and partake. May our prayer be, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread".

"For He the soul that longing is  
doth fully satisfy;  
With goodness He the hungry soul  
doth fill abundantly".



# Jesus The Light

Some English miners were once trapped as the result of an explosion. Their comrades dug with a will, and after three days got within hearing distance. "What do you want first?" they cried. The prisoners replied, "we want everything, but light before all things".

In the beginning darkness prevailed upon the desolate earth. Light was needed before all things. "And God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light." And later, when sin entered, spiritual darkness prevailed. The great necessity was spiritual light, and this has been met by God in Christ, met for the individual, and the world. The Psalmist says, "The Lord is my Light", and many years later the Saviour speaks of Himself as being "the Light of the world".

In all probability the circumstances were as follows: Our Lord was speaking in the Treasury of the Temple, within the Court of the Women, early in the morning, at the close of the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. There were in this part of the building two colossal golden lamps, each of them seventy-five feet high. When lit up, these lamps are said to have illumined the whole city of Jerusalem. It was the custom to light them on one or two of the last evenings of the Feast. Priests and people would gather round them, and indulge in riotous dancing and shouting. As the water, carried from the Pool of Siloam during the Feast, and poured out at the altar, was to remind the people of the rock that had provided water for their forefathers in the wilderness, so the lighting of the two great lamps was to commemorate the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire which led the Israelites in their desert wanderings.

When Jesus speaks, however, the light of the lamps has been quenched, and a new day has dawned. Perhaps the sun is now shedding its rays upon the Temple, showing up the magnificence of the architecture, and just at this moment the Saviour says, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". It is as though He said to those who rested on the shadows of the past, "Look not on the type, but gaze on the reality. The light of these lamps must fail, but the sun shines on. I am the true Light".

Today we rejoice in this Light. We know some of the blessings of ordinary light—health, growth, joy, power, safety—and Jesus the Light brings corresponding spiritual blessings. In considering this subject I first of all thought of an acrostic, but then I discovered, to my chagrin, that one of the writers of the C.S.S.M. Sabbath School notes—Rev. Guy H. King—had already covered, in his usual efficient way, much of the ground that I had intended going over. His acrostic is Jesus the Light: (1) Leads; (2) Illumines; (3) Gladdens; (4) Heals; (5) Tests. Very good, isn't it? We might perhaps have changed (1) into Lasts, and (3) into Guides and (5) into Travels, but I'm afraid the



result would have meant deterioration from "very good" to "fair". Consequently we bid a regretful farewell to our acrostic, and concentrate on three simple R's, which have this virtue that they are original—so far as I know! Jesus the Light:

## **I. REVEALS**

Light is a great revealer. It can disclose many things—some of them pleasant, others decidedly unpleasant. And Jesus the Light has revealed much regarding the character of God, the nature of sin, the way of salvation, and the reality of the future life. Today He still makes revelations to us.

### **(a) He reveals our PERSONAL DANGER**

A gentleman, returning from a distant town on horse-back, was overtaken by a severe storm. The rain poured in torrents, it became very dark, and in crossing the moors he lost his way. After travelling some miles, without seeing any star or light, he was startled by a sudden flash of lightning. To his horror, this revealed that he was galloping along upon the edge of a steep precipice. At any moment horse and rider might have been dashed into pieces.

And Jesus the Light reveals that we are sinners, and as such are in great danger. In our natural state we are lost, wandering along the broad road which leads to destruction. It is well for us when we see the red sign of danger.

### **(b) He reveals our PROPER DIRECTION**

A poor woman, dying in the Infirmary, sent for the minister. He had never seen her before, and when he asked why she wanted him, she said, "Oh, the doctor says I'm deein'; an I ken I'm no ready. I hae been very careless. It's dark, dark, awfu' dark, and I dinna ken the richt road. Oh, ye maun tell me it quick".

Jesus the Light not only reveals to us that we are going in the wrong direction, He also points out the right direction. "He THAT FOLLOWETH AFTER ME shall not walk in darkness." Like the star of Bethlehem He goes before and invites us to venture out after Him on the way to Heaven. He leads us to the Cross, and from thence we find our way home.

### **(c) He reveals our POWERFUL DYNAMIC**

It is not enough for us to see that we are in the wrong way, and to know what is the right way. We must walk along the right way, and Jesus reveals the powerful dynamic which will enable us to do this. "He that followeth after Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have THE LIGHT OF LIFE." The one, who, in response to Divine grace, ventures out in faith after Christ, has light within, light which means LIFE. He has a new life, a new power, a new dynamic, and is thus enabled to go forward on the heavenly way.

(To be continued)



# Jesus The Light

(continued)

## II. REMOVES

A little child, holding her father's hand as they walked into a dark room, said, "Father, put out the dark". The great function of light is to remove darkness, and Jesus the Light can remove those dark things that tend to hinder our onward progress.

### (a) He removes our FAULTS

The Psalmist speaks of the sins and faults of youth. Where the conscience is sensitive, these can be very troublesome. They rise like a thick cloud between earth and heaven, and tend to depress us. What a comfort it is to us to know that when we are trusting in Christ He blots out these sins, just as the sun in eastern lands blots out the clouds (see Isaiah 43 : 25; 44 : 22). They are completely removed: God will remember them no more.

### (b) He removes our FEARS

A gentleman had two little boys who shared the same bed. One night as he was passing the door of their room he heard them talking. Harry, the younger one, said to Tom, "Tom, I feel afraid; I don't like the room without the candle". Tom replied, "Don't you be afraid, Harry; turn your face to me, and then you won't see the darkness".

When we turn our face to Christ in simple faith, He removes our fears. Faith conquers fear—the fear of hell, of man, of the unknown, of death.

### (c) He removes our FOES

Have you ever lifted a plank that had been lying in the garden for some weeks or months and watched the horrid insects, as they scurried away into the darkness? They couldn't bear the light.

And when Jesus the Light is ENTHRONED in our heart and life He removes many of our foes. Such enemies as disobedience, untruthfulness, selfishness, bad-temper, and the devil himself, cannot bear the light of His countenance.

## III. REJOICES

Light is closely associated with joy. Nansen, the great explorer, went to the North Pole where darkness lasts for six months. When at length the sun reappeared he said that he and his companions went frantic with joy. Light was truly sweet to them after the long darkness.

And Jesus the Light brings joy unspeakable and full of glory. He rejoices the HEART which bids Him welcome. He rejoices the HOME



in which He is honoured; He rejoices the HEATHEN who receive the Light for the first time.

And now, in closing, let us seek to apply the subject. He is the Light of the world. Is He my light? No doubt you have seen Holman Hunt's great picture, "The Light of the World". There the Saviour is depicted, with light in hand, knocking at the door of the sinner's heart; and the latch is on the inside. Did you know that at the bottom of the picture the artist had inscribed the prayer, "Nec me praetermittas, Domine!" meaning "Neither pass ME by, O Lord!" The picture was concerned with the Light of the World, but the artist wanted the Saviour to be his own Light. May we each one be constrained to:

(a) Receive the Light (Revelation 3 : 20)

(b) Spread the Light (Matthew 5 : 14-16).

N.B.—Light travels at remarkable speed, and the Saviour HASTENS to those who seek Him. "Before they call, I will answer."



# Jesus The Way

Some of you have received as a prize the biography of Dan Crawford, the famous African missionary, who wrote "Thinking Black". He tells us of a native guide who was one day leading him along a new trail. Being somewhat doubtful of the direction, Mr. Crawford asked this proud as punch guide of his just where they were going. "The way", smiled the native; "you want to know the way". And then pointing proudly to his breast, where the hidden knowledge was locked up, he said, "I am the way"! The missionary immediately sought to "improve the occasion". Sitting down with his guide on a fallen tree stump, he took as his text the words, "I am the way", and preached unto him Jesus, showing that He was the only Way to heaven.

At first sight it may seem rather strange to you that a person should be the Way. Let us suppose, however, that you are lost, and cannot find your way home. At last you meet someone and tell him of your plight. He gives you detailed directions regarding the way, but they are very involved, and you feel sure that you will never be able to follow them. And then another person comes along, and after hearing about the trouble, he says, "Oh, I'm going to that district myself. Come along with me, and I'll take you home". You willingly put your hand into his. He is the way to you, and soon you are safely home. And in similar fashion Jesus is the Way to lost, wandering souls, and when we put our hand into His in simple faith, He will lead us onward and upward, until at last we reach the home in heaven.

Dr. Newton, in one of his books, speaks of Jesus as—a plain Way, a broad Way, a narrow Way, and the only Way. We purpose thinking of Him for a little as:

## I. THE WAY OUT

I am sure you have often seen the word Exit. An exit is a way out, and can be very useful at times, for example, when a building catches fire.

Now Jesus is the sinner's great exit. He is:

### (a) The Way out of a place of Doubt

I was reading recently about a man who went into a maze at Hampton Court Palace, London. It was an amusing experience. He tried first one path and then another, only to find the way blocked. He was in great doubt as to the way he should take. However, there was a man stationed on a platform in the centre of the maze, whose business it was to show people the way out when they were tired of their own unsuccessful efforts.

And sinners are often in a maze. They have their doubts



regarding God, regarding sin, regarding the way of salvation. But thank God there is One, the Man, Christ Jesus, who can dispel doubt, and make the way out so plain that "wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein".

#### (b) The Way out of the place of Drudgery

Sin brings drudgery. In our natural state we are the slaves of sin and Satan. We are in bitter bondage; and Jesus is the way out. You remember the bondage and drudgery of the Israelites in Egypt. Their taskmasters laid heavy burdens upon them and made them serve with rigour. But the time came when the way out appeared. God Himself led them out with a strong hand.

There is bondage which is more bitter than that of Egypt. There have been cruel taskmasters in history, but never one so cruel as Satan; there have been terrible forms of drudgery, but never one so servile and enslaving as that of sin. And from this taskmaster, and from this drudgery there is a way out, even Jesus Himself.

#### (c) The Way out of the place of Desolation

Sin brings loneliness. The sinner may have his boon companions, but his heart, his inner being, is utterly desolate. As the poet Byron put it:

"Though gay companions o'er the bowl  
Dispel awhile the sense of ill;  
Though pleasure fills the maddening soul,  
The heart, the heart, is lonely still".

And for this loneliness Jesus is the way out. None of them that trust in Him shall be desolate.

## II. THE WAY IN

The salvation which our Lord gives is not merely negative; it is gloriously positive. He calls us to come out from the evil, but He also calls us to enter into the good. He is:

#### (a) The Way in to the life of Faith

He reveals God to us. He teaches us to say "Our Father". He assures us that the God who cares for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field will much more care for us. Through Him we believe that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

#### (b) The Way in to the life of Freedom

Sinners are in bondage, but those who belong to Christ are free. He came to preach deliverance to the captives, and those whom the Son makes free are free indeed. They have freedom from want—the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall have no lack; they have also, to a great



extent, freedom from fear—"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid".

### (c) The Way in to the life of Fellowship

In our natural state we have no fellowship with God; our sin comes between. But Jesus is the Mediator, the "middle-man", between God and us. Through Him, and through His atoning work, we can have access to God, and enjoy intimate fellowship with the Father. As He Himself said, "I am the Way—no one cometh to the Father but by Me".

A beautiful story is told of Agassiz, the naturalist. When he was a boy his family lived on the edge of a lake in Switzerland. One day the father was on the other side of the lake, and Louis and a younger brother set out on the ice to join him. The mother watched the boys from her window. They got along well till they came to a wide crack in the ice. The taller boy leaped over easily, but the other hesitated. "The little fellow will fall in", the mother said, "and drown". But as she watched a moment she saw Louis, the older boy, get down on the ice, lay himself across the track, his hands on one side and his feet on the other, and make a bridge of his body. Then the little fellow climbed over him in safety to the other side, and both the boys ran on to find their father.

Have we found our father through the bridge that the Saviour has made? Are we daily enjoying fellowship with Him?

## III. THE WAY THROUGH

The Lord Jesus is not only the way out of evil into good, out of sin into salvation, He is also the way through the different hard things of life which confront us on the road to heaven. He is:

### (a) The Way through the Special Tasks of Life

Special tasks confront us all as we go on in the Christian life. Some of these are very difficult, and like Joshua and Jeremiah we shrink from their performance. But as we go forward in faith and prayer, and with good courage, we find that, by our God assisting us, we get through.

### (b) The Way through the Strong Temptations of Life

Every Christian is tempted of the devil, and no Christian can overcome in his own strength. The Saviour, however, has already conquered the great enemy of souls, and when we use the weapons which are placed at our disposal—Watchfulness, Prayer, the Word, Resistance, we get safely through, and receive additional strength because of the conflict.

### (c) The Way through the Severe Trials of Life

These come to us all sooner or later. We don't like them. And yet when we receive them in the right spirit, the spirit of strong



faith, and gentle submission, and good courage, they are beneficial to our souls. The Saviour gives us grace to endure. He is with us in the waters of affliction, and eventually He brings us safely through. One day He will lead us over the river of death into heaven for He is:

The Way Home

The Only Way.

Therefore put your hand into His hand and follow where He leads.



# Jesus The Truth

Some of you, no doubt, have heard of Francis Bacon, who lived in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Perhaps you have in your home his volume of Essays. If so you will see that the first essay in the volume is on "Truth", and that the first sentence in the essay is "What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer". It is not likely that Pilate was feeling in a jesting mood when he asked this question. His attitude was, no doubt, that of the sceptic. Certainly he wasn't an earnest seeker after the truth, else he would surely have waited for a reply.

Many, however, have asked Pilate's question honestly and sincerely. In every age there have been the true seekers after truth. Alister MacLean, in his book "High Country", tells of a peasant man of India who said to an aged wayfarer as they stood together at noonday, under the shade of a tree, "Where are you going, holy man?" The old man answered gravely, "To a city far away". "In India?" questioned the peasant. The answer was "Further". "In Asia?" "Further". "Some city of the western lands?" The old man answered, "Further, friend, further, for the city I seek is Truth, and it is hidden in the heart of God".

