

Bible readings delivered at the Toronto Christian Conference overflow meetings by W.J. Erdman, H.M. Parsons, Misses Mudie and Geldard.

Erdman, W. J. (William Jacob), 1834-1903.

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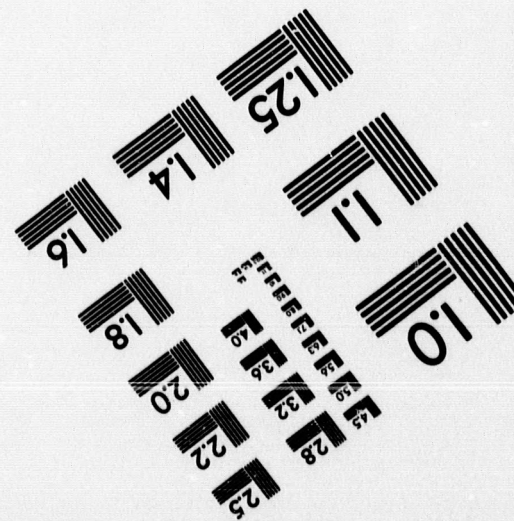
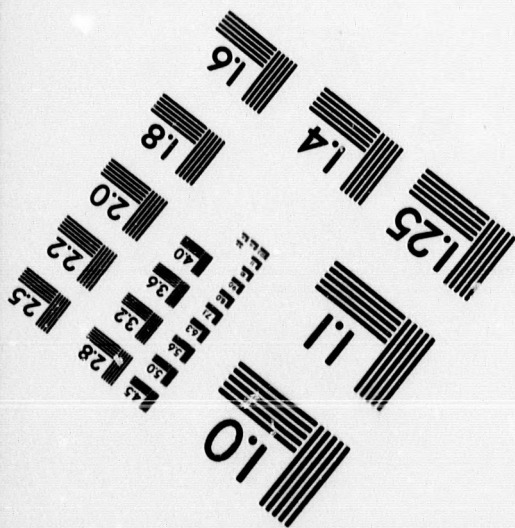
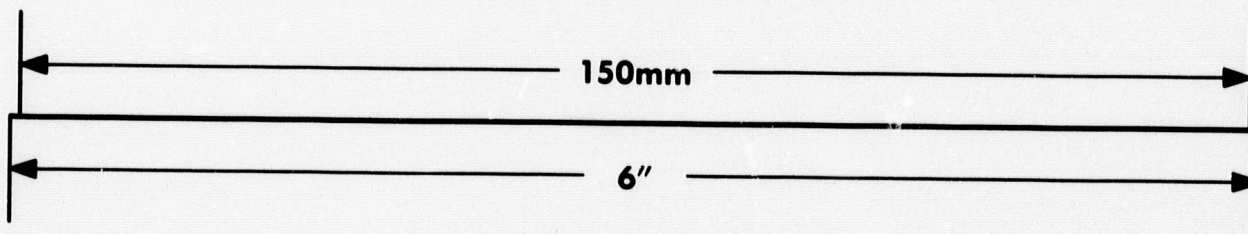
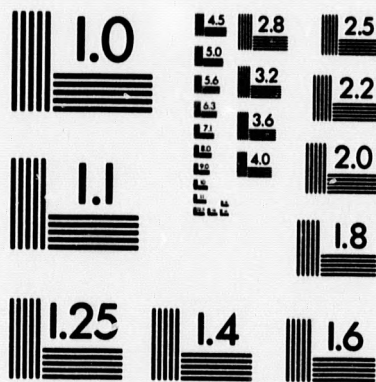
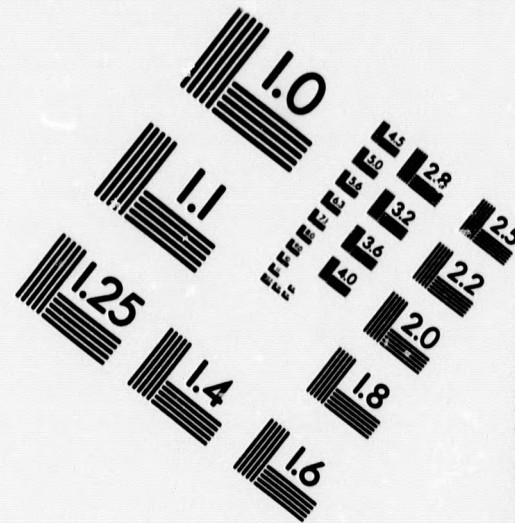
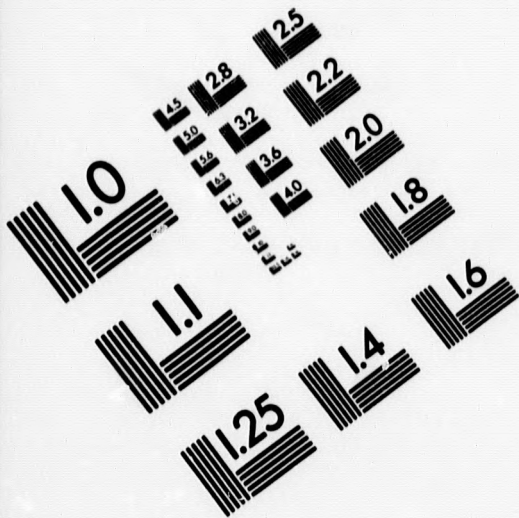
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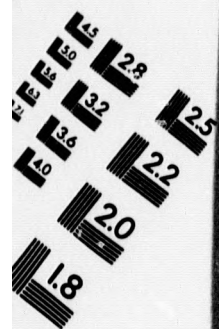
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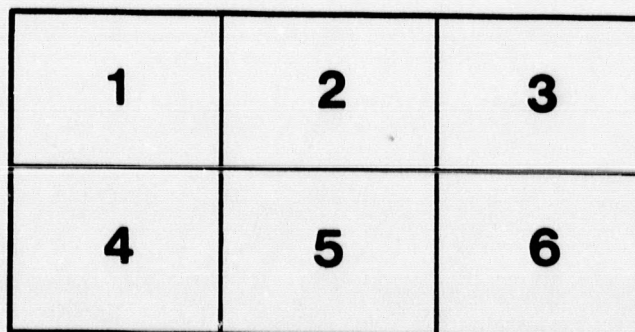
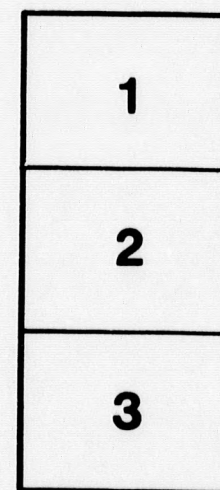
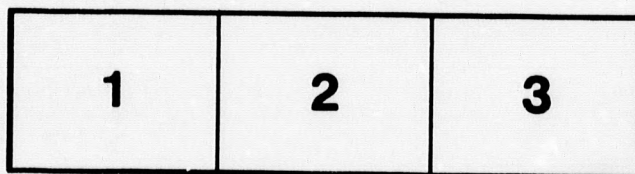
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BIBLE READINGS

DELIVERED AT THE

Toronto Christian Conference

OVERFLOW MEETINGS.