Today the truth-seekers are many and varied. Multitudes are interested in historical truth and scientific truth, and quite a number are still interested in spiritual truth, the most important aspect of all, and the aspect with which we are now mainly concerned. This spiritual truth is most intimately connected with our Lord and Saviour. Pilate asked the question, "What is truth?" and failed to realise that the answer stood before him in the person of his Royal prisoner. Jesus was, and is, THE truth. He came that He might bear witness to the truth. He was the reality behind the types and symbols of the Old Testament, and hence He is said to be the true Light, the true Bread, the true Tabernacle. He revealed the truth in His words, He was the truth in His life, and He is the same today. He is:

## I. THE TRUTH CONCERNING GOD

When He was here on earth He spoke the truth about God. He declared God to the people of His time. He told them something of His nature. Many then, as now, had wrong ideas regarding God. They believed in gods many, and lords many, gods who were cruel, gods who were impure, gods who cared little for mere mortals. The Jewish leaders in the days of His flesh believed in one God who was holy and righteous, and who had a saving interest in the Jews, and in them only. Jesus, in His teaching, showed that God was not only holy and righteous, but loving too. In the parable of the Prodigal Son He declared God to be a gracious Father, and in many passages He made it perfectly plain that His saving mercy was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews.



And then Jesus not only revealed the truth concerning God by word of mouth, He was that truth in His life. You remember how He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father". Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. In His life, and in His death, He has shown us what God is like—a God who loves children and young people, a God who went to the Cross to save sinners, a God who is to be loved and not dreaded. A schoolmaster once asked a class of big boys to write an essay on God, and to tell in it what they thought God was like. Here are some of the results: "God is like a policeman directing the traffic"; "God is like a great engine rushing through the prairie, scattering everything that gets in its path"; "God is like a sergeant-major shouting orders to a squad of soldiers". Obviously those who wrote thus had imperfect ideas regarding God. If they had seen His glory in the face of Jesus Christ they would surely have brought out the idea of the Divine love. Remember, Jesus is God.

## **II. THE TRUTH CONCERNING MAN**

Some of you perhaps have already come up against evolutionary and humanistic theories which lay stress upon man's natural progress towards perfection. If you want the truth concerning man, however, you must turn to the man Christ Jesus, and learn of Him. By word of mouth He showed **WHAT WE ARE BY NATURE**. To Nicodemus He said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh". The meaning is that those who are born into the world have a fleshly or sinful nature. In our natural state we are all sinners, and before we can make any progress heavenwards we must be born again. The same humbling truth is brought home by the Saviour's life. The best way to see whether a stick is crooked or not is to place it alongside a straight one, and when we place our lives side by side with the holy, sinless life of the God-man, we see our great sinfulness and unworthiness. Have we ever prayed, "Lord, show me Thyself"? When we see His holiness we see our own sinfulness.

By word of mouth the Saviour also showed **WHAT WE MAY BECOME BY GRACE**. "Come unto Me . . .", He says, "and I will give you rest"; "Sanctify them", He says, "through Thy truth"; "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast give Me, be with Me where I am". And then we see what we may become by grace, not only in the words of Jesus, but in His life also. He is the ideal Man. As Christians, as those who are resting upon Him, and upon His finished work, we are to take Him as our great Example. As we use the means of grace we should be becoming more like Him, and one day we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

## **III. THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE FUTURE LIFE**

What happens after death? Is there a life beyond this life? These are questions which naturally concern us all. Instinct and reason make it highly probable that there is a future life, but Revelation,



and especially Revelation through the Lord Jesus Christ, changes probability into certainty.

There is a beautiful story told in connection with early British history. A number of Christian missionaries had arrived at the court of King Edwin of Northumbria. As they were being entertained in a large hall there was much discussion as to the advisability of receiving a new religion. At last a grim, bearded earl rose in his place and spoke as follows, "Can this new religion tell us anything of what happens after death? The life of man is like a swallow flying through this lighted hall. It enters at one door from the darkness outside, and, flitting through the light and warmth, passes through the farther door into the dark unknown. Can this new religion solve for us the mystery? What comes to men after death in the dark, dim, unknown?"

I am sure those missionaries would have their answer ready. No doubt they would preach Jesus who by lip and life has brought life and immortality to light. Through the spoken word He showed plainly that there was a life beyond—see for example John 11 and 14, yes, and through His own life He made the same revelation. Why, He Himself died AND ROSE AGAIN. He came back again from the grave to make it perfectly certain that there was a future life. And if you are to be happy in that future life you must:

- (1) Know the truth—you can't know the Saviour too well.
- (2) Receive the Truth — you need to take Him as your own Saviour.
- (3) Spread the Truth—you must think of other needy souls.

N.B.—Since Jesus is the Truth you should always seek to tell the truth by lip and life. He desires truth in the inward parts; He is opposed to all lying and hypocrisy.



# Jesus The Life

"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." So said Satan in the time of Job—and it wasn't all lies! You boys and girls naturally love life. There are times—and especially during the holidays—when your one main thought is, "It's great to be alive". You cling to life, and you shrink from death. You want to live long, to live happily, to make the most of life, and to get the best out of it. You heartily agree with the words of Tennyson in his poem "The Two Voices":

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;  
More life, and fuller, that I want".

Unfortunately many people have wrong ideas as to what constitutes the best life. Some think that the best life is the life of money-making. To them, to live is money. They leave God out of account, and their fate is that of the rich fool in the parable. Others think that the best life is the life of pleasure seeking. To them, to live is pleasure. Lord Byron was one of them. He died a young man after writing those sad words, "The flowers and fruits of life are gone, the worm, the canker and the grief, are mine alone". Still others think that the best life is the life of fame-pursuing. To them, to live is fame. They worship ambition, and often they find that it "o'erleaps itself" and brings no abiding happiness. Had Cardinal Wolsey served God as faithfully as he had served his king it would have been better for him. The truth of the matter is, the best life is the life that is lived for God. Those make the most of life, and get the best out of life, who can say with Paul, "To me, to live is Christ". In Christ we have the best possible life, the life which is life indeed (I Tim. 6 : 19). He is THE life, the only life which is worth while here and hereafter. He is life Himself, and He imparts to us the life we need.

Let us consider, briefly, one or two points regarding Him. He is:

## I. THE SOURCE OF LIFE

In the Acts of the Apostles He is spoken of as "The Prince of Life", and that title implies that He has authority to give life. He is the source of physical and mental life, but above all He is the source of spiritual life. In our natural state we are all spiritually dead, dead to the great eternal realities, dead to the things that matter most, but, in and through Christ, we can be made spiritually alive, alive unto God. "You hath He quickened (made alive)", says Paul, "who were dead in trespasses and sins".

Dr. Newton tells a story which may prove helpful. "I say, Willie", says Charlie to his brother, "Isn't it nice to be alive! Why, only see how I can toss my arms about, and use my legs and feet, and hands. And, then, I can see, and hear, and feel. It's real nice to be alive.



especially when you are all alive, and have no part of you dead". "No part of you dead?" asked Willie. "Who ever heard of such a thing as being part alive and part dead?" "I have, Willie. It was myself. The best part of me was quite dead; and what made it still worse was that I didn't know it." "But what part of you was dead, Charlie?" "My soul was dead towards God. When God spoke to me I didn't hear His voice; when He called to me to look to Him I couldn't see Him; and when He told me to love Him I didn't do it." "Well, how did it ever come alive?" "Well, Willie, it was Jesus who did it all for me. When He was on earth, He said, 'I am the life'. He sent His Spirit into my heart, to show me that my soul was dead; and that I never could be happy, and never go to heaven unless my soul was made alive. Then I prayed to Him, and said, 'O Lord Jesus, do not leave me in my sins. Make my soul alive, and teach me to love Thee and serve Thee, that I may live with Thee for ever'. And He heard me, and ever since He has made me feel so happy."

The result of it all was that Willie too went to the Saviour and asked Him to make his dead soul alive also. Perhaps some of my younger readers will be constrained to do the same. My earnest prayer is that Christ may give YOU life.

## **II. THE STAFF OF LIFE**

Ordinary bread has been called the staff of life; upon it our physical life depends; it nourishes and sustains the body. And Jesus is the staff of life as far as the soul is concerned. He is the Bread of Life, and the Water of Life, and as such He sustains the spiritual life which He has imparted.

This is beautifully illustrated in the "Pilgrim's Progress". You remember Christian, in the Interpreter's house, was shown a fire at the side of a wall. One was standing by it, casting much water on it to quench it, and yet the fire only burned higher and hotter. The mystery was explained when Christian saw, on the other side of the wall, a man who was continually feeding the flames with oil. The one who poured water on the fire was the devil, who endeavours to destroy the work of grace in the believer's heart. The man who fed the flames with oil was the Lord Jesus Christ, Who maintains the fire that has been kindled, and sustains the life that has been imparted.

Yes, Jesus is the great nourisher of the life of the soul. As we look to Him in faith, as we use the means of grace in the home and in the sanctuary, we are enabled to LIVE the Christian life from day to day. Paul puts it in a nutshell in Galatians 2 : 20 and Philipians 4 : 13.

## **III. THE SPICE OF LIFE**

At first sight this may seem a rather strange expression to use with reference to our Lord, but I am employing it reverently and deliberately. Some young people seem to have the idea that Jesus



takes the spice out of life, but this is one of the devil's lies. Far from taking the spice out of life, He actually adds to it. The thief may come to steal and to kill and to destroy, but He is come that young people "might have life, and that they might have it more ABUNDANTLY". We speak of variety as being the spice of life, and what variety there is to be found in Christ! Why, all the great desires of youth find their satisfaction in Him. Youth longs for ADVENTUROUS LIFE, so listen to this testimony from that great Christian, Dr. Grenfell, of Labrador: "Feeble and dubious as my own footsteps have been since my decision and endeavour to follow Christ, I believe more than ever that this is the only real adventure of life. No step do I even compare with that one in permanent satisfaction. Never have I questioned that the decision and endeavour to follow Christ does for men what nothing on earth can do".

Dr. Grenfell would have said to you young people, if you want a real life-long thrill, be a follower of Christ. Youth longs also for JOYOUS LIFE. Young people naturally want to be happy, and the secret of a truly happy life is to be found in personal friendship with Christ. A young girl once said to her father, "If I become a Christian must I give up being funny?" The enemy of souls had been troubling her with the insinuation that Jesus takes the joy out of life, and judging by some professing Christians one could nearly believe that there was some truth in the insinuation. J. S. Stewart however, in one of his forthright sermons gives this salutary advice, "Don't be put off by these gloomy caricatures of Christianity . . . don't judge Jesus, the King of joy, by them! Try the real thing, make friends with Jesus, answer His challenge, rise and follow, and you will find it the happiest life on earth"! Youth longs too for LONG LIFE, and the life which Jesus gives is eternal. It begins here on earth and goes on after death; for ever and ever—perfect in quantity and perfect in quality.

I hope you all know something about John Knox. As he lay dying he said to his wife, "Go, read where I cast my first anchor", and she, knowing well what he meant, read the 17th chapter of John, that chapter which contains the familiar words, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent". Perhaps some of you will cast your first anchor there. May you all have heart-knowledge of Him, who is THE life, and whom to know is life eternal.



# Jesus The Vine

"I am the true vine"; "I am the vine, ye are the branches." These familiar words were uttered by our Lord either when He was still in the upper room, or when He was leaving it. His reason for using the figure of the vine is not absolutely clear. Some think that He drew the figure from a vine trained over the walls and windows of the upper room: others take the view that it was suggested by the famous golden vine which ornamented the main gate of the Temple; others express the opinion that it was suggested by the vines which He saw on the slopes of Olivet as He set out for the garden of Gethsemane; still others refer the figure to the fruit of the vine which had just been used at the Lord's Supper. Whatever the reason for the figure it was one with which the disciples were thoroughly familiar. The land of Canaan was famous for its vines, and in the Old Testament the Jewish nation and Church is often called a vine. It is interesting to note that the vine was used as an emblem of the Jewish nation under the Maccabees in the second century before Christ, and appears on their coins. The Jewish nation and Church, however, failed to live a life in harmony with the emblem, and when Jesus spoke of Himself as being the True Vine, He was, in all probability, contrasting Himself with the Jewish nation and Church, and indicating that He, and not it, was the true source of spiritual life. At any rate the figure illustrated the very close relationship which existed between Him and His followers—He being the vine and They being the branches—and we know that it was a source of great encouragement to the early Christian Church, for, in the catacombs of Rome, where the Christians used to bury their dead, the vine and its branches are sometimes found as a symbol of the Redeemer. Today the figure should be no less precious to us. We are entirely dependent upon Him for life and vigour, and, strange though it may seem, He has chosen to be dependent upon us for fruit.

Let us notice one or two characteristics of Jesus the Vine. He is:

## I. A BEAUTIFUL VINE

It is true that the vine is not so striking in appearance as some other trees. In loftiness it yields to the cedar, in strength to the oak, and in beauty to the palm-tree and fir. And yet the vine has a beauty all its own. I have read that the vine is the most perfect of plants. For the harmonious development of every part and quality, for perfect balance of loveliness and usefulness, there is no plant to equal it. It belongs to the highest order of the vegetable kingdom. A Canadian minister tells us about the beauty of the fruit-growing Niagara District. He says, "I delight in the spring-time, and again in the autumn, to get away for the day and drive through that Niagara District; in the spring-time to see the blossoms, and in the autumn to see the beauty of the fruit as it hangs upon the vine. There is nothing more beautiful, so far as I know, anywhere than to see a



fruit tree or a vineyard in time of fruit. There it is in the autumn—the lovely trunk of the vine, the beautiful little branches growing out from it stronger and stronger each year; the great, beautiful, glossy green leaves shining and shimmering in the sunshine; then clustering here and there great bunches of blue fruit ready, waiting for the picking. If you go all over the world you may not see anything more beautiful”.

And how beautiful Christ is! To those whose spiritual eyes have been opened He is the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One. In Him we see the beauty of perfect harmony, the beauty of absolute holiness, the beauty of sacrificial service. And we, in union with Him, can live beautiful lives also. Some of us may be plain, physically, but we can all be beautiful, spiritually. Painters tell us that to study the perfection of form, colour, light and shade, united in one object, we must place before us a bunch of grapes. And when we, united to Christ, bring forth fruit, we are living lives that are beautiful in the sight of God and man.

“God who touchest earth with beauty make me lovely too,  
With Thy Spirit recreate me, make my heart anew”.