BY

REV. W. J. ERDMAN, REV. H. M. PARSONS,
MISSES MUDIE AND GELDARD.

Published by Request.

WILLARD TRACT DEPOSITORY, SHAFTESBURY HALL,
TORONTO.

BELLEVILLE.

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ONE very pleasing feature in connection with the late Conference was that of the large numbers attending. So much so that it was necessary to have Overflow Meetings on three evenings, which were well attended. Addresses being delivered by Revs. H. M. Parsons and W. J. Erdman. We were also highly favored in having with us our sisters in Christ, Misses Mudie and Geldard, well known in many parts of Canada in connection with their Christian work for the Master.

During the noon vacation, Misses Mudie and Geldard held Parlor Bible Readings for ladies. These meetings were largely attended, and profitable to all who were privileged to sit under these honored servants of the King.

At the request of several who attended, we have published these Readings, all of which have been revised by the speakers.

S. R. B.

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Address

ON

THE NEW LIFE.

BY REV. H. M. PARSONS, OF BUFFALO, N.Y.

If there are any here who are not acquainted with the Lord Jesus,—who are not *living His life*; let me say to you “Look unto Him, and live.” We have no actual, no true life, in the highest sense, until we know Him.

We often hear sinners exhorted by their friends on this wise, “I wish you would become a Christian; begin now to lead a new life; abandon your evil habits; practice religious duties; and you will find happiness.”

I well remember the instruction of a distinguished Theological Professor to the students, when I was at college. “Young gentlemen you wish to be Christians, go and read your Bibles: pray, do the duty of a Christian, and my word for it, you are a Christian.” The first time I heard this false Gospel, I said to myself: “This is not true, I could do all *that*, in form, and yet be the same. But hearing the frequent repetition of this advice, its soothing effect on my heart, was to make procrastination easy. For years I rested on the vain hope, without a single uneasy rebuke from conscience, (because it was *seared* by the falsehood) that whenever I chose to give reasonable attention to the subject of religion, the Spirit of God would come to my aid, and then by some supernatural process I should be saved. I hoped to visit Germany for a course of study, and after that I promised myself I would attend to the great end of life. Thus with many of you, you hope, you intend to be Christians, but first you would accomplish some cherished plans, or object in life. In my case

(How we obtain our eternal life)

God interposed in great mercy, to overthrow *my way* and establish His *own way*.

A beloved minister of France, passing through the city where I lived, preached Christ with such scriptural plainness, as the *God-Man* and Saviour, that the Spirit of God opened my eyes to see Him as my Saviour, and my heart to receive Him. I believed on the Lord Jesus, and found life—*eternal life*.

I want briefly to urge on you to-night, friends, the life as preached in these words of our Lord: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John iii. 14, 15. Many hesitate and doubt, concerning their state, when the word of God most clearly settles the matter for all who will receive it. You have no trouble in deciding whether you love a person, whom you love; you enter on no process of reasoning to prove it to yourself. Many other things which you accept as certain now, you cannot and do not seek to prove. You may know now with absolute certainty—if you are alive in Christ—whether or not you have *eternal life*.

Our Lord has given us the truth in dealing with inquirers as He met them. The first one, Nicodemus, acknowledging his divine origin—having knowledge of all religious duties—and yet uneasy under the pressure of conscience, seeks Him by night. To him our Lord says "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God,"—and with renewed emphasis: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

In himself man has no capacity to see these things, but in the Spirit he is *born*, has a *new life*, and knows the *person*, and the power of God. And this is absolute. Our Lord in dealing with Nicodemus gives no receipt for prayers, for duties, for reformations, for resolutions. He speaks of *life*. The word *born* implies *birth*, and birth means *life*. Now this word *life* expresses the power of religion, it is not a form, nor a dress, nor service. Many hope by duties and endeavors at reform to make themselves in some way worthy or ready for the work of the Spirit. But the Word of God gives no such license. It speaks of *life* from the dead. It speaks of *life* in simply believing another, and that other the son of God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*." 2 Cor. v. 17. This new creation must be known to the subject of it, and the whole Gospel declares, that it will be known to all who beheld the sinner thus divinely *new created*. See how the Lord taught another inquirer, at the very

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opposite extreme of society, He meets the poor outcast woman at Jacob's well. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into *everlasting life*." John iv. 14. Here again our Saviour speaks only of life, with the highest and lowest alike, *life, divine life*—is the only essential. Once be *born from above*, and life, *everlasting life*, is yours. Once drink from the *life-giving fountain*, and eternal thirst is quenched.

An old negro, on the western coast of Africa, was continually complaining to the English sailors of the burden on his heart. He wanted peace, could find none. Was weary and sad, and often in tears. The wicked men around him, told him he needed the Englishman's God, they could tell him nothing of the way to find Him, because they only could blaspheme. After a time he worked his passage to England. Still burdened with the great weight of his sins, finding no helper, he found his way to London. And one night passing a little Gospel chapel, he entered and listened. The minister was telling, in simple way, the story of the cross. The old man drank in the words, and in his joy kept slowly advancing through the aisle, till he reached the altar, As the sermon ended, he could not restrain his delight, but with streaming tears and clasped hands—broke forth: "Me have found *Him!* me have found *Him!* me have found *Him!*"

So it is the Spirit of God seals His own word upon hearts drawn and prepared by Himself. God does accomplish by the Holy Spirit, in this age, acting through his disciples, greater things than the working of miracles.

Brethren and sisters, believers in the Lord, I appeal to you, are you manifesting this *new life*? no matter what avocation you pursue, an opportunity is in every man's path for Him to fill. In every place our light can shine, and your works be seen. It may not be the pure and clean flame, that burned in the "Bush!" But it is the same flame, if it calls wandering sinners to turn their faces toward God, and reveals to them the light of the Sun of Righteousness.

There must be some thing seen in us by others, if this *Spiritual life* have predominance, which declares to them that we testify of Christ, and shine in the light of God.

God accepts every one coming to Him, in the way He has provided, the youngest, the oldest are alike welcomed. The smallest child may be a worker and witness of this life.

A friend once told me, how he watched a steam tug bringing a long

line of vessels to the dock in New York harbour, and it reminded him of a very little girl in his mission school; she had found the Lord Jesus through just learning to read of Him at her home, without any advantages. Her father kept a tavern, and all the influences and surroundings were against her. But this little missionary was *alive*, she had the *Divine life*. She first led her mother to the school, and soon she was converted. Then she led in her sister, her father, her grandmother, one after another, till the whole family came to Jesus. This one little girl with the Spirit of Christ in her, accomplished her work like the little "Steam Tug," she conveyed the whole family into the haven of eternal life. And this the Lord Jesus calls us all to be and to do. We are to be *lights* in the world, and as witnesses we are to tell the truth of Him.

In one church where I labored, the good people wanted me to preach to sinners for their conversion, after some continued preaching to the church. But said I, He has ordered me to equip you, the saints, for this work. Teaching you all things, which Jesus has left for you to observe, that you may distribute the manna of the Word to the perishing around you. Be ye therefore filled with the Spirit of Holiness, and go out and bring them in. If we preach to you the living Gospel, then *you* can go and do this work of ministering to the dead around you. You may distribute tracts by the ton, or scatter them as the leaves of Autumn; they will be of little account. God wants the living person, and heart and voice of a believer to do this work, and that is His method all through the New Testament. Let twenty or thirty Christians filled with the holy fire, go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and see how you will bring them in.

Look at the school boy as he bounds forth from the school-room, so full of animal life, running, jumping, frolicking at will. Why this exuberance? He is *alive*, and *life*, physical *life*, expresses itself in this way. If spiritual life and feeling move the heart, we cannot sit still and be indifferent when we know souls are perishing all around us. Pray much dear friends for the love of God to fill your hearts, so that you can do daily work for the Master. But some who hear me are saying, "How can I get this life? Would that I had it!" The Lord speaks plainly to you. Are you wise, well taught, moral, respectable, outwardly religious? Hear His words—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." John iii. 14, 15.

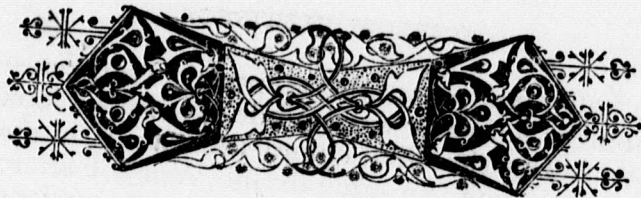
I cannot tell you how those poor creatures, who were bitten by the fiery serpent, were made whole by looking at the brazen serpent. But they had complete healing on the instant as they looked. And upon the same divine Word, I assure you, that as you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for you a lost sinner, and thus accept Him as your personal Saviour by faith, that instant you believe, you have the new life, you are born from above by the Holy Spirit. The new life begins its powerful current *in* you. Work and service are no longer forced. This water of life needs no more a "force pump." It will be in you a "well of water springing up into *everlasting life*." It will overflow. Blessing and benediction will attend your steps, and life everlasting will be your eternal portion and joy.



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Bible Reading

BY THE

REV. W. J. ERDMAN, OF JAMESTOWN, N. Y.

My friends, this will be only, in part, a Bible Reading. Let us turn to I Corinthians i. Each letter of the New Testament was written for a special purpose; when Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, he wrote to those who had more knowledge than love. We see one word, the word WISDOM, used very frequently.

Let us try and consider its import this evening. The WISDOM of man and the WISDOM of God, concerning the one great question of salvation; and that question is one which God had in some degree given to the Gentiles to answer.

The ancients failed to solve this problem, and since then human wisdom has failed to add one ray of light on the subject. The wise men of the world can give no better answers than those of the old Greeks and Romans; they have nothing new to say.

Turn to the twenty-first verse of the first chapter of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, "For after that in the WISDOM of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Now we must understand the words; "*foolishness of preaching*" does not refer to the act of preaching, but to the thing preached; this is, as we are told, THE GOSPEL; the Gospel of the crucified Saviour. This is the WISDOM OF GOD which is preached. In reference to this, note two facts.

1st. They did not know God in regard to this great question of salvation; they did not know how good God was; they were left to themselves and failed to know Him. God thought it best to let them for centuries try to solve this great question, How can a man be saved?

2nd. After these nations had been permitted to answer this

The only true wisdom is the highest & best wisdom

question, and utterly failed, then our God, whom they could not find out, came to men with His wisdom; Jesus Christ and Him crucified. But it was foolishness to the Greek, and a stumbling block to the Jew.

The question is answered by God in the thirtieth verse, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us WISDOM and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

Who is made God's wisdom? Christ Jesus; for He is made unto us WISDOM in regard to salvation; that is full salvation; even righteousness which corresponds to the removal of the guilt of sin, sanctification which corresponds to the removal of the power of sin; redemption which corresponds to the removal of the presence of sin; deliverance from the guilt and danger of sin; deliverance from the power of a sinful nature and habits; deliverance from the presence of sin, from the world, the flesh, the devil, from an encompassing groaning creation, from this old body; the body of our humiliation.

Is there any one here to-night who is opposed to this plan of salvation; who thinks he has an answer for his reason? then let him come fairly down to this chapter, and look at it in its full signification. The wisest people were the Greeks, they developed the finest intellect, elaborated the noblest and fairest thought, and to this day the highest philosophy is found in the old Greek authors; all the arts and all the great sciences are still indebted to them. The answer of the wisest Greek to the question, How can a man be just before God; how can he be free from the evils and miseries of human life was substantially this: "We must wait until a *Teacher* comes from heaven to tell us what things we ought to do; both towards the gods and towards each other." He had tried to solve this deep problem, and left this as his confession. And where does the confession bring us? To a confession of our helplessness before God.