## II. A USEFUL VINE

The vine is a very useful plant. It is useful for SHELTER. In hot countries, like Palestine, its broad leaves provide an effectual screen from the scorching sunshine. The inhabitants are grateful for the pleasant shade that the vine affords. Again it is useful for REFRESHMENT. You have noticed, I am sure, that people often take grapes to hospitals. The fruit of the vine is the finest in the whole vegetable world, and no other is so refreshing to the parched lips of the invalid. Further, it is useful for PURIFICATION. Like other plants it purifies the air by feeding upon that part which we reject as poison.

And we can apply all this to Jesus the Vine. He is most useful to us, in fact He is absolutely essential for our spiritual well-being. When we are in Him, He shelters us from the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin—there is no condemnation in regard to those who are in Christ Jesus; He also shelters us from the evil associated with our different temptations and trials. Hence the believer can say, “I sat down under His shadow with great delight”. The verse goes on, “and His fruit was sweet to my taste”, and this reminds us that He provides refreshment as well as shelter, that He satisfies our hunger and quenches our thirst. And certainly He is the great purifier. Any goodness that is in the world today is due to His influence, and we rejoice that much goodness is still to be found and sometimes in very unexpected places.

And you and I, in vital union with Christ, can be useful too. Perhaps we can shelter some young life from danger; perhaps we can refresh some weary life by our cheerful helpfulness; perhaps we can be as the salt of the earth in our little part of God’s world, and



add to its purity and goodness. On the tombstone of a girl who died young are inscribed these words, "Her companions said, 'when she was present it was easier to be good'."

### III. A FRUITFUL VINE

This is really the most striking characteristic of the vine. It is essentially a fruit-bearing plant, and is renowned for its fertility. Many grapes grow on one cluster, many clusters on one branch, and many branches on one tree. The most famous vine in Britain grows in the vinery of Hampton Court Palace, some thirteen miles from London. It is over one hundred and seventy years old; its roots reach down to the River Thames; and it has been known to yield three thousand bunches of grapes in one year.

And Jesus as vine is strikingly fruitful. When He was here on earth He was fruitful—a fruitful Branch, bringing forth to perfection the fruit of SERVICE and CHARACTER. Now, in heaven, He is the great vine, and He looks to His branches, to His followers, to bring forth much fruit. A Sabbath School teacher once said to his class, "Jesus is the vine: we are the branches; we get all our life and happiness from Him". "Yes", said a little fellow, "Jesus is the vine, grown-up people are the branches, AND WE YOUNG ONES ARE THE BUDS". In the ordinary vine the buds don't produce any fruit, but in Jesus, the spiritual vine, even the buds can be fruitful, even the youngest can LIVE and WORK in Him. If you are to do this, however, you must be in living union with Christ, separated from Him you can do nothing. May you all, by Divine grace, be taken out of the wild vine, in which you are by nature, and grafted into Jesus, the true vine. May you, as you daily abide in Him, be fruitful in every good work.

N.B.—Tied on branches cannot bear fruit.



# Jesus The Lamb

The thought of Jesus as the Lamb occurs quite frequently in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament the lamb was the usual sacrificial offering. Abel, you remember, was a keeper of sheep, and he offered unto God a firstling of his flock. Isaac said to Abraham, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" thereby showing that the lamb was the usual victim. Under the Mosaic Law a lamb was offered every morning and evening. There was also the Passover lamb whose blood was sprinkled and whose flesh was eaten to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. These all pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was to take away the sin of the world. Yes, and in the Old Testament, He is actually spoken of as the Lamb. We naturally recall the familiar words of Isaiah 53: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter".

When we come to the New Testament the thought of Jesus as Lamb is even more prominent, and is especially so in the writings of John. When he was a disciple of John the Baptist, he heard the latter saying one day, as he pointed to Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God", and he never forgot that title. In the book of Revelation Jesus is spoken of as Lamb no less than twenty-seven times!

The title is very suggestive, and in considering it we propose dealing briefly with a number of practical points. Jesus is:

## I. THE SELECTED LAMB

When the Israelites were in Egypt the lamb was selected by God "as the victim", whereby deliverance should come to the first born. God said, "They shall take to them every man a lamb". And Jesus is the Lamb of God, the Lamb selected and appointed by God for our deliverance from sin. Peter tells us that this selection and appointment took place before the foundation of the world. Even then God chose and provided the Lamb who should take away the sin of the world. Calvary was no after-thought.

## II. THE SINLESS LAMB

In the Book of Revelation the word translated lamb means "a little lamb", and this suggests innocence and harmlessness. The Passover lamb was to be without blemish, and in this was typical of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Peter tells believers that they were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Our Lord was absolutely sinless. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He was pure, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. He could say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me". And as such He was the perfect sacrifice for sin. "God made Him to be sin for us, who himself knew no sin . . ." Only the sinless One could save sinners.



### III. THE SLAIN LAMB

The Passover lamb had to be slain, and its shed blood applied to the lintel and doorposts. Peter speaks of the precious blood of the Lamb, and John saw, in Heaven, a Lamb as it had been slain. Have you ever noticed the great stress that the Bible lays on the Saviour's death? That death was VOLUNTARY—"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter . . ." It was also VICARIOUS—He died for sinners. He is the lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

The story is told of a gentleman who was travelling in Norway, and who went to see a church in a certain town. Looking up at its tower, he was surprised to see near the top the carved figure of a lamb. He enquired why it was placed in that position, and was told that when the church was being built a workman fell from the high scaffold. His fellows saw him fall and, horror-stricken, rushed down, expecting to find him dashed to pieces. To their surprise and joy he was practically unhurt. A flock of sheep was passing at the moment of his fall and he fell amongst them and right on top of a lamb. The lamb was crushed to death, but the man was saved. Consequently the lamb was carved on the tower at the height from which he fell to commemorate his escape. And we should give the highest place in our affections to the lamb of God, who was crushed beneath the load of our sin, who died that we might live, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

### IV. THE SUPPLICATING LAMB

"And lo in the midst of the throne STOOD a Lamb as it had been slain". The words "as it had been slain" speak of the Saviour who died, the word "stood" speaks of the Saviour who is alive, and who is active in the interests of those for whom He died. And in what does His activity consist? No doubt in different things, but mainly we believe, in earnest supplication, in constant intercession (Hebrews 7:25). He makes earnest supplication in words, He makes no less earnest supplication through the silent presentation of His wounds. You remember the old Greek story of the man who was found guilty, and who was about to be condemned to death. At that moment his brother, who had given his best for his country, who had fought in many battles and received many honourable scars, stood up in the midst of the court, and held up the two stumps of his arms. It was silent supplication, but it was effectual in securing the brother's pardon. And today, in Heaven, Jesus, the Lamb of God, presents the marks of the Cross, and because of His past death and present intercession we, as we trust in Him, live and triumph.

### V. THE SHEPHERD LAMB

"And the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them" (literally, shepherd them). Our Lord was the good shepherd when He was here on earth, and He still is through His spirit, but He



is also the good Shepherd in Heaven, the Shepherd of the Redeemed in glory. In heaven our Shepherd will feed us—feed us with regular, and varied, and satisfying food; He will lead us—lead to the living fountains of waters which never fail; and He will guard us—“neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat”. It should be a great comfort to us to know that if the Lord is our Shepherd here on earth then we shall not lack any good thing here and hereafter. He will be with us throughout life. He will lead us safely through the valley of the shadow of death, and when we get to the other side we shall see Him face to face and be assured of eternal provision.

## **VI. THE SOVEREIGN LAMB**

John saw the Lamb “in the midst of the throne”, and this speaks of supreme sovereignty. This sovereignty comes through His sufferings (Philippians 2 : 8-11), and the thought of it should be encouraging to us. It was encouraging to John, in the midst of all his troubles and trials, to know that Christ stood in the midst of the throne in Heaven, and that on His vesture and on His thigh was written the name “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”. And today this thought should be no less encouraging to us. Christ is on the throne working out His own sovereign purpose, and His cause must prevail in spite of all opposition. He is King and Head of nations, and the call for the nations today is to acknowledge Him as such, and make their laws in accordance with His will (Psalm 2). He is King and Head of the Church, and the call for the church is to regulate all her activity in accordance with His revealed will. He is King and Head of the home, and the call for the heads of families is to acknowledge Him in the home, for example, through family worship. Last, but not least, He is King and Head of the individual, and the call for individuals is to open the door of the heart that the King of glory may come in and have full possession.

Jesus the sovereign Lamb! What should our attitude be to Him? Shall we not with God's help:

Behold the Lamb—in simple faith.

Follow the Lamb—in wholehearted obedience.

Worship the Lamb—in lowly reverence.



# Jesus The Lion

In one of his books F. W. Boreham describes a visit which he, and some others, paid to the famous little vessel "The Fram", when it lay in Hobart harbour, Tasmania, after its Norwegian commander Captain Amundsen, had discovered the South Pole. They found those on board very courteous and ready to show them anything they cared to see. One striking object was the canary whose song amid the ice had helped to cheer the expedition. Other things which attracted their attention were the sledges and the skis, the furry dresses and the scientific instruments. The main interest, however, was centred upon the dogs, and especially upon "Oberst", the leader of the pack. Oberst was a huge animal, strong as a horse, the pride of the pack, the first dog to reach the pole. The explorers loved him, and spoke of his work at the sledges with great enthusiasm and appreciation. And yet the thing which impressed Mr. Boreham most was not his lion-like dignity, nor his enormous size, nor his massive strength, nor his shaggy coat, nor his noble face and eloquent eyes, but, rather, the fact that unlike many of the others he was quiet and gentle, and absolutely approachable. Whenever the visitors first saw him he was receiving with evident delight the caresses of a number of ardent admirers. Later on he was heroically enduring the affectionate homage of a group of small children who mercilessly pulled his ears, poked his sides, and buried their plump little fingers in his warm and glorious fur. He took it all in perfect good temper, and Mr. Boreham, as he watched, saw in the great dog a wonderful combination and majesty and meekness, of lion-like gentleness.

And this same combination we can see in the Lord Jesus Christ. Last month you remember we were thinking of Him as the Lamb, this month we wish to think of Him as the Lion, the Lion of the tribe of Judah—a title which no doubt is associated with Genesis 49:8-10. Let us consider a number of points suggested by the title.

## I. MAJESTY

It has been said that no animal is grander or more noble looking than the lion. There is something majestic about its general appearance—its great head, its flowing mane, its glittering teeth, its fearless eyes; there is also something majestic about its powerful roar, a sound which is "extremely grand and peculiarly striking", increasing in loudness and then dying away in a number of low muffled sounds, resembling distant thunder.

And when we think of Jesus the Lion we think of majesty. Even in the midst of His pain and shame, Pilate was constrained to say, "Behold THE Man"; "Behold your King". And now, in His exaltation, He is more majestic than ever. Read that glorious description of His voice and general appearance which you have in Revelation 1, and the one great thought before your mind will be that of majesty. The



same thought will naturally arise, as you sing some of the Psalms which speak of Christ. Those great songs of praise teach us to think magnificently of the Redeemer.

## **II. BRAVERY**

When we think of the lion, we naturally think of strength and courage. Richard I of England was surnamed "Coeur de Lion"—the lion-hearted; Gustavus Adolphus, that great soldier and champion of Protestantism, was known as "the Lion of the North"; and Richard Cameron, who fought and died at Ayrsmoss, was called "the Lion of the Covenant". These names were given to them because of their dauntless courage, and yet their bravery pales into insignificance when compared with that of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah". His meekness was not weakness; His tenderness was not timidity. And nowhere is His bravery more signally displayed than towards the end of His life when He faced the Cross. Knowing all that lay ahead He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and on the Cross He refused the drug. It took the greatest bravery to taste death for sinners.

## **III. LIBERTY**

When the Jews, in Biblical times, thought of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, they thought of a great Liberator, of One who would come to free them from earthly oppression. Christ did come as a Liberator, but not in the way the Jews expected. He came not to free from the Roman yoke, but to free from the bondage of sin. In the Old Testament we read of sweetness coming from a slain lion, and the sweetness of spiritual liberty comes from the slain "Lion of the tribe of Judah"; "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins"; "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed". Christ gives freedom from spiritual want and fear.

## **IV. SEVERITY**

The lion can be severe, and so can Christ. Why, we even read of the wrath of the Lamb! We rejoice of course in the Saviour's gentleness, and tenderness, and love, but we need to remember that there is a stern side to His character, a marked severity against sin. When He was here on earth He took the little children up in His arms, but He also drove out the money-changers in righteous indignation, and denounced, in the severest terms, the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. And He is the same today. "He delighteth in mercy"; "A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench". And yet we must not trifle with Him. He is sternly opposed to every form of evil, and, as has been said, there is a lion-like awfulness about the wrath of the Lamb.



## V. AUTHORITY

The lion has great authority over the other animals. He is the king of the beasts, the monarch of the forest. And Jesus, you remember, said after His death and resurrection, "All authority is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth". He is the King of Kings, and the time will come when His authority will be universally acknowledged.

"Yea, all the mighty kings on earth  
before Him down shall fall;  
And all the nations of the world  
do service to Him shall."



# Jesus The Star

If any of you have read Shakespeare's "The Tempest", you may remember that Caliban cried from the abyss:

"O God, if you wish for our love  
Fling us a handful of stars".

Our God hasn't flung a handful of stars to a world lying in darkness, but He has given His Own Son, the One who is the Bright and Morning Star, and this should call forth our highest love and deepest affection.

Let us think for a little of this most wonderful star. He is:

## I. THE STAR THAT SHINES

He shines BRIGHTLY. He spoke of Himself as being the "Bright and Morning Star". The morning star is also the evening star, and Homer and Milton have referred to it as being the brightest star in the heavens. And Jesus is brighter than any ordinary star. He is "the brightness of His Father's glory". He shines with a clear, pure, Divine light, and, as such, should be worshipped humbly and reverently. We do not—like the Chaldeans—believe in the worship of the stars, but we do believe in worshipping Him who is THE Star.

Again He shines STEADFASTLY. There is something steadfast about the ordinary stars. The poet Keats commences one of his poems with the words, "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art". And Jesus is fixed and steadfast. He is the same yesterday, today and for ever. The Christ whom the Apostles knew is the Christ we know. They looked to Him and were lightened and we can do likewise.