I turn to the Old Book, the Book of Ecclesiastes. It is the Book of the vanity of all things under the sun. Here you have a mirror of the natural man. And what is the question he sets before us, "What is the best thing under the sun?" And this wise king tried every experience that was possible, while in the pursuit of this answer. He tried pleasure, riches, learning, studied the arts and sciences; he even went to funerals, to find out what was the good thing under the sun. He said a great many good things, and a great many strange things. He clothes all nature in the sackcloth of his own melancholy; and to

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what conclusion does he come? You have read it again and again. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man; for God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Where does this book bring man? **UNDER LAW, AND EXPECTING JUDGMENT.** Ministers of the Gospel desire earnestly to get you, who are not yet in the Lord Jesus Christ, to come to that very conclusion.

The Book of the vanity of all things "under the sun" brings a man right to where he knows he is a **FAILURE.** For who has kept the commandments? Who can meet judgment with his obedience? Now what was Ecclesiastes written for, if not to prove the failure of the Hebrew natural man and his wisdom, and so to hold the mirror up to all men? When a man is convinced of the truth of all that book; bring him face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and with one step you enter into liberty and salvation.

"How can a man be just before God?" The Greek philosophers tried to answer that problem, philosophically, politically, and morally, and failed; the wise king confirms such human failure in his conclusion of the whole matter.

Look at the third chapter of John, and you will find a Jew also trying to solve this question. Read the latter part of the second and the beginning of the third chapters, and see what answer Jesus gave to him. Jesus knew all men, and he knew that Nicodemus was saying to himself, I am a Rabbi; I am a Jew; I have Abraham's blood. Now the Greek confession was, they must wait for a Teacher from God. And what did Nicodemus say unto Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." Nicodemus evidently thought he needed to know something more to perfect his morality, and then he would be all right; but the answer of our Lord came to him as if an all-engulphing earthquake had cleft the ground beneath his feet. The answer left him without a shred of morality; not even a little bit of the old Nicodemus left to help him into the kingdom. "He must be born again." A Rabbi, a Patriot, a Moralist, an Israelite; but all this you see was of no avail. We see even a Jew, a natural man with the best advantages, could not answer the question satisfactorily.

Turn to the old Roman world. One day two noble Romans

were in a questioning mood. One said to the other, "Why is it that when we try to do the thing that is good something draws us towards the thing that is evil?" Their hearts were truthful, but dark, and they knew not where to find the answer to that question. Thank God we have the answer in this Book, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall have righteousness, that has to do with our JUSTIFICATION before God, and removes from us, through Jesus Christ, the guilt of sin; SANCTIFICATION, that has to do with our REGENERATION, and with the development of the new man, who is born of God, with the dominion over sin; REDEMPTION, and that has to do with the full and final salvation from the presence of sin and with perfected spirit, soul and body.

We should never, when talking with an unbelieving, sceptical, insincere man, allow him to quote a passage out of the Bible in his behalf. The only thing to do with him, is to ask him as a modern Jew, or a modern Greek, or modern Roman, for his answer, aside from all the Bible; and to-day, as years ago, such men are silent and dumb, or can only repeat the former failures. A certain learned Doctor, when confessing Christ for the first time, in speaking of his former life and studies, said, "My friends, I have read all the infidel books for the last forty years, the best books that human learning could produce, and they have landed me on the GRAVE with no beyond."

A Hindoo King who lived a long life, and had waged many wars, and gathered together the spoils of many libraries, commanded his librarian to condense the wisdom of the whole library into a few volumes. The librarian disappeared, and after three years laid before him three large folios. The old King said, "These are too large for me to read. I am too old now, condense them into still smaller compass." The librarian again disappeared, and ere long returned with one thin folio. Then said the old Hindoo, "Does this contain the whole of my library? I am much older now than when you first came into my presence, can you not tell me in a few words the sum of all this wisdom?" The librarian with golden stylus wrote on a palm leaf, "The all of man; he is BORN, he SUFFERS, he DIES. The all of man's knowledge: Perhaps!"

Yes, my friends, many scientific men to-day conjugate with an "IF;" a "perhaps." Napoleon knew better. He spoke some wonderful words on this question of salvation. One day, when in the height of his power, one of his officers came to him, and

said, "Were it not well, Sire, now to organize and establish a universal religion?" "Would you have me crucified," instantly replied Napoleon. He knew, intellectually at least, that Jesus Christ crucified was the attractive power that drew all men unto Him. I pray it may be so to night.

From all this, it is evident God expects the Gospel to be preached without making any allowance for the civilization and culture of the present day of eighteen centuries. He expects to have the Gospel preached as if the day of Pentecost had just come, and because the case is closed and the conclusion reached; **MAN IS A FAILURE AND MAN'S WISDOM IS FOOLISHNESS.** He is of himself unable to answer the question of questions; before it all the oracles are dumb. Try then no longer your own experience; come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has declared you shall be saved. You may try to find other answers, but it will only be a repetition of the folly and wisdom of these old Greeks and Romans. God now beseeches you to be reconciled to Him; His words in 2 Corinthians v. 20, give me the firm conviction that I am standing here in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ, "We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In reality, every minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he is preaching the Gospel of Christ, is standing in the place of the Lord Jesus. You don't reject me, my friend, to-night, remember! You are rejecting *Christ Himself.*

Therefore, God in His wonderful love is beseeching men to be reconciled to Him through His beloved Son. Turn also to the seventeenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and the thirtieth verse, and hear Paul preaching on Mar's Hill. Hear what he says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

The word winked at may be read overlooked, but God will not overlook it now; for He hath commanded all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which He shall judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; and therefore He commands all men to repent, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

Sincere as sinners are they have no wisdom to save themselves. May God grant that souls may come to night just as they are, looking unto Him, whom God has set before us, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that they may be free from guilt of sin, from the power of sin, and at last from the presence of sin.



Bible Reading

ON

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF OUR LORD JESUS.

BY REV. W. J. ERDMAN.

Let us turn to the epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle opens in a way different from all the other epistles, with the exception of St. John. It is written to Hebrew Christians, and the moment we say Hebrew Christians it would suggest to the mind allusions to the Old Testament; special trials belonging to Hebrew Christians unknown to Gentile Christians; special temptations, and the like. Nevertheless, it has for all of us its own great, general and specific teachings.

So far as I have been permitted to contribute anything to this Conference, those who may have been present may have remembered that the first topic I had was the truth for the sons of God. And then again this morning, the Holy Spirit as specially given to the sons of God, the author of all their spiritual experience as sons of God. To-night I take up the relation of the Lord Jesus as the High Priest of the sons of God: and my point from which to start is in the ii. chapter and 10th verse of Hebrews, "For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

The first question is, "Who was this Captain of our salvation?" and we have the answer in the first three verses of this epistle, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets; Hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son." That was a prophet's work, to speak the words of God, "Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds;" "Who, being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, *when he had*

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by Himself purged our sins." He is, then, a Priest, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He is, then, a King. He is Prophet, Priest, and King, this Captain of our salvation.