## II. THE STAR THAT CHEERS

In the "Life and Letters of J. P. Struthers" we have reference made to an interesting story of the escape of a number of officers during a certain war. The end was very striking. "A Colonel Rose persevered and persevered, and dug a tunnel with a chisel, a comrade standing at the far end fanning in air. The last night, when Rose thought he was outside the prison limit, he dug up, and then began to faint, turned on his back, and in despair, for he was choking, he struck up with his hands, broke through the crust, and saw a star! and heard the sentinel's voice 'Half-past one and all's well'." The sight of that star must have cheered the officer when he felt that his darkest moment had come, and the vision of Jesus the Morning Star can cheer us, for the Morning Star is the star of hope, the star which heralds the dawn.

Before Jesus came the world lay in darkness. Men despaired of the coming of the Messiah. And then the Morning Star appeared in the form of the Babe born in Bethlehem. A new day was about to dawn. Those who sat in darkness saw a great light, and their hearts were cheered with the good tidings of a Saviour.



### **III. THE STAR THAT SAVES**

A party was once crossing the Caspian Sea in a boat. One of the men kept looking up into the sky, and did not take his eyes from a certain star. A passenger asked him why he kept looking at the stars, and he said, "Do you see that star? If we lose sight of that we are lost. That is the only way we know in which direction to steer the boat". Their salvation lay in looking to the star.

Another story is told of a young girl who had lost her way, not in a forest or a wilderness, but in her own home. She had lost the way to peace and happiness. One night she had a dream. She was in a deep, deep pit, and there were no steps, no rope, no ladder. She despaired of life, and then falling on her knees and looking up she saw a piece of blue sky and a star. As she gazed at the star she began to rise. It seemed so strange that she exclaimed, "What is lifting me?" and, looking down, she found herself at the bottom. Again she saw the star and began to rise, but again she looked down, and found herself at the bottom. A third time she fixed her eyes on the star, and this time she kept looking steadfastly until she found herself lifted right up to safety. When she awoke she said, "I see it all now. I am not to look to myself but to Jesus, the Bright and Morning Star".

And it is only by the grace of God, and through looking to Christ with the eye of faith, that we can be lifted up out of the pit of sin, and saved from destruction.

### **IV. THE STAR THAT GUIDES**

In the Bible we read about the wise men being guided to Bethlehem by means of a star, and since then the stars have guided many a one travelling by land or sea.

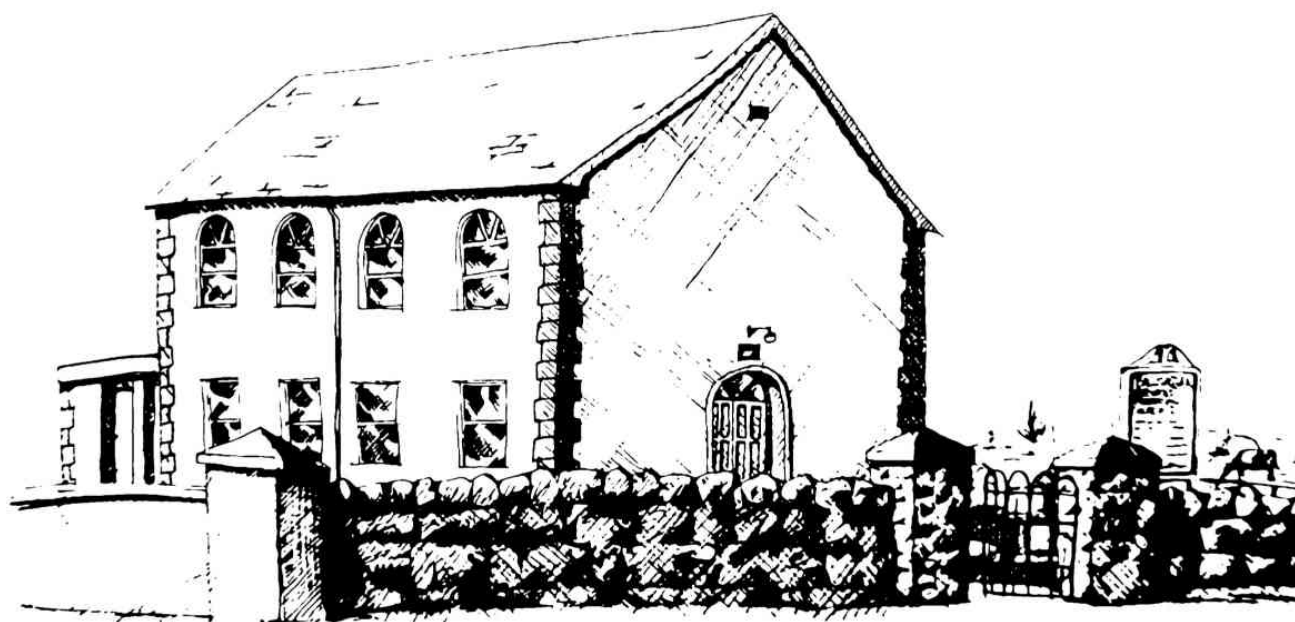
Let me close by telling you a story from British military history. It was the evening before the famous battle of Tel-el-Kebir, in Egypt, and Lord Wolseley determined to send a body of soldiers to attack the enemy in the rear. The great problem, however, was how they were to be safely guided over the desert. A young naval officer suddenly sprang forward and volunteered to act as guide. "I shall pilot them by the stars", he said. He succeeded in doing so. The attack was launched successfully, but alas, the brave young guide fell mortally wounded. The British general visited him in the tent where he lay, and the wounded man said, "General, didn't I lead them straight?" "You did, my brave fellow; no man could have done it better; England will thank you for it", Lord Wolseley replied. "And I guided them", gasped the dying hero, "by a star, you know, by a star—a star".

And we, having been lifted up out of the pit of sin, must keep our eye fixed upon Jesus the Star, and follow wherever He leads. Sometimes we hear the slogan, "Hitch your wagon to a star", so let us see to it that we are linked to Jesus the Bright and Morning Star, and that we keep looking to Him and following Him. When we do this faithfully, He will one day lead us into the heavenly home and there we shall shine as stars for ever and ever.



## PART IV

# GOD'S PEOPLE





# Christians

"What's in a name?" Shakespeare asks in one of his plays and the answer which he gives suggests that to us a name means very little. This, however, was not so in Biblical times. Names, then, were very expressive; we can learn much from a study of them; and so, during this year, I propose dealing with some of the outstanding names applied to the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We commence with the name Christian because it really embraces all the others. It is my privilege, just now, to wish you "A Happy New Year", and if this is to be a happy year for you, in the highest sense of the term, then you must be a Christian. The Christian is the only person who is truly happy. He, and he alone, can rejoice in the Lord always.

In considering the name "Christians" we shall think of:

## I. THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME

In Acts II : 26 we are told that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch". Notice that they were "called" Christians. They did not originate the name themselves; it was given by others. Not by the Jews, of course. They were passionately opposed to the claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Messiah. They called the followers of Jesus Nazarenes, but they could never have called them Christians. No, the name was obviously given by the heathen populace, by the pagan onlookers—perhaps indeed by the Romans.

We have good reason to believe that the name was originally a nickname. Rita Snowden, in one of her recent books, has a very interesting chapter entitled "Name this child". In it she divides names into three main classes—those we earn, our nicknames; those we endure, our Christian names; those we inherit, our family names. I need not tell you boys and girls that nicknames generally fit those to whom they are given. Family names are sometimes rather unsuitable. One of the greatest criminals of the 15th century was called Goodman, and I have read of Mr. Lightbody who weighed 22 stone! Nicknames, however, generally fit the case, and the people of Antioch, who were very fond of nicknames, certainly chose a suitable one for the followers of Christ. They called them Christians.

Some think that the nickname was given in mockery, that it was a term of reproach and contempt. And certainly, in the days of the early Christian church, there were many of the pagan onlookers who had no love for the followers of Jesus, and nothing but scorn for the Cross of Christ. The nickname, however, may have been given in a quite different spirit, the spirit of admiration. All nicknames are not insults. Some of them indeed are really tributes. And it is interesting to note that Sir William Ramsay, a great authority, has pointed out



that the name Christian was a good-tempered nickname. It was not given in mockery, but in good humour, perhaps even in admiration.

## II. THE MEANING OF THE NAME

The word "Christian" is often used today in a very vague, diluted sense. Some would say that Christians are people who are not heathen; others that they are people who go to church; others that they are people who make a profession of faith; others that they are people who live a good life. All these definitions, however, fall short of the real meaning of the name Christian.

There are two main parts in the name. The word "Christ" is a Greek word, which is translated from the Hebrew word "Messiah" or "Anointed One", and the ending "ian" is Latin, meaning "belonging to". Speaking generally, then, Christians are people of any race BELONGING TO CHRIST, God's anointed Redeemer. They are "Christ's ones", "Christ's followers". Speaking more particularly I think we may justly say that Christians are people who are:

### (1) In Christ

Christians are new creatures in Christ. They are born again of the Holy Spirit. They are vitally united to Christ by grace and through faith in the One who loved them and gave Himself for them.

### (2) For Christ

Christians are not only united to Christ, they are also loyal to Him; they are for Him, and not for another. If you have read "Oliver Twist", you will remember that Charley Bates, the pick-pocket, described Bill Sykes' dog as "an out-and-out Christian". And why did he say this? It was because of the animal's wonderful faithfulness. We don't of course speak of dogs as being Christians, but we do speak of Christians as being faithful to their Master, as being loyal to Christ. You remember when Margaret Wilson, the Covenanting lassie, was plucked from the waters, and asked to do something that would mean denying her Covenant and her Saviour-King she replied, "No, I will not. I am one of Christ's children. Let me go". She was faithful unto death.

### (3) With Christ

Christians walk with Christ in daily fellowship. They use the means of grace in the home and sanctuary. They talk to the Saviour in prayer as friend talks to friend; they listen to His voice speaking to them through His Word; they meet with Him regularly in His House and around His Table. They are also with Him in daily service. They not only come to Him, they also take His yoke upon them. They are Christ's yokefellows, working together with Him in the extension of His Kingdom.

### (4) Like Christ

Alas, there are many professing Christians who bear little



resemblance to the Christ of the Gospels. A minister tells the story of a Sabbath School teacher who was not reckoned to be sincere in his profession. One day he asked his class the question "Why do people call me a Christian?" There was an ominous silence; no one felt inclined to give an answer. He repeated the question, and then a little boy put up his hand and said, "Because they don't know you". It is possible for a person to be a Christian in name, and not in reality. There are many professing Christians who are not recognisable as the followers of Christ. They say, but they don't do, they profess, but they don't practise. This was not so in regard to Peter and John. The outside world took knowledge that they had been with Jesus.

### **III. THE CHALLENGE OF THE NAME**

The name Christian, as explained above, presents a challenge to you and to me. Are we Christians in reality? Have we, in response to Divine grace, repented of our sin, and received and rested upon Christ for salvation? Do we love Him, and are we seeking to live as He would have us live, to do His will in so far as we know it?

Polycarp, when dying a martyr's death, said, "I am a Christian". I trust that all you young people will be persuaded to join up on Christ's side, early in life, and that you will so live that others will naturally call you Christians—that is, Christ's boys and girls.



# Believers

Let me commence with a story which I read recently. Baby Blossom went to the window one Sabbath evening, and was seen making signs to the sky. "What are you doing, dear?" her mother asked. "I was just wanting to speak to God", was the reply, "but He doesn't see me. Will you call to Him, Mummy, and tell Him to send down an angel to play with me?" Mother was wise enough to take the matter seriously. The request was duly made, and baby waited expectantly. When nothing happened, Mother tactfully explained: "I expect dear, He has so much work for them to do that He can't spare even a little one to play with Baby Blossom; but Mummy will play with you instead". So all ended happily.

That story illustrates the wisdom of the mother, and the faith of the child. Little children are great believers. They believe everything their parents tell them, and so in a Christian home they soon come to believe in God, and in His Son Jesus Christ. Indeed there are times when their faith puts that of the older folks to shame.

It is interesting to note that the name believers, as applied to Christians, occurs only once or twice in the New Testament. There are many references, however, to them that believe, and this of course implies the same as believers. A believer is one who believes, or one who has faith, and the importance of Christian faith cannot be too strongly emphasised. Let us think for a few moments of three points regarding it.

## I. THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

We need to bear in mind that Christian faith has its source in God. We cannot exercise it apart from the Divine influence. The Saviour Himself said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him", and Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, said, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD". It is God, the Holy Spirit, who works faith in us, and this He generally does through His Word. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." If you young people are believers you no doubt came to be such through your parents making the Scriptures known, or through your own Bible reading, or through your pastor preaching the Word.

## II. THE OBJECT OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

The importance of faith depends on the importance and reality of its object. Some children believe firmly in the Man in the Moon, Old Mother Hubbard, and all kinds of fairies. Yes, and some grown-ups, who ought to have more sense, believe in ghosts, in luck, and in



all manner of superstition. The faith which saves has ONE object, and that object is a Divine Person, the Triune God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we think of Christian faith, we naturally think of faith in Jesus Christ, and this is worthy of special mention. It is expressed in such familiar terms as coming to Christ, looking to Christ, believing in Christ, receiving Christ, and fleeing for refuge to Christ. It implies three main things—knowledge, belief and trust. If we are to have faith in Christ we must know who He is, and what He has done for sinners; we must believe certain things regarding Him—that He is perfect man and true God, that He willingly lived and died for sinners, that He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and that He is “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him”; finally, we must, in response to Divine grace, trust ourselves definitely to Him, “receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel”.

Alas, there are many today who are resting upon themselves rather than upon Christ. I remember reading once about a poor woman who was greatly concerned about the welfare of her soul. Her great question was, “What must I do to be saved?” In her distress she went to her pastor, and he told her that there was nothing that she could DO in the matter, that she simply had to REST upon Christ, and upon His finished work. She left the manse dissatisfied, however, and when she returned home she went to her bedroom with her Bible, determined to keep on reading until she found the way of salvation. By and by she became tired, and slept. In her sleep she dreamed, and in her dream she felt herself falling over the edge of a precipice. As she fell she grasped a twig, and held on for dear life, crying out at the same time, “Save me! Save me!” And then she heard a voice from below saying, “Let go the twig, and I will save you”. She knew that it was the voice of her Lord, but she still held on to the twig, crying “Save me! Save me!” Again the voice came from below saying, “Let go the twig and I will save you”. But she still insisted on clinging to the twig, until at last, through sheer exhaustion, she let go and fell—right into the arms of her Saviour! The resulting joy awoke her. In her dream she saw the way of salvation. It was letting go all earthly supports, and falling into the arms of Christ in childlike trust.