Notice, too, in the first verse of this epistle, the contrasts that are drawn. Allow me to make the verse a little more literal. It is in this wise, "God, who in many parts and many ways, spoke," notice the contrast, "God once spoke in many parts." He gave one prophet one part of His revelation, and to another another part. And He made Himself known in many ways; in dreams and visions and voices and appearances: but at last there came One who was Himself, the very revelation of God, who had not the spirit by measure nor the truth by parts. He was not spoken to in dreams or by visions, but as a father speaks to his son. It was a revelation of God to Jesus Christ in a most intimate manner. He was a Son, and He was doing all the Father was showing Him, all the Father was telling Him. Now that is language implying the most intimate fellowship and union possible. Who, then, is this person? He is Prophet, Priest and King.

Next, the question will be, What is His nature? or, What was He in Himself, considered apart from those offices? He was God, and the first chapter gives us the answer. In the first chapter and fifth verse He is called a Son. Notice that He is compared with angels. He is said to be greater and higher than the angels. First, then, He is a Son; second, He is a Son of God; and third, He is God.

Notice in first chapter, eighth verse. "But unto the Son, He saith, 'Thy throne, O God,'" &c. Who is He as to nature? Also man. Look at the second chapter and fifth and sixth verses, "For unto the angels hath He not," &c. Then in the ninth verse, "But we see," &c. Then it goes on to tell us in the twelfth verse that we are His brethren, and then in the thirteenth verse that we are the children that God has given Him, and then in the fourteenth that He was made partaker of the nature of those children. Who, then, is this Captain of our salvation? Prophet, Priest, and King. What is He as to nature? God and man: man, able to sympathize; and God, able to help.

Now, then, as to the name given there, "The Captain of our salvation." What is the meaning of the word "Captain?" If you will turn to the twelfth chapter of Hebrews and the second verse, we will find, "Looking unto Jesus," &c. Let me now say that the word "Author" is given in the margin of my Bible as

meaning "Beginner." So you see the translators were in doubt as to the meaning of the word, and thus left it to your choice.

Now, we have three meanings for one word in the Bible: Captain, Beginner, and Author. Turn to Acts iii. 15, there you have the same word rendered "Prince," and in the margin of my Bible it again reads "Author." Then we have one place more, which is in Acts v. 31. So we have these words—Captain, Prince, Author, Beginner—of what? Of faith. And you notice in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews and second verse, the word "our" is in italics. So, if we omit the word "our," it brings out the wondrous beauty of this name as the Captain of our salvation, the Author and Finisher of faith. In the eleventh chapter there is a long roll of men and women of faith who lived in the olden time, but in the twelfth chapter we are told not to look at Abel, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to imitate them in their faith, but to look at the Lord Jesus. That word should be rendered, "Looking away unto Jesus, the Beginner and Completer of faith." And of *the* faith. What faith? The faith common to all God's sons. Jesus is the only Son of God who ever began and completed a life of faith without flaw or failure. We are to look away, then, from Abraham as the father of the faithful, for he failed twice. And so when you come to look over the whole list, all had a flaw, as looked upon by God. But there was one adorable Son in whom God found no flaw, no failure. Who, then, is this Captain? Prophet, Priest, and King. What is He as to nature? God and Man. He was *very God*. He was *very Man*. He is the God-Man to-night, and there He is on the throne of the Majesty on high, and He feels for us as much as He ever felt for the poor disciples on the Sea of Galilee. He is Man, and has us on His heart: He is God, and, therefore, able to help.

Let us come back to the word "Captain," to look at another shade of meaning. You know in a regiment the file leader is he who stands at the head of the line and leads off; and that is what the Lord Jesus has done—our princely Leader of warriors of faith—under the cover of all those different names. Look back at Hebrews ii. 9, 10. There is He the Leader of a long line of brethren with their faces set towards the glory, and are marching on, and being led on by the Captain of their salvation. They are saved ones, saved by the *blood* of that same Lord Jesus who, having "purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The brethren are yet down here, and what is their life? A life of faith; and their faith will be subject to trials.

But the relationship of the Lord Jesus to us is this, that He once lived down here, and was made perfect through sufferings, and is thus able to sympathize and sustain His brethren.

Then in what sense was He made perfect through suffering? He was perfected sympathetically and officially, that is, God knew that for eighteen hundred years He would be leading many sons unto glory; and He knew that there must be some one who must know these sons on this earth. And so the Lord Jesus sustains this relationship among others that He began and completed a perfect life of faith. He was tried and tempted, yet sin apart. We fail often, but He never fails. We get discouraged; we find the way steep and rough. But, my friends, if we would only look up, we would see glory always. And if we always appealed to God, the Father would supply us from the riches of glory in Christ Jesus. He came into this world so that He might make Himself acquainted with all sorts of experiences of pain and weakness, weariness and fatigue. Jesus Christ walked through Palestine as you and I might walk through an hospital. In the days of our Lord Jesus Christ, He found the cripple, and the dumb, and the blind all over the land. It was one great lazarus house through which He moved continually: and so He knew all about every form of sickness, and sorrow, and pain the sons of God would have for eighteen hundred years.

Notice, too, the Father was going to lead many sons into glory. So the Lord Jesus went through the vast and varied gamut of human sufferings, so that He might be able to sympathize with every class and condition of saints through all the ages that were to follow, until all those sons were made perfect together in glory.

So, my dear friends, we want to get these facts into our souls, that He is merciful and supplies us with all needed grace. The Lord Jesus knows what it is to be poor. Now, is there any believer here to-night who is poor? That believer has the privilege of saying that the Lord Jesus had no place where to lay His head. But the Lord Jesus, when He had no place to lay His head, knew to look up to the Father. More than that, the Lord Jesus Christ knows what it is to be rich. He was invited to rich men's tables. He knew all the temptations of the rich. How many words He spoke about the rich. How He said, "It is hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom." But He is able to help all these. Rich Christians need Him as well as poor Christians.

Again, the Lord Jesus Christ was a boy; and there is no young

Christian with whom He cannot sympathize. And He knew the nature and heart of woman, as no man or woman can know; and we can understand why it was that women followed Him. I do not profess to understand fully my wife: I certainly never understood my mother. But I do know one thing, I know that the Lord Jesus Christ can understand mothers, for He is priestliest heart of all; He came to minister. So the Lord Jesus Christ, in leading many sons into glory, many believers of all ranks, perfected Himself; developed His sympathies by His contact with human sufferings. It is blessed when you can lay hold of the Lord Jesus Christ in that way.

And now, how does He manage all this? There is not much said in Hebrews about the Holy Spirit. He is mentioned in the ninth chapter and fourteenth verse, and the tenth chapter and twenty-ninth verse. But there is a silence as to the way that the results of Christ's intercessions are communicated to believers. A priest must do three things: a priest makes an offering; a priest intercedes on the ground of that offering; a priest receives blessings to bestow as the result of his intercession. Now, how does this apply to the Lord Jesus? First, we know He was a Priest who made Himself an offering: then, in the presence of God for us, He, on the basis of His accomplished work, makes His prayer of intercession for us. In the seventeenth chapter of St. John you have the prayer, a prayer repeated for over eighteen hundred years in the cause of believers.

Last of all, the Lord Jesus Christ sends blessings as the result of that intercession. What was that intercession about? He told the disciples, John xiv. 16, "And I will pray the Father," &c., &c. And the Holy Spirit is He who now comes Himself as *the* gift of all the gifts of God. He, Himself, as the blessing, includes all the blessings of God. And now, is there a soul down here tried and tempted, worn, weary, and sad, perhaps sick and desolate, poor and friendless, what shall such an one do? Why, just look up to that mercy seat, and tell the Father of our Lord Jesus of your need of supplies of grace in glory up there, and *that* seasonable help will come. Now, how does the Lord Jesus bring that help to one praying down here? Through the Holy Spirit. In that communion there comes an intimation that when the child prays to the Father, the Son has started and endorsed that petition already, and the Spirit down here answers the prayer. He brings the blessing that the High Priest won by His wondrous work of redemption.

Turn to the eighth chapter of Romans, to complete all. Here we read of another intercessor. One up there and one down here, and yet one and the same; another person, and yet the same being. It is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ.

Now, let us turn to Romans viii. 9, "But ye are not in the flesh," &c., &c. Here we have the Spirit called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, and thus the Spirit of God is the same as the Spirit of Christ. Then we have the same truth in the fourteenth and sixteenth verses. Turn to the twenty-sixth verse, "Likewise, the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities," &c. Let us now unravel that for a moment. First, as a fact that we are beset with infirmities; and the context of the passage shows that trials and sorrows are alluded to. Now, what is our resource? First, to pray: but when we pray it is declared we do not know what to pray for as we ought. Shall we pray, "Lord deliver me from this burden," or shall we pray, "Lord help me to carry this burden." What shall we do? It says here, that when we do not know how to pray, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. He so identifies Himself with us that when we pray it is the prayer suggested by the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit telling the Father what to do for the Son down here. The child left to himself would not know what to pray for. The word "help" represents the burden as lying between two parties, and the Holy Spirit is helping the child of God to carry that burden. He is helping; it is the help of one standing over against the other. Now that is a blessed fact. But how do some people come to Christ to have their burdens borne? It reminds me of the story of the man who, carrying a heavy burden and invited by a friend to ride in his cart, persisted in keeping his burden on his back while riding in the cart. And that is the way we often do. We come to God to ask Him to carry the burden, and still carry it all the time ourselves. When Paul was praying for that thorn to be taken away, he did not know what to pray for as he ought. In the eighth verse of the twelfth chapter of II. Corinthians we read, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice," &c., &c. It is on this wise: Paul had that thorn in his flesh, he did not like it; he began to pray, but he did not know what to pray for as he ought. He prayed one way; three times he prayed, "Lord take this from me." Paul must have groaned when he prayed these prayers.

Now, in Romans viii. 26, we read, "But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

The Spirit so identifies himself with us that our groanings become His groanings. Now I can imagine Paul to be praying to have that thorn removed, and I think he prayed with groanings unutterable. How was the Father to answer that prayer? Not as Paul would have it.

The thorn was not taken away, but grace was given. We do not know what to pray for as we ought, but God turns His ear to hear what the Spirit has to say, and then God answers according to the prayer of the Holy Spirit, and not according to the desires of the child. As a circle of truth how complete it is. Are we tried and tempted; there is a real living Person, a Man with a human heart, perfected to the utmost fineness of sympathy. There is a Heart up there that understands our case thoroughly, and more than that, He is Almighty and He is able to help. God grant that we may lay hold of the Lord Jesus Christ. This truth is the way to a *living Person* who loves us and gave Himself for us; or as we ought to say, "who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*," and more than that, who takes charge of me from the beginning of my pilgrimage to the end. He is leading many sons to glory. May God grant that we as priestly sons may pray for one another, and I ask you to pray for me. Priestly sons! no set order of men, but all of us praying one for another; the gift in all of us is the same Holy Spirit of intercession; and so we have one High Priest up there sending us the blessings down here through the Holy Spirit. May God grant that we may be subdued when we think what we are carrying in these bodies of humiliation a living, real Person, the Spirit of God; and He is not afar off. Oh, heaven is much nearer than it seems.

We often pray as if the mercy seat was afar off; but in all true prayer in the Spirit, by faith, we are right before the mercy seat, right in the presence of the glory. Let us draw near with a true heart. We have a way, *new and living*, by the *blood* of Jesus. There let us go, my friends; we are not so far from God's throne as we sometimes make out. No telescope has ever been able to bring to light the throne of God, and yet I have do doubt it is much nearer than we are aware. May God enable us to realize this, and at last when we see Jesus as He is, we will give Him all the glory. Blessed be His holy name, for of Him, and to Him, and through Him are all things.

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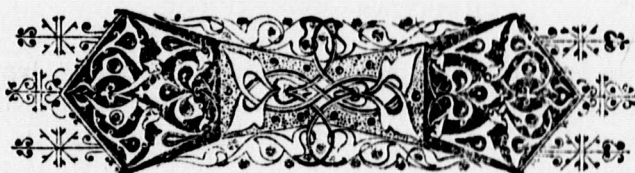
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THE FOLLOWING
BIBLE READINGS,
BY MISSES
MUDIE AND GELDARD.



Bible Reading

ON

WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?—WHAT
SHALL WE DO?—WHAT MUST I DO?