What is the object of YOUR faith? Is it CHRIST or SELF?

### III. THE OUTCOME OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

Faith always produces practical results. There are those who would say, “It doesn’t matter what I believe so long as I live a fairly good life”, but this is false reasoning, for what we believe has a definite influence on our life and conduct. The one who believes in Communism will act according to his belief, and the one who truly believes in Christ will seek to live the Christian life.

One result of Christian faith is good CHEER—the person who really trusts in Christ has the joy of forgiveness. Another result is



good COMPANIONSHIP—the one who really trusts in Christ has fellowship with Him and with His people. Another result is good COURAGE—faith overcomes fear. A final result is good CHARACTER and good CONDUCT. Genuine believers are good liver, and good achievers. Their faith is evidenced by their works.

The story is recorded of a mission doctor in a lonely station in India who was a great Christian as well as a good doctor. One day a convert was being examined before being received into the membership of the mission church. He began bravely and safely enough, "I believe in God Almighty, and I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ". But here his training gave way to his experience, and, turning to the doctor, he burst out, "And, sahib, I believe in you". That doctor's faith in Jesus was evidenced by his works. He was a man who was loved and trusted because of the life that he lived.

May you boys and girls be persuaded and enabled to come to the Saviour early in life, and may you, as you continue looking unto Jesus, and using the means of grace in your own home and God's House be constantly living lives worthy of the Gospel.

The motto of John Eliot, the first Missionary to the American Indians was: "Prayer and Pains, through Faith in Jesus Christ, will do anything".



# Children

An aged minister was once addressing a school of little orphans on the love of God. "How many of you have no father?" he asked, "Answer by holding up your hands". A forest of little hands went up. "So you have no father?" the minister said. "No", they replied. "Well", said the minister, "I expect you have learned the Lord's Prayer. Let me hear you say it". And so they began, "Our Father, which art in heaven . . ." "Stop, children", said the minister. "Did you begin right?" They began again, "Our Father . . ." "Then you have a Father—I hear you say 'Our Father'," said the minister, "Let me speak to you about Him. He is a good Father—the best Father in the world. He is a rich Father too—He owns all the gold in the world, and can give you as much as He sees is best for you. Now, children, never forget what a wealthy family you belong to, and what a rich Father you have. Go to Him for all you want, just as if you could see Him. He is able and willing to do all that is for your good".

It is a beautiful thought to think of God as our Father. Jesus taught us to do this. There is a sense in which God is the Father of all men. All are created by Him, and as such are His offspring. Strictly speaking, however, God is the Father only of those who are in Christ. Christians are believers, and believers are the children of God. This is a most honourable title, and it suggests a number of practical thoughts.

## I. RELATIONSHIP

One of the closest of earthly relationships is that which exists between parent and child, and the Bible makes it perfectly plain that such is the relationship between God and His people. He is their Father—yes, and their Mother too; they are His children, sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

And how is this relationship formed?

(a) Always by Grace. No one can become a child of God apart from Divine grace, apart from the free, undeserved mercy of God. It is by grace that we are born again, that we are created anew in Christ Jesus. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God . . . , which WERE BORN . . . OF GOD". It is by grace that we are adopted, that we are received into God's family and regarded as His children. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will". As Christians think of their close relationship to God they are constrained to say, "By the grace of God I am what I am". "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God".

(b) Generally through Faith. We say "generally" because it is possible for an individual to become a child of God before he is



capable of exercising faith in Christ. Our Confession of Faith states that "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit" (and many of us no doubt like to think that all children dying in infancy are elect infants). Usually, however, sonship comes through faith in Christ. Paul in writing to the Galatians says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus". Faith is our response to Divine grace. It is receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation.

## **II. RIGHTS**

By virtue of their relationship to God, as children to a Father Christians have certain rights and privileges. They have the right to:

(a) The Divine Presence. They can come into the more immediate presence of God through prayer; they can draw near to Him with reverence and confidence; they can ask Him for what they need; they can talk to Him as the child talks to his father or mother. Queen Esther, you remember, came into the presence of the earthly king, in fear and trembling, not knowing how she would be received. The children of God can come into the presence of the King of Kings with confidence, knowing that He is always willing to reach out the golden sceptre of mercy.

(b) The Divine Provision. The children of God are the objects of His parental care and love. "Like as a father . . . so the Lord . . ." He supplies the needs of body and soul; He guides them in their moments of perplexity; He protects them in the hour of danger; He chastens them for their profit; and (we mustn't forget the mother), He nurses them in their time of sickness (see Psalm 41 : 3).

## **III. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Great privileges always imply great responsibilities, and the children of God have their duties as well as their rights. Very briefly, it is their duty to:

(a) Trust God. It is wonderful how children trust their parents. They look to them for the supply of their different needs. They trust them even when they don't understand. And God wants His children to trust Him—when the sun is shining and also when the clouds are overhead.

(b) Love God. It is beautiful to see children loving their parents, loving them not in word only, but in deed and in truth. And God wants His children to love Him. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . .". Christ's great question is still, "Lovest thou Me?" If we truly love Him, it will be evidenced by our service.

(c) Honour God. "Honour thy father and thy mother." We like to see children honouring, respecting, reverencing their parents, and such should be the attitude of God's children to their heavenly



**Father.** In the Scriptures we read much about "fearing God". This, of course, does not mean fearing Him as the slave fears the tyrannical master. It means regarding Him with respect and reverence; it means loving Him so much that we fear lest we may grieve Him. O for more such fear in these modern days!

(d) Obey God. If children trust, love and honour their parents they will seek to obey them, and one of the great marks of the children of God is their obedience. We ought to obey God rather than man, and some of those whose name we bear were obedient unto death. Margaret Wilson said, "I am one of Christ's children", and she laid down her life "for Christ's Crown and Covenant".

(e) Thank God. "'Tis sharper than a serpent's tooth to have a thankless child", and some of God's professed children have been ungrateful for all His goodness. Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? We need to think and thank, and as Philip Henry once said, "Thanksgiving is good, but thanksgiving and thanksgiving is better".

#### **IV. REWARD**

"If children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." There is a reward here—what an honour it is to be a child of God; and an even greater reward hereafter. "Behold, NOW are we the sons of God . . . WE SHALL BE LIKE Him . . ." (I John 3 : 2). The revised version of the preceding verse is "Behold what manner of love . . . that we should be called the sons of God; AND SUCH WE ARE". May we all be such by grace and through faith.



# Brethren

From childhood days we have been taught to say the words, "Our Father which art in heaven". The word "Father" speaks of the Fatherhood of God—Christians are His children by grace and through faith; the word "our" speaks of the brotherhood of man—Christians are, or ought to be, brothers and sisters in Christ.

Most people would agree that the world's greatest need today is summed up in the word "brotherhood". Robert Burns has moved the hearts of men in every land with his prayer:

"Then let us pray that come it may,  
As come it will for a' that,  
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,  
May bear the gree and a' that;  
For a' that, and a' that,  
It's coming yet for a' that,  
That man to man the world o'er,  
Shall brother be for a' that".

Those were fine words, but we need to remember that such brotherhood can only come through the spread of the gospel and through the work of God's Spirit in the hearts and lives of individuals and nations. The one great and true brotherhood is the Christian brotherhood. We can see it plainly in the New Testament; indeed the commonest name applied to Christians in the Acts of the Apostles is the name "brethren". Speaking of that name Dr. Graham Scroggie once said, "The occurrence of it is very frequent from the time of Christ to the close of the third century. The Christians called themselves 'brethren'; Christ said they were 'brethren'; and also He called them His brethren".

The name "brethren", as applied to Christians, suggests a number of important thoughts:

## I. UNITY

"Birds in their little nests agree,  
it is a shameful sight,  
When children of one family  
fall out, and chide, and fight".

Brothers and sisters in the home should live together in peace and unity, and the same is true in regard to Christian brethren. You remember Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee . . . for we be brethren", and there should be no strife between those who are brothers and sisters in Christ. It is only natural that, in regard to Christian individuals and churches, there should be differences of opinion and belief, and it is only right that those who feel assured that what they hold and believe is in



accordance with the revealed will of God, should stand up boldly for the truth as they see it, but, in doing so, they should always act as Christian brethren, seeking to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

“Behold, how good a thing it is,  
and how becoming well,  
Together such as brethren are  
in unity to dwell!”

## II. EQUALITY

We naturally think of brothers in the one family as being equals, and Christian brethren are equal in Christ. God is no respecter of persons. With Him there are no social distinctions. In His family, learned and ignorant, rich and poor, black and white are all brethren.

The story is told of a poor man who approached the communion table and, seeing the Duke of Wellington there, drew back. The Duke, however, invited him to come forward, saying, “We are all one here”. Another story is told of a great artist who was asked to paint a picture for a new church. The people of the church asked that the picture should portray little children singing praises to Jesus. The artist set to work and at last the picture was finished to his satisfaction. There was Jesus, and around Him five of the loveliest little children singing His praises. The artist went to bed, and in his sleep he had a wonderful dream. He saw an angel standing beside his own precious painting. As he looked, the angel took up the brush and commenced working on his finished picture, and as he painted the artist heard him whisper, “The painter has five colours on his palette. I wonder why he used only one for the faces of the little children?” At that moment the artist awoke. He rushed over to where his painting stood, but it was just the same as he had left it. The dream had its effect, however, for the artist took up his brush and painted one little face yellow, another brown, another red, and another black, leaving only the last one white. The result was a great improvement. The people of the church were delighted with the picture. Everyone said, “Aren’t the children’s faces beautiful? Aren’t the colours lovely? Why, it’s just God’s own family”.

Jesus loves the children, and the grown-ups of every colour and of every land. In Him there is “neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free”.

## III. CHARITY

By charity we mean love in action. Christians are brethren, and as such they should love one another, and show their love in a practical way. How often the scriptures stress the importance of “brotherly love” (Hebrews 13 : 1; I Peter 2 : 17). The one who loves God will necessarily “love his brother also” (I John 4 : 21), and “not in word only but in deed and in truth” (I John 3 : 18).



A little girl of three or four years old learned the Bible text, "Love one another". "What does 'love one another' mean?" asked her older sister, in honest doubt as to the meaning. "Why, I must love you and you must love me, and I'm one and you another" was the answer. What a wonderful answer from a child! Brothers and sisters take note.

Another story gives us an illustration of practical brotherly love. While visiting one day the famous preacher, C. H. Spurgeon, came across an urchin boy in the street—dirty, underfed and underclothed, with just a few bits of untidy leather about his feet for boots. The great man felt very sorry for the little hungry fellow, and took him home for a meal. Before the meal Spurgeon gave thanks, saying, "Our Father we do thank Thee for these good gifts", and the boy was puzzled for he had never heard anyone "saying grace" before. When the meal he had was over, Spurgeon went to his desk, wrote a letter, and told the boy to take it to a bootshop owned by one of Spurgeon's deacons. The deacon read the letter as follows, "My dear friend, would you kindly supply this little brother of mine with the strongest pair of boots that you have in the shop. Yours sincerely, C. H. Spurgeon". The boot and shoe merchant was mystified. Spurgeon was an old man—and he with a brother as young as this! He couldn't understand it. But like a good deacon he obeyed his pastor, and gave the boy a good pair of boots. The next time he met Spurgeon, he said, "What was the meaning of that letter you sent me? I didn't realise you had a brother as young as that". "Oh, didn't you?" said Spurgeon. "Well, I have, and what is more, you have a brother as young as that too, and since he is your brother and he is my brother, I'll tell you what we will do. You will pay for the one boot and I will pay for the other!"



# Disciples

"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch". These words show that the followers of Jesus were called "disciples" before they received the name Christians. Indeed this seems to have been the first name given to them. It occurs no fewer than 270 times in the Gospels and Acts, and although we rarely use it nowadays it has a very practical message for us because disciples are:

## I. LEARNERS

This is the root meaning of the word. A disciple is one who is instructed or taught, one who is ready to sit at the feet of a great teacher and learn the truths which he is able to unfold. In Greek history we read about the disciples of such great thinkers as Plato and Aristotle, and in the Bible we read about the disciples of Jesus.

Nicodemus spoke the truth when he said to the Saviour, "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God". One of the most familiar pictures in the Gospels is that of the Saviour sitting on some grassy slope with His disciples around Him, and teaching them many things. His teaching was authoritative, original, attractive, challenging. Never man spake as He spake. The common people heard Him gladly.

And today He is still the same great Teacher. He teaches through conscience, through nature, through providence, and above all through His own Word. He makes use of Christian parents, Christian Sabbath School teachers, Christian pastors, and He wants you boys and girls to listen to His voice and to learn to do His will. He says, "Come unto Me" as your Saviour; He also says "Learn of Me" as your Teacher. He would have you know the great doctrines of His word—He would teach you about God and the soul, about sin and salvation and eternity. He would also have you know your Christian duties—He would teach you your duty to God, to yourself, and to others, He would teach you how to LIVE the Christian life.

It is all important that you sit down at His feet early in life, and learn from Him what He would have you be and do. And remember—you won't learn everything in a few sessions. A young man, having passed his final examination, announced the fact to his parents through a telegram bearing the one word "Educated". If that young man had been wiser he would have realised that his education was only beginning. Of John Richard Green the historian, it is said on his tomb at Cannes—"He died learning", and this is true of the greatest of God's saints. They have grown in knowledge as well as in grace, and even in old age they are still learning. God's Word is very dear to them, they discover new treasures in it, they have an even more intimate knowledge of their Lord.

Never think that you can reach a stage in the Christian life when you have nothing to learn.



## II. LOVERS

The disciples of Plato and Aristotle were lovers—lovers of their master, lovers of the wisdom which he taught, and the disciples of Jesus are lovers too.