What shall I do?—What must I do?—What shall we do? are questions recorded in the Bible, and often asked still.

Now there is a right time for asking such questions as well as a wrong time, and because they are often asked in a wrong way is no reason why they should be laid aside and never asked at all. Because men have preached repentance in a wrong place as a preparation to be gone through before coming to Christ, is that any reason why we should preach a Gospel without repentance in it? Because good works are not the price of our salvation, are we at liberty to abstain from preaching that they necessarily follow salvation?

So we will take this question, What must we do that we may work the works of God? and hear our Lord's own answer to the unbelieving Jews who asked it, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent," John vi. 29. In Acts xvi. 31, we have the jailer's question answered by the Apostle in the same way; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, (as Saviour, Messiah, Lord) and thou shalt be saved." To the unforgiven sinner this is the only answer. No uncleansed hands can do acceptable work for the Lord.

An African woman, in the fulness of her pity, once invited Dr. Livingstone to rest in her hut, and then brought him her best—a carefully prepared pudding of crushed green corn. He was faint and hungry, but as he took the dish from her hands he saw they were covered with leprosy, and turned away with loathing.

So till we get the cleansing, God can only loathe the work done

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by defiled hands. Rather, He wants us to cease from our own works, and hear Him ask us, What wilt thou that I do for thee? We must be willing for Him to do great things for us first of all. Then the question, What shall I do? has its right and natural place. "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" was Paul's question when he recognized Him whom he had been persecuting and blaspheming. We can find an answer to this question in Bible words again, in Mary's direction to the servants at the marriage feast in Cana, "Whatsoever He saith unto you *do it.*" (Is it not strange we do so little for such a Master; sometimes it seems as if we answered the Psalmist's question, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits," in this way—Nothing!!) Do you ask what does He say to me as a woman? We find a very complete answer in 1 Timothy v. 10, St. Paul's description of a model Christian woman. "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." Brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord her own children or orphans, lodged strangers as Lydia did,—when the Lord opened her heart she did not wait for any one to tell her what to do, she opened her house,—washed the saints' feet, (don't spiritualize this; we may spiritualize the life out of the Bible precepts.)

What picture do you think Paul had in his mind's eye as he wrote this, or when he greeted by name, so gratefully, that "Mary who bestowed much labor upon us." Was it such a scene as may have occurred in Lystra after the mob had stoned Paul and left him for dead, when he rose up and dragged his aching limbs to the shelter of some friendly house. How the women would minister to him, bathe his feet, anoint the bruises, bind up the wounds, wash and mend the soiled and rent garment or replace it with a new one, woven and sewed and lined soft with woman's grateful, tender, pitying Christian love. Don't be afraid of washing the saints' feet. It is not always the same to pay some one else for doing it; you cannot depute any one to do your own proper work; you do not know what you will miss if you try to do it.

We may find some very practical teaching as our duty as Christians in the last chapter of Proverbs; you may have taken these verses about a virtuous woman as a kind of plaything; looking out the verse that corresponded with your birthday. If you have only used it thus you know little of its value. Did you ever wonder why the Song of Solomon should be so full of Christ

and His Church, and Proverbs have so little of Him? I wondered till I found out that Proverbs is as full of Christ as the Song is, only it does not lay so much on the surface. May we not find in Proverbs xxxi., the Bride of Canticles at work at home. We have a glimpse of her in garden work in Canticles ii., among buds and blossoms with the bridegroom, but in Prov. xxxi., she is apparently working *for* him rather than *with* Him.

v. 11, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." Did you ever think of Christ trusting His Church, trusting her to represent Him in His absence, to do His work.

v. 12, "She will do him good and not evil." Is this true of every Christian woman here to-day, are you doing Christ good; so living that people will speak well of Him for your sake?

vs. 13 and 19, "*Seeketh* wool and flax." (Has to receive the materials for her work.) Worketh *willingly* with spindle and distaff. Is that like people who have no gift for work and a great gift for idleness?

v. 14, "She bringeth her food from afar." 'Tis not in earth's fields that our sustenance grows.

v. 15, She cares for her household. "Giveth meat (the food from afar) to her household."

v. 21, Clothes them so warmly and suitably that she is not afraid of cold for them.

v. 27, Teaches them to work, "and eateth not the bread of idleness" herself.

vs. 16 and 24, Increases the wealth of her husband; like the faithful servant in Matthew xxv.

v. 18, Looks after his affairs, so that whether she buy or sell the goods may be genuine; examined by the light of the "candle" even though all is dim around her.

vs. 17 and 25, Increases her strength in labor.

v. 20, "Stretcheth forth her hands to the needy." Not only cares for those of the household of faith, but for those outside who are ready to perish. Are we ready for this? In our churches there are doubtless many needy, but in China, in India, in Africa, thousands, MILLIONS are dying without the knowledge of Christ, because His bride has been slow to stretch out her hand to the needy. The Bible speaks of folded hands, and hands kept hid in the bosom, as well as of hands opened and hands stretched out; which are ours?

vs. 22 and 25, While laboring for the good of others, what a

portion is preparing for herself, coverings of silk and tapestry, "raiment of needlework, wrought gold," Ps. 45; "Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come."

v. 23, Her husband honored through her.

v. 28, Unites in her praise with her children.

v. 29, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

v. 31, Finally points to her own works as her surest memorial.

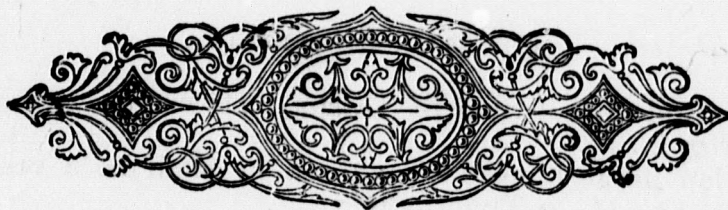
One verse we have not noticed, it relates to her speech. In Cant. iv. 11, we have her lips dropping like honeycomb; honey and milk *under* her tongue; now she has gained courage and strength, for "she *openeth her mouth* with wisdom (implying deliberate, thoughtful speech) and in her tongue is the law of kindness," not a kind word dropped occasionally, not "blessing and cursing," as we have in James iii. but the law *in* the tongue (steady and constant) of kindness.

Have we not here a complete answer to the question, What wilt thou have me to do? one which will take our lives to fulfil.