(a) They love their Teacher. Like Peter they can say, “Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee”. They love Him because of what He has done—died that they might live; they love Him because of what He is—the fairest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely One; they love Him because of what He says—the gracious words which proceed from His lips, words of wisdom, of invitation, of warning, of command, of promise, of hope.

(b) They love one another. Of the early disciples of Jesus the heathen said, “Behold how these Christians love one another”, and today one of the characteristics of Christ’s true disciples is mutual love and affection. You will remember we stressed this last month when dealing with Christians as brethren.

(c) They love the outside world. To the early disciples the Saviour said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”, and filled with love for the Saviour, and for those who knew him not, they went forth teaching and preaching the good news of redemption.

And today the disciples of Christ still love the heathen at home and abroad, and seek to do what they can to bring them to a saving knowledge of the Gospel. Some of you young people may have heard of Dr. Laubach and his famous work amongst the illiterate. He was an American Missionary in the Philippines when he planned a quick method of teaching people who were no longer children to read and write. This was partly by pictures and partly by insisting that “each one should teach one”. The rule was, “No second lesson till you’ve taught someone else the first one”. The result was within a few years millions of people all over learned to read. And the motto, “Each one teach one”, or “Each one, win one” is a fine motto for the disciples of Jesus.

## III. LABOURERS

There is mental labour as well as manual labour. Some of you young people know this very well; you know that the learner must labour, that the student must “scorn delights and live laborious days”.

And the true disciples of Jesus are labourers. The word disciple is closely associated with the word discipline, and the latter speaks of the hard things of life. True discipleship costs. There is cost associated with our own learning. It is not easy to study the Bible as we ought to study it, to learn the great doctrines and duties of the Word. It is not easy to practise the great Christian virtues, indeed



some of these, such as courage, and patience, and endurance, and contentment are often learned in the hard school of affliction. There is also cost associated with the teaching of others. It costs a conscientious mother something to instruct her child in the main things—what patience, what prayer, what pains are needed there! It also costs a conscientious Christian something to obey His Master's orders—"Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them . . .". There are those who have to leave all and go—we cannot think too much of their sacrifice—there are those who have to hold the ropes at home through sacrificial praying and giving.

I trust that all my youthful readers will become disciples of Jesus early in life. He still says, "Come unto Me" and "Learn of Me". May your response be, "Here am I; for Thou didst call me". May you sit down at His feet ready to learn His will, and having learned it, to do it. How good to be able to say with the Psalmist in old age:

"For Thou, O Lord God, art my hope,  
and from my youth my trust".

"For even from my youth, O God,  
by Thee I have been taught;  
And hitherto I have declared  
the wonders Thou hast wrought".

(Psalm 71 : 5, 17).



# Servants

The title servant is an honourable one. We are all servants, and there is nothing to be ashamed of in being a servant provided we are good and faithful servants, doing our work as unto the Lord and not to men. There was once a servant girl who made a profession of faith in Christ. She was asked what difference it made to her life, and she replied, "I sweep below the mats now". The good servant sweeps below the mats; she does her work well; she knows that God would have it so.

In the Bible we read of many good servants. What a model servant Eliezer, Abraham's servant was! He was faithful, obedient, godly, humble and diligent. And needless to say you young people all know the story of the little captive maid who waited upon Naaman's wife—she was faithful to her mistress, to her master, and, above all, to her God. Turning to the New Testament we find that the Lord Jesus was Himself a servant. "I am come not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; "I am among you as One that serveth". Later on we find such men as James and Peter and Paul speaking of themselves as servants of Jesus Christ; we read also about a lady called Phoebe being highly commended by Paul as "a servant of the church".

Today even the King or Queen upon the throne is regarded as being a servant. When the Archbishop of Canterbury preached at the coronation of King George VI, he chose as his text, "I am among you as he that serveth". On the crest of the Prince of Wales there are the words "I serve". When the Prime Minister calls together the members of the Cabinet the official summons reads that: "the servants of the King are commanded to meet".

The highest title of all, however, is "servant of God", "servant of Jesus Christ". This title belongs to all true Christians. They are:

## I. ROYAL SERVANTS

I am sure most of you know the meaning of those words "O.H.M.S."—they mean "On His or Her Majesty's Service". There is a familiar story told regarding Henry Drummond, the famous Scottish Professor and author of "The Greatest Thing in the World". When the Prince of Wales—afterwards King Edward VII—was getting married, the High School in Stirling was being decorated by the teachers and scholars in honour of the event. Henry Drummond was only a little boy at the time, and he couldn't do very much but look on—at least that was what the bigger boys thought. When the decorating paper was finished, however, they asked him to go to the shop for more, but he refused. Then someone said, "Don't you know it's O.H.M.S.?" And when Henry Drummond heard that he at once darted off to get the paper. The errand had been transformed; it was service for the King.



And Christians are servants of the King of Kings. Their service is:

(a) Honourable. Have you read the story of how Stanley went out to Africa in search of Livingstone? He and his party went through the jungle swamp, braving the beasts of the field and the fever—a more terrible enemy than lion or tiger. The task seemed hopeless, and Stanley was nearly giving up in despair. One day as he sat at the door of his tent he saw smoke arising in the distance, and knew that there must be people near. Coming near cautiously, he saw some huts, and was startled by seeing a black face at his side, and hearing a man say in good English, “Fine morning, sir”. Stanley looked at the speaker in amazement and said, “Good morning, but who are you?” “Who am I?” replied the native, drawing himself up with dignity to the top of his height. “I am Dr. Livingstone’s servant, sir”. The native regarded it as a great honour to be the servant of the famous missionary, and Christians regard it as an even greater honour to be the servants of the King of Kings, of Him whose service is perfect freedom.

(b) Humble. The servants of Christ feel highly honoured as they think of their relationship to their Royal Master, but this does not lead to unseemly pride. On the contrary it leads to true humility, to a deep sense of utter unworthiness to be the servants of such a great Master. Humility is one of the outstanding characteristics of the Christian. We see it exemplified very clearly in the life of the greatest of the apostles. Paul speaks of himself as the chief of sinners, as less than the least of all the saints. He also speaks of himself as the servant of Jesus Christ, and the word means slave, bond-servant. What a lowly, humble attitude on the part of the great apostle! And today the true Christian has the lowly and contrite spirit. His motto is, “Not I but Christ”. He is deeply conscious of his unworthiness, and of the worthiness of his Royal Master. He is clothed with humility, humble in prayer and in service.

## II. READY SERVANTS

In days gone by a certain slave, on hearing that an Englishman had purchased him, gnashed his teeth, knit his brows, and declared with true pathos and heartfelt indignation that he would never obey so unworthy a representative of the land of boasted freedom. On learning afterwards, however, that his new master had bid for him and bought him in order to set him free, the poor negro was so overcome with joy and gratitude that he fell down at the feet of the man he had just vowed never to serve and exclaimed, “I am your slave for ever”. He was now ready to serve with all his heart and soul.

Now that is an illustration of the true Christian’s attitude to Christ. Realising what the Saviour has done for him, realising that He has also redeemed him from the bondage of sin and Satan with His own precious blood, and drawn him to Himself by His grace, he



falls down at his Royal Master's feet in joyful, glad surrender and says, "I am your slave, your bond-servant for ever".

Christians, as servants of Christ are:

(a) Ready to BE what He would have them be. He wants them to be good, to be true, to be faithful, to be upright—in a word to follow after holiness, to bring forth the fruit of Christian character, to live the Christian life. Let us never forget that if we are to be good servants of Christ we must LIVE the good life. The lip is of no avail if it is not backed up by the life.

(b) Ready to DO what He would have them do. Did you ever notice how the Saviour stressed the importance of doing in regard to His followers? "What do ye more than others?" "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." His faithful servants seek to know what His will for them is, and having discovered it they seek to do it. They are ready to obey, without asking questions; they delight to do His will. A famous Christian once spoke of himself as "God's errand boy".

### **III. REWARDED SERVANTS**

The true Christian does not serve with the thought of a reward, but he gets it. There is a reward in this life. Faithful service—even in regard to that which is least—brings joy to self, and to others. And when our service here is ended what a joy to hear the Master's "Well done", and to meet in heaven those whom we have helped—perhaps brought to the Saviour—here on earth!

Son, daughter, go work TODAY in My vineyard.



# Friends

Charles Kingsley was once asked the secret of his success and he replied, "I had a friend". It is a great thing for us to HAVE a good friend, one in whom we can confide, one who is absolutely trustworthy, and such a friend we have in God, or if you like, in Christ, for Christ is God. He is the greatest of all friends— Faithful, Rich, Invisible, Everlasting, Near, Dear. It is also very important for us to be good friends. Abraham was called "the friend of God"; Jonathan was the good friend of David; and we should all be good friends of the Lord Jesus Christ, and hence good friends of all those who trust, honour and obey Him.

It is noteworthy that the name "friends", as applied to believers, came from the Master Himself. You remember, in the Upper Room, He said to His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants (slaves); for the servant (slave) knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you". Some of the names applied to Christians were coined by themselves, and others were given by the world, but the name "friends" came directly from the lips of the Saviour. It suggests three main thoughts:

## I. FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST

If we have good friends we always feel happy in their company. We talk to them—telling them our joys and our sorrows, seeking their counsel and advice. A certain father once said, "Nothing gives me a greater thrill than when my children talk to me about their personal concerns as a friend with friend". We also LISTEN to our friends—listen to them telling us their problems, or giving us good advice or perhaps faithfully pointing out our faults. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

And this is a picture of how Christ's true friends act in regard to Him. They walk with Him in happy, glad companionship. They talk to Him in prayer, as friend talks to friend, they also listen to Him speaking through conscience, through providence, and above all through His own Word. Yes, and they know where He is most likely to be found on His own day, and so they get into the habit of going to church on the Sabbath.

I trust that you boys and girls will make diligent use of the means of grace in the days of your youth. I trust that you will find real pleasure in prayer, in Bible reading, and in attending the services of the sanctuary. Thus you will walk with God, and have intimate fellowship with your Saviour, and thus your lives will be transformed.

## II. OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST

If our friend asks us to do something we naturally endeavour to do it, and the Saviour spoke of obedience as being one of the marks



of His friends. "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you".

We cannot lay too much stress on the importance of obedience. "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"; "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it"; "If ye love Me, keep My commandments". If we are really the friends of Jesus we shall seek to do His will in so far as we know it. The Ten Commandments are the words of Christ, and they are as binding in the twentieth century as they ever were. The Saviour still says—Worship God only, and in the way He has commanded, Swear not, Remember the Sabbath day, Honour your parents, Kill not, Keep yourselves pure, Be honest, Lie not, Covet not. He also says, "Repent and believe"; "Watch and pray"; "Go and preach"; "Love one another"; "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness"; "Suffer the little children to come unto Me". Let us find out His will for us as set forth in His own Word, and having discovered it let us do it. A little girl was asked how she knew that she was one of Christ's disciples. Her reply was, "I do what He tells me without asking questions".

### III. SACRIFICE FOR CHRIST

We are generally willing to make some sacrifice for our friends. The Saviour Himself said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for His friends".

There have been those who have gladly laid down their lives for an earthly king or prince. Young MacPherson belonged to one of the Highland clans that were loyal to "Bonnie" Prince Charlie. One day he was caught by a company of "Butcher" Cumberland's soldiers who were searching the glens for the prince. They thought they would make the young highlander tell the way to the secret hiding place, but to every question and threat he replied, "I'm a MacPherson, and the MacPhersons are friends of the Prince". They shot him in the end, but he was faithful unto death.

We naturally admire such sacrificial loyalty. But as you young people know there is a greater Prince, a greater King, ONE JESUS. Can He trust us to be loyal to Him, even though this may mean sacrifice? Those whose name we bear were faithful unto death. The Scottish Covenanters put loyalty to Christ before all other loyalties, and so separated themselves from a church and a state which did not acknowledge Christ as King and Head. They testified even unto death "for the Crown Rights and Royal Prerogatives of their Saviour King". Young people like Margaret Wilson and Andrew Hislop laid down their lives "for Christ's Crown and Covenant".

Today we, as a church, seek to uphold the principles which they honoured so highly. To do so does not mean death, but it does mean a certain amount of sacrifice. Some of our principles—scriptural worship, political dissent, separation from secret societies—are decidedly unpopular, but behind them all is the thought of loyalty to



Christ as King and Head. We seek to do His will as set forth in His Word, we seek to separate ourselves from anything that we hold to be dishonouring to Him as King. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate . . .". I repeat, can He trust us to be loyal to Him, even though this may mean sacrifice? Real friendship with Christ means denying self, and taking up the cross and following Him.

We have been talking then about being friends of God, of Christ. How can we enter into this friendship? J. P. Struthers in his 1890 volume of the "Morning Watch" has an interesting article "About the best Friendship in the World". In it he states that if God is your friend you will walk HAND IN HAND with Him, see EYE TO EYE with Him, feel HEART TO HEART with Him, and, one day, stand FACE TO FACE with Him. He concludes with this paragraph, "Hand in hand, eye to eye, heart to heart, face to face—it is good and pleasant to be God's friends. Is the name yours? This is how you get it, not by your gifts or your services, but by trusting Jesus to save you from your sins, by coming to Him just as you are that He may lead you to God". A missionary was preaching once to some North American Indians, and their chief, Long Arrow, was touched by the sermon. One evening he came to the missionary, leading his beautiful horse by the bridle, "I am going to buy the friendship of God", he said. "I will give my horse for it". But the missionary replied, "That friendship is not to be bought". The next day Long Arrow came again and offered his fine six year old boy, "I will give my first born son", he said, "if God will forgive me". But the missionary shook his head and answered, "Forgiveness is free". And then the chief cried, "I have nothing left; I have no dearer thing. But stay! will He take me and my sinful heart? I will give myself to Him". "A broken heart He will not despise", the missionary said, "He will take you just as you are". Yes, that is the way into God's friendship—the only way.



# Saints

The title "saint" occurs very often in the Bible; indeed it is one of the most common names applied to God's people. In the New Testament we find Paul using it very frequently. In writing to the Romans he addresses himself to the saints at Rome; and in the same way he commences his two Epistles to the Corinthians, and his Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians.

Today the followers of Christ are still called saints. It is all-important that we know the correct meaning of the name, and it may interest you young people to know that you can become saints in the days of youth, and then grow in Christ-likeness. In dealing with this particular name we shall consider:

## I. WHO THEY ARE

The word saint has often been used in a sense which is not scriptural.

The Church of Rome reserves the title for certain men and women whom it canonizes. Before a dead person can be enrolled in the canon of saints, the Pope holds a court of law to consider the matter. One advocate sets forth the good character of the departed, whilst another—"the Devil's advocate"—brings up charges against him. The decision rests with the cardinals and prelates present, whose votes are counted by the Pope. The machinery of Rome is so smooth that the defender has never lost a case! In the list of saints thus created by the Roman church there are some of the best people who ever lived, and also some of the worst. All are entitled to be prayed to and to receive the worship of the church. For such canonization of saints, and for such prayers to saints, there is no scriptural warrant.

Again there are those who restrict the title to the Apostles and early Evangelists. Those who put the headings to the books of the Bible—they were not inspired men of course—apply the title saint to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, but not to any of the other New Testament writers, and to no Old Testament writer. Today there are many who are careful to say St. Matthew and also St. Peter and St. Paul, but they never say St. Abraham, or St. Moses, or St. Isaiah. We, as a church, protest against such unscriptural distinctions. If you are referring to a Bible verse, don't say ST. Mark 6 : 12, but Mark 6 : 12.

Further, there are many today who reserve this name for those who are specially good and pious. How often we hear the expression "I don't profess to be a saint", or "That would vex a saint". According to Scriptural usage, however, every Christian is a saint. Paul, in writing to the members of the Church at Corinth, does not spare them from censure. Some of them were very imperfect and inconsistent



Christians. And yet Paul in the opening words of his two Epistles to them is careful to salute them as saints.

The humblest believer in Christ then is a saint in God's sight, and as he or she grows older in years, and makes a constant use of the means of grace, there should be noticeable progress in Christian character. The saint at the beginning of the Christian life is reckoned righteous in God's sight, and then, through the Holy Spirit working in him, he gradually becomes righteous.

## II. WHERE THEY ARE FOUND

The Bible speaks of different places where saints are to be found.

(1) In God's hand. In Deuteronomy we read of the saints being in God's hand. This speaks of their preciousness—when a thing is particularly precious we often carry it in our hand; it speaks of their safety—"No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand"; it speaks of their usefulness—when Richard Baxter lay dying he spoke of himself as being "a pen in God's hand".

(2) In God's house. In the Psalms we read of the congregation or assembly of the saints, and the reference is to God's people meeting for worship in His house. In the closing words of Psalm 132 we have a beautiful description of the earthly Zion, and of her saints shouting aloud for joy. God's saints will naturally be found in His house. There most of them are planted by His grace and there they grow up and flourish. You are all familiar with that beautiful expression—"the communion of saints". I trust that you young people will enjoy such communion all the days of your life, that you will never forsake the assembling of yourselves in God's house on the Sabbath day—as alas the manner of many is today.

(3) In unlikely places. Paul speaks of "saints in Caesar's household". The reference is to Nero, that monster of iniquity, who murdered his brother, and mother, and wife. In his palace, or in the barracks attached to it, there were saints, faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is interesting to note that in the Old Testament we have a somewhat similar reference. In I Kings we read about a young prince called Abijah. He was the son of Jeroboam, the man who made Israel to sin. He was brought up in evil surroundings, and yet we are told that in him there was found "some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel". Listen, young people—no matter how difficult your surroundings may be, no matter how strong the opposition of the world, you can, with God's help, be a saint, "a lily among thorns".

(4) In heaven. Heaven is the eternal home of the saints. There they are lilies separated for ever from the thorns, and there they look to us to follow them. Parents, grandparents, all our loved ones in glory—they being dead still speak to us, and their message is "Come up hither".



### III. WHAT THEY DO

Speaking generally the saints seek to live the life which God would have them live. Having been persuaded and enabled to embrace Christ as Saviour they aim at living as good a life as it is possible for saved sinners to live.

(a) This life is a life of consecration to God. Bishop Westcott once said, "The mark of a saint is not perfection, but consecration". A saint is not a man without faults, but a man who has given himself without reserve to God. John Calvin's seal and motto was an open hand holding out a burning heart, with the words engraved, "I give all". May God enable us each one to yield ourselves afresh and wholeheartedly to God. The members of the churches in Macedonia first gave their own selves to the Lord, and then their monetary offerings.

(b) This life is a life of separation from sin. In the days of the French Revolution, Louis XVI of France, and his beautiful queen died on the scaffold. Their son, the heir to the throne, was only a lad. They didn't kill him, but they kept him a prisoner, and tried to destroy any good that was in his nature. Wicked men sought to train his mind to evil thoughts, his heart to evil feelings, his lips to unlovely words. Naturally the boy suffered, but we are told that there were times when he would wake up to higher things, and exclaim, "I can't say it, I can't do it, for I was born to be a king".

Those who are born again by the Holy Spirit are born to be kings and priests unto God, and as such they must separate themselves from known sin. Consecration unto God, and separation from sin, like faith and repentance, should always be found together. If we are to let God control our life we must let go sin. One of the great commands of the Bible is "Be ye holy", and as a famous preacher has pointed out, to be holy is to be Honest, Obedient, Loving, and the Y stands for You.

And now a closing word for your hard-working mothers in the home. It is entitled.

#### THE HOUSEWIFE'S PRAYER

"Lord of all pots and pans and things; since I've not time to be  
A saint by doing lovely things, or watching late with Thee,  
Or dreaming in the dawnlight, or storming Heaven's gates  
Make me a saint by getting meals and washing up the plates.  
Although I must have Martha's hands, I have a Mary's mind;  
And when I black the boots and shoes Thy sandals, Lord, I find;  
I think of how they trod the earth, each time I scrub the floor;  
Accept this meditation, Lord, I haven't time for more.  
Warm all the kitchen with Thy love and light it with Thy peace.  
Forgive me all my worrying, and make my grumbling cease.  
Thou who didst love to give men food, in room or by the sea,  
Accept this service that I do—I do it unto Thee."



# Followers

I expect many of you boys and girls have heard of the game, "Follow your leader". Perhaps some of you have played it at school, though I don't think it is played very often nowadays. The idea of the game is this. One boy is chosen as leader. He then starts off running, and the others follow him. Whatever he does, they do. If he jumps over a wall they must follow him, if he climbs up a tree they must climb after him, if he enters the school, and takes out a book and begins to learn poetry, they must do likewise. They must follow their leader—and the fun depends, to a great extent, upon what the leader does.

Now the Bible shows that the Christian life is somewhat like the game of "Follow your leader". Jesus Christ is the Leader, and what we have to do is to put our trust in Him as Saviour, and to seek to follow Him wherever He leads. This will mean obedience to His call: it will also mean imitation of His example.

H. V. Morton has written a famous book entitled, "In the steps of the Master". In it he describes how he went to the Holy Land and walked the paths that the Saviour walked when He was here on earth. You boys and girls may not have the privilege of doing this, but you need to remember that the Saviour is alive today, that He still calls upon individuals to follow Him, that He has given you an example that you should follow in His steps.

Let us think of some of the marks of His true followers. The followers of Christ are:

## I. WISE

Many followers are unwise. Rita F. Snowden, in one of her recent books, tells us of an incident in the life of Henri Fabre, the French scientist, who died in 1915 at ninety-two years of age. One day he noticed a number of caterpillars climbing up a huge stone vase, beside the door of his house. Presently he saw them going round a ledge at the top. Each caterpillar followed the one in front of him. Round and round the vase they steadily marched at three inches a minute. Evening came, and still they went on round and round. Hardly a hand's distance away there was some green stuff on which caterpillars love to feed, but they kept going round, each one blindly following the one in front. After five days and five nights one poor weary caterpillar slipped down over the edge, and then four others followed. Three days later—on the eighth day—the rest, in ones and twos and threes, came down the ledge. They had travelled over a quarter of a mile, and all to no purpose, simply because each one followed the one in front of him, and never stopped to ask himself if it was worth while.

And there are young people today who follow others to no good purpose, indeed they often follow them to some evil purpose. In



Exodus we find God saying, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil". That is a very practical command for young people. You should not imitate the evil that you see in the many, rather you should imitate the good which you see in the few. You should always be followers of that which is good, you should imitate the good which you see in others, and above all you should follow Christ who is the good, the perfect Leader, the perfect Pattern.

J. P. Struthers once baptized a child whose name was Douglas Young. He reminded the parents of the story of Sir James Douglas and the heart of Robert Bruce—of how Douglas when surrounded by foes took the heart of the dead hero and threw it forward saying, "Douglas will follow thee". He then went on to tell the parents to teach their boy to follow Christ..

Today it is the duty of Christian parents and pastors and Sabbath School teachers to teach the children to follow Christ. When the children do this they are acting wisely. They are following the One who will lead them along the right paths to the right place, the One who will enable them to make the best of this life and of that which is to come.

## II. WILLING

I expect some of you young people have read stories about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. A Scottish prince called Gareth wanted to become one of that gallant band, but his mother, Queen Bellicent, pleaded with him to remain at home and follow the deer. Gareth's mind, however, was made up.

"Man am I grown; a man's work must I do.  
Follow the deer? Follow the Christ, the King;  
Live pure, speak true; right wrong, follow the King,  
Else wherefore born?"

At last his mother gave her consent, but she insisted that, when he reached King Arthur's court, he would serve a year as a kitchen boy before revealing his identity. She thought that this would lead him to stay at home, but Gareth accepted the hard condition most cheerfully. He was willing to make any sacrifice if only he could become a Knight of the Round Table.

And you young people should have something of Gareth's willingness in regard to King Jesus. May God make you willing in the day of His power; may He persuade and enable you to embrace Christ and to follow after righteousness; may He help you to follow Christ the King.

Remember—Christ's followers are volunteers, not conscripts. His love should constrain you to offer yourselves willingly.



### III. WORTHY

The followers of Christ have a worthy leader, and they themselves, though deeply conscious of their unworthiness, seek to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing".

Many of you have in your homes a book entitled "The Scots Worthies". In it we have the record of the testimony and sufferings of many of our Covenanting forefathers. They followed Christ the King even unto death; they were willing to lay down their lives for His Crown and Covenant; they were courageous, consistent, compassionate; of them the world was not worthy.

Today we are called upon to follow them in so far as they followed Christ. Their message to us today is, "Follow Christ the King". "Crown Him in all the relationships of life—individual, family, social, ecclesiastical and national".

Let me close with a familiar story. In a lonely place in Africa, prior to the 1914-18 War, a little group of people was assembled. There was a circle of native chiefs, and in their midst a tall white young man, a missionary. For a week he had been telling them about the Saviour, and now they were about to separate. On the morrow they were about to return to their different tribes and the missionary at the close of his final address felt constrained to throw out a challenge. "Who is willing", he said, "to make Jesus Christ King, in his own heart and life, and in the heart and life of his tribe?" For a time there was silence for every chief knew what this would mean for him—sacrifice, probably death. And then suddenly one chief lifted his hand and said, "Ina so" (I am willing). He was followed by another, and another, and another, until the whole band had given their promise. The missionary bowed his head in a prayer of thanksgiving to Almighty God, and then they all departed to their tasks.

May you young people be willing to make Jesus King in your hearts and lives, and to seek his acknowledgment as King in all other spheres. May your sincere resolve be, "Lord I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest".



# Witnesses

How often, on the Radio, we hear a police message regarding an accident! Usually the message ends with the familiar words, "Will anyone who witnessed the accident please communicate with Scotland Yard, telephone number Whitehall 1212". It is a broadcast appeal for witnesses, and it is interesting to note that such an appeal came from the lips of the Saviour just before He left this earth. One of His last recorded sayings is, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me", or, as we have it in the Revised Version, "Ye shall be My witnesses". This was His appeal to His disciples before His ascension, and it is still His appeal today. It is His appeal to the church, it is also His appeal to the individuals in the church. It is His appeal to you young people who are the hope of the church. He wants you to join up on His side and to become His faithful witnesses. The world would put Him in the prisoner's dock—as it did in Pilate's day—bringing false witnesses to testify against Him; you are to take your stand by His side, openly confessing Him, faithfully bearing witness for Him.

Your witness should be:

## I. CLEAR

The good witness has something to say, and he says it clearly and definitely. He speaks what he knows and testifies to what he has seen.

The witness of the early Christian Church was clear and precise. It declared Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God; it laid stress upon His Incarnation, His Life of perfect obedience, His atoning Death, His triumphant Resurrection, and His glorious Ascension; it proclaimed Him as the sinner's only Saviour; it showed the importance of faith in Him, and of good works as the evidence of such faith; it spoke out boldly against evil.

Today you young people are called to bear similar witness—You are to testify to the Saviour's Person and work as set forth in His own Word; you are also to testify to what He means to you, to what He has done for your soul. You should be able to say—"He is the Saviour because He has saved and is saving me". "He is the Comforter because He has comforted and is comforting me". When cross-examined by the enemy you should be able to use the great weapon of experience. "How do you know that Christ is alive?" a young Christian was asked. "Because I was talking to Him this morning", was the swift reply.

You will remember too that a great part of your witness must be against evil. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil". You must testify against anything you know to be dishonouring to Christ in regard to individual, family, social, church and national life, against such evils as dishonesty, profanity, the drink traffic, betting and gambling in



any form, and Sabbath desecration. Let the world know where you stand in these matters.

## II. CONSISTENT

The good witness acts consistently. When cross-examined by the opposing barrister he does not contradict what he has already said. He tells the truth at the beginning, and he sticks to what he has said.

And in your witness for Christ it is most important that you act consistently, that you are sincere in your testimony, and that lip and life correspond. I am firmly convinced that the cause of Christ suffers more from the inconsistencies of its professed followers than from the open attacks of its avowed enemies. Young people—be what you profess to be; avoid all formality and hypocrisy; witness for Christ by the life that you live. Daniel Webster once said, "The best argument I know for religion is an old aunt of mine". A young man was asked under whose preaching he had been led to Christ. He replied, "Under no man's preaching, but under my mother's practising". We need more practical Christianity today, more holy, consistent, Christ-like living.

## III. COURAGEOUS

The good witness has the courage of his convictions. He may have received threatening letters written with a view to preventing him from giving important evidence, but he refuses to be intimidated, he courageously speaks what he knows.

And in your witness for Christ you must be strong and of good courage. The word translated witness in the New Testament is the same as the word translated martyr, and every witness should have the martyr spirit, the spirit of courage and endurance. We naturally recall some of the youthful witnesses in the days of our Covenanting forefathers. I hope that the girls all know the story of Margaret Wilson and the boys that of Andrew Hislop. They witnessed for Christ's Crown and Covenant, and they were faithful unto death. Today you are not persecuted as they were, but it still requires courage to be a faithful and true witness of Jesus Christ. It takes courage for that young girl to rebuke her companion for her evil ways, and it takes courage for that young lad to kneel down and pray the first night in the boarding school. Never be ashamed of Christ.

## IV. CONVINCING

If the witness in the box gives clear, consistent, courageous evidence, if he is known to be a trustworthy person, and if he speaks from personal knowledge, he will inevitably make a great impression on judge and jury. His witness will be convincing and will call for a definite verdict.



And if you young people, having been persuaded and enabled to embrace Christ, having experienced His power in your own hearts and lives, witness for Him clearly, consistently, courageously—through lip and life—verdicts will be won for Christ. Others will take knowledge of you that you have been with Christ, that He is real to you, and they will be attracted to the same Saviour and the same way of life.

I have read of a woman who approached a minister saying, "I would like to join this church". She then went on to give her reason. She talked about her companion with whom she worked in the factory, and how the wonderful Christian life of this woman had led her to decide to accept the way of life as Jesus revealed it, and to become an active member of the church.

Let me close with a story. In one of her books Rita F. Snowden tells of a Miss Marion Olcott, who in the course of a lovely holiday found herself one evening in a little village on the river Elbe, between Saxony and Bohemia. By and by she heard the church bells ringing, and saw the people making their way to church, each carrying something. Going down to the street she saw that the "something" was a little lamp. One of the women satisfied her curiosity. "You see", she said, "there is no other way of lighting our church. Away back in the sixteenth century the duke, who then lived in the castle, built the church, putting into writing his wish that each of the people should bring his or her own lamp. He also furnished the lamps for the purpose. The church loans them to the families year by year. We have never departed from that beautiful old custom". Miss Olcott expressed the opinion that this would keep people from attending the evening service, but the village woman said, "Oh, no, it works just the other way. Our Church is called 'The Church of the Lighted Lamps'. Everybody who goes makes it a little brighter, and when one is tempted to take her ease and stay at home, she remembers that the dear old church needs everybody's lamp. If one's lamp isn't there, there is so much less light. One is missed if one stays away. Besides there is the blessing; one needs the blessing of going to church to help one to live".

The two main lessons of the story are: (1) We should attend church regularly; (2) We should bring our lamp of witness with us and let it shine inside the church and outside too.

"The Lord will light my candle so,  
that it shall shine full bright".



# Heirs

I have just been reading about an old trunk, on the side of which were the letters W.C.B. It had come all the way from China to England, and was being opened in a humble home in the presence of a little girl. This little girl had often heard her parents speak about the great man to whom the trunk belonged, for W.C.B. stood for William C. Burns, one of China's great missionaries. Someone once asked a Chinese Christian if he knew William C. Burns. The man replied, "Know him, sir? All China knows him. He is the holiest man alive". After his death his trunk was sent home, and the little girl, as it was being opened, wondered what curious things would be found inside. To her surprise this was all that the trunk contained—some sheets of paper, printed in Chinese, a Chinese Bible, an English Bible, an old writing case, two small books, a Chinese lantern, one Chinese dress, and a little blue flag—which had belonged to "The Gospel Boat". When she saw the contents, the little girl whispered, "Surely he must have been very poor".

William C. Burns was poor materially, but he was rich spiritually, rich in that he had a Bible and sought to make it known, rich in faith and good works, rich in the spiritual blessings of the present, rich in the assured blessings of eternity.

Early in the year we were speaking of Christians as being God's children. If you boys and girls are His children, by grace and through faith, you are rich. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ". In regard to a large estate the oldest son is usually sole heir, but in regard to the riches of God's grace ALL His children are heirs. As heirs they have:

## I. A PRESENT INHERITANCE

In Psalm 16 David speaks of this. He is an exile. For the time being he has lost his earthly inheritance. He realises, however, that a greater inheritance remains. "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup . . . yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Today we too can think of a present inheritance. How often, as a church, we speak of our Covenanting heritage, the heritage of civil and religious liberty which has been handed down to us as a result of the earnest contendings and faithful witnessings of our forefathers in Scotland. Today, as a result of their faithfulness unto death, we enjoy privileges that were denied to them. We can worship God in our own homes and in the sanctuary, none daring to dictate to us or molest us, and we should show our appreciation by following in the footsteps of those who have gone before by upholding the principles for which they fought and died, by bearing aloft the Blue Banner, "For Christ's Crown and Covenant".

Included in our present inheritance are privileges which our



forefathers enjoyed, even in the midst of their sufferings—God Himself, for us and in us; His precious Word, with all its truths and promises; all those blessings which His children partake of in this life—justification, adoption and sanctification, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Rita F. Snowden tells a touching story of an old lady whom she knew in New Zealand. "Granny", as the neighbours called her, had come out from Scotland, and had experienced many sad bereavements. Now she was living alone in her little cottage, and when Miss Snowden went to visit her one afternoon she found that her home had been gutted by fire. "Granny" was in a neighbour's home, close by, and when she had somewhat recovered from the shock, she told Miss Snowden something of the struggles of the past, and mentioned one by one the treasured little bits of furniture, and all the little knick-knacks that she had gathered round her in her little home. Then breaking off she said, "But I have lost them all now—and my old partner, and my daughter, too. I have lost them all now, and I am getting an old, old woman; I'll be seventy, come May". Then presently like sunshine after rain, her face brightened and she quietly turned to her young friend and said, "But girly, I'm rich. I've got all my faculties still, my alert mind and my ready step; I've still got my garden haven't I, and lots and lots of friends". And then, as if to reach the climax, she added, "And I haven't lost the love of my great Father. Girly, I'm rich—I know I am".

## II. A FUTURE INHERITANCE

David speaks of this towards the end of Psalm 16. "At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore". Peter refers to it as being reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. This future inheritance is:

(a) Permanent. Peter describes it in the words "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away", and this means that the inheritance is permanent, that it cannot be lost, and that it cannot diminish in value. No doubt Peter in using these words was thinking of what the Saviour said regarding earthly treasure and heavenly treasure. (Matthew 6 : 19, 20).

(b) Reserved. If a certain seat in a building is reserved for you, you are sure of getting it, and this heavenly inheritance is reserved for the people of God. There have been those who were under the impression that they were going to get an earthly inheritance, but, when the time came, it was given to another, and their fond hopes were sadly disappointed. This can never happen in regard to the children of God. Their heavenly inheritance is sure. "We know" Paul says. (II Corinthians 5 : 1).

(c) Unmerited. As sinners we merit hell, as Christians we can never merit heaven. Heaven is ours by heritage, not by conquest. It



is won by another arm than ours, by the strong arm of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is given as a free gift to His chosen.

Let us think for a moment of an earthly scene. King John and the English barons are assembled at Runnymede in 1215, prior to the signing of Magna Charta. In the midst of the proceedings the king asks the assembled nobles by what title they held their lands. At the rash question a hundred swords leapt from their scabbards. Advancing on the alarmed monarch they cried, "By these we won them, and by these we hold them". Their lands were theirs by conquest.

And now we change the scene from earth to heaven. The Lamb is seated on the throne, the saints around Him. "By what right", He asks, "do you possess this heavenly inheritance?" And immediately they take their crowns, and cast them at His feet, saying, "Unto Him that loved us . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever". "Not unto us, O Lord . . . but unto Thy name give glory".

Let me close with a little story. A great lady had called at an orphanage to take little Jane home with her. Jane wasn't sure whether she wanted to go or not. The sight of the shining carriage, the fine horses, the liveried servants awed the frightened little girl. The lady told her that she was going to give her beautiful clothes, a gold ring, a box of candy, books, dolls, blocks, and a swing, but still Jane hesitated. The lady went on, "You shall have a little room of your own, with a beautiful bed and table and chair; you shall have a bird in a cage, and a little dog with a silver collar. Don't you want to go with me, Jane?" There was a moment's silence, and then the little one said anxiously, "But what am I to do for all this?" The lady burst into tears, "Only to love me and be my child", she said, and she folded the little girl in her arms.

God finds us spiritual orphans, needy and helpless. By an act of grace He adopts us into His family, and gives us all that we need in this life and then the joys of the life to come. And what He wants is for us to love Him and be His children.



# Pilgrims

I wonder what thoughts the word "pilgrim" suggests to you young people. Those of you who are familiar with the works of Chaucer will naturally think of that famous band of travellers which he describes so minutely in his *Canterbury Tales*. Those of you who know your history will at once think of the *Mayflower* which left Plymouth, in 1620, with the Pilgrim Fathers on board; all of you, I hope, will think of a well-known book, written by John Bunyan, which tells of the pilgrim's progress from the City of Destruction to Mount Zion; and perhaps some of you will think of the pilgrim life as referred to in the Scripture.

Abram was a pilgrim when he set out from Ur of the Chaldees, and eventually reached the promised land; the children of Israel were pilgrims when they travelled from Egypt to Canaan, and their descendants were pilgrims when they journeyed from their homes to Jerusalem, with songs of praise upon their lips, to take part in the Jewish religious festivals.

Turning to the New Testament it is interesting to note that one of the first names given to the followers of Christ was "The People of the Way" (see for example Acts 9:2). The Saviour Himself spoke about the strait gate and the narrow way. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of God's people as being "strangers and pilgrims on the earth", and Peter in writing to Christians, addresses them as "strangers and pilgrims", and beseeches them to abstain from fleshly lusts.

Today the pilgrim idea is still suitable for us. Time is passing, the old year is drawing towards a close, we are all moving on, and it is all-important that we should be moving in the right direction, with faces Zionward.

Let us think then of God's people as pilgrims.

## I. WHO THEY ARE

(a) They are travellers not tramps. The tramp wanders here and there with no definite starting point and no definite end in view. Some of you, I expect, are interested in the derivation of words. That of the verb "to saunter" is very interesting. It comes from *Sainte Terre*—the Holy Land. In the days of the Crusades, idle men roved about the country begging for money to help them to go "a la Sainte Terre", to rescue the sacred soil from the hand of the infidel. But they never went, and when they were seen still roaming about the homeland, they were called in derision "*sainte-terres*"—saunterers. They pretended to be pilgrims, but they were only tramps. The true Christian pilgrim is a traveller. He sets out with a definite end in view, and is resolved with the help of God to press on towards the heavenly goal.



(b) They are strangers not settlers. This applies to their relationship to this world. They are in this world, but not of it. They are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth". Like Christian, in the "Pilgrim's Progress" they must pass through Vanity Fair, but they are not at home there. They seek "a better country, that is an heavenly", and as sojourners and pilgrims they abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

## II. WHEN THEY START

Speaking generally, they commence their pilgrimage when they hear God's call and respond to it, when they repent of sin and receive and rest upon Christ for salvation. Usually the Spirit leads them to do this through the reading or preaching of the Word, and often an "Evangelist"—pastor, parent, Sabbath School teacher perhaps—is used to make the way plain.

The pilgrims set out at different ages. A very few commence in old age, a greater number set out in middle age, still more make a start in young manhood or young womanhood, and the greatest number of all respond to the Divine call in the days of youth. A good message for you young people is "Get you early on your way". The Saviour said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me". He wants you to come to Him early in life, to put your hand into His hand in simple trust, and to set out with Him, as your "Greatheart", on the Christian pilgrimage.

## III. WHERE THEY JOURNEY

The road along which they travel is the narrow way which leads from the city of Destruction to Mount Zion.

(a) It is a PREPARED way. Away in Western Samoa there is a path which runs from the low levels up to the heights where R. L. Stevenson lived, and the high summit where he was buried. It is called "The Road of the loving heart". The Samoan people made it out of love for the white man who had come to live among them, and who had taught them many times about many things. And the narrow way from earth to heaven might well have a similar name because it was prepared at infinite cost, by the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

(b) It is a DIFFICULT way. The Saviour Himself said, "If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me". Christina Rossetti puts it this way:

"Does the road wind uphill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend".

Along the Christian highway there are many places of danger and hardship. John Bunyan speaks of the Slough of Despond, Hill



Difficulty, the Valley of Humiliation, Vanity Fair, and Doubting Castle. Lest the thought of these should daunt us, however, you will find, if you read the "Pilgrim's Progress" carefully, that beside each place of trial and difficulty there is a place of rest and refreshment. This is true to Bible teaching. Marah is followed by Elim; when the journey is too great for us, the angel of the Lord supplies the needed provision.

#### IV. WHAT THEY TAKE

The Christian pilgrims "travel light". The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us. Paul stresses the three great essentials—faith, hope, love, and also the whole armour of God. F. W. Boreham tells us that there are a few things that must be taken—"a working faith, a stainless character, and an open Bible, for example". And then there are the memorable lines which Sir Walter Raleigh wrote on the night before his execution:

"Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,  
My staff of faith to walk upon,  
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,  
My bottle of salvation,  
My gown of glory, hope's true gage,  
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage".

Don't overload, then. Cast your burden upon the Lord. Take Christ as your Saviour and guide. Let your motto be, "Looking unto Jesus".

#### V. WHY THEY CONTINUE

The road is hard but the true pilgrims keep right on to the end. The main reason for this is that the grace of God, which enabled them to start, enables them to keep on keeping on. Other reasons are—the places of rest and refreshment, the comrades on the road, and the thought of heaven at the end.

Let me close with the story of how Philip Henry, father of the famous commentator Matthew Henry, won his bride. He was a Presbyterian minister, she was an heiress, and her father objected to the match. "You see", he said, "he may be a perfect gentleman, a brilliant scholar and an excellent preacher; but he is a stranger, and we do not even know where he comes from". "True", replied the girl, "but we know where he is going; and I should like to go with him"!

You young people know others who are on the way to heaven. Would you not like to go with them? You can, in and through Christ.