Not a complete answer perhaps, for part of the Lord's answer to Paul was, "I will show him how great things he must *suffer for My sake.*" He would not dwell on this, only add that if His will can only be fulfilled through suffering still, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."



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Bible Reading

ON

BELIEVERS,—GOD'S VESSELS.

2 TIMOTHY ii. 21.

Looking back to the Old Testament history of the vessels in God's house, we find them made by the children of Israel, according to God's command, and brought to Moses for the service of the Tabernacle.—Exodus xxxix. 33-40.

When the Tabernacle was fully set up, other vessels were brought and dedicated by the princes representing the congregation.—Numbers vii.

They had to be sprinkled with blood.—Hebrews ix. 21.

They were also anointed with oil.—Exodus xl. 9.

Carefully kept throughout the wilderness journey, and in the land, during the times of the Judges and the first years of the Kings, they were then brought up with the tabernacle and placed in Solomon's temple.—1 Kings viii. 4.

In the after history we learn how they were watched over by God, when carried down to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.—Daniel i. 2.

All were brought forth again, numbered, and delivered by Cyrus into the hands of the Prince of Judah.—Ezra i. 7-8.

And here we have given some idea of their number and variety. Five thousand and four hundred: some gold, some silver, chargers, basons, knives, all counted by God.—Ezra i. 9-10.

When, after this, others were added as an offering to the Lord, they were reckoned holy, and weighed, guarded and kept until brought to Jerusalem.—Ezra viii. 28-29.

In the New Testament, believers are the vessels in the spiritual

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temple. God said of Saul of Tarsus, "He is a *chosen vessel* unto Me."—Acts ix. 15.

If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, *sanctified*.—2 Timothy ii. 21.

Like the vessels in the tabernacle, God's vessels now must be sprinkled with *blood*. Cleansing from sin is the first requisite for service. Forgiveness of sin and separation from sin must be experienced.—Hebrews x. 22.

When the prophet's lips were touched with the live coal from off the altar, and he had listened to the assurance, thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged: then he could say, "Here am I, send me."—Isaiah vi. 7-8.

Then the anointing with oil must follow the sprinkling of blood, not only are we separated *from* sin but separated *to* God. All service for God must proceed from the Holy Spirit in the believer.—1 John ii. 20; Acts i. 8.

The vessel thus sanctified is to be filled,—"Filled with the Spirit."—Ephesians v. 18.

But it was not enough for the vessels to be cleansed at first, they must be kept clean. Forgetfulness or neglect of this often brings the Christian much trouble. It is not so easy rubbing off the tarnish of the world, or making bright the fine gold that has become dim. The *vessels* are holy; and the silver and the gold are a free-will offering unto the Lord God of your fathers. "Watch ye, and keep them," is a command that suits the spiritual *vessels* in God's house now, as it did the temple *vessels* in the days of Ezra. And so we find the same in the following passages:

That every one of you should know how to possess his *vessels* in sanctification and honour.—1 Thessalonians iv. 4.

He that is begotten of God keepeth himself.—1 John v. 18.

Keep yourselves in the love of God.—Jude 21.

Come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.—2 Corinthians vi. 17.

Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the portion of the King's meat, and so kept himself, even in Babylon, as a temple *vessel*.—Daniel i. 5-8.

The Holy Spirit guards us, too, with a jealous love, lest the *vessel* should be marred by contact with the world. "Do ye think the Scripture saith in vain, the Spirit which dwelleth in us jealously desireth us?"—James iv. 5.

Our own attempts at keeping the *vessel* would be, however,

vain, had we not the secret revealed in such texts as, "They shall hang *upon him* all *vessels* of small quantity, from the *vessels* of cups even to all the *vessels* of flagons."—Isaiah xxii. 24.

Our dwelling place must be in the house of the Lord: and thus, near the Master's hand, we shall be ready for the Master's use.—Psalm xxvii. 4.

In the shadow of His hand hath He hid me.—Isaiah xlix. 2.

And "He is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."—Jude 24.

The Apostle John says he saw no temple in the New Jerusalem, yet adds, "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and in that temple shall there not be place found for the vessels 'prepared unto glory,' (Rom. ix. 23,) for His servants shall serve Him, and His name shall be in their forehead".—Revelation xxii. 3.



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Bible Reading

ON

THE ANGEL'S GOSPEL.

The first day of our Bible Readings we took the duty or privilege of Christians to work for their Lord; yesterday under the figure of God's vessels we were led to consider the power for such service, and to-day we will consider what message we have to bear in order that through our instrumentality others may be saved. Did you ever think of the Gospel the angels preached? We know our Lord Himself preached the Gospel to the poor, and that His holy Apostles preached the same glad tidings of salvation. Paul says in Gal. i. 8, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Now if we compare the gospel preached by the angels, with that spoken by Paul, we shall find them corresponding in every particular. As the song of the angels will agree with the song of the saints, so their spoken message on earth agreed, its one subject was *Jesus*. The angels message to the Virgin, Luke i. 31, thou shalt "bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name *Jesus*." *Jesus* born a Saviour is the first clause in the angel's gospel. Verse 32 gives us His dignity, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest." Then we have His royal right, "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." Next comes a sway more extended and durable than David's, "Shall reign over the house of Jacob *forever*." The thirty-fifth verse gives us His Divine character, born of the Holy Ghost; and therefore called the Son of God. Now we turn to Matthew i. 20. In the angel's message to Joseph we have something more; not merely a Saviour from

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enemies as we have in Luke i. 71, but something more precious still, "He shall save His people from their *sins*." These three messages are gospel in prophecy, but in Luke ii. 11, the angels announce the fact of the birth in Bethlehem to the Shepherds, no longer a whisper in secret, or an intimation in a dream, but a gospel *preached* and *attested* by a multitude of the heavenly host.

Glad tidings, peace and good will, and the Gospel is no longer glad tidings to a few, but to *all people*, a light for the Gentiles as well as the glory of God's ancient people. And now the angel messengers become silent; we have no recorded angel utterance during our Lord's life on earth. *He* was God's anointed Preacher, they came to minister to Him, but not to speak to us. But when the crucifixion is past, the body marked with scourge and thorn and nail and spear, has been hurriedly entombed. The resurrection morning comes, and the *angels* have again their brief moments for preaching. They roll back the stone to shew the Church the empty grave, and to the women they say, "Fear not, ye seek Jesus which was crucified." *Christ crucified* is another clause added to the *angels* gospel, immediately followed by the more glorious announcement, "He is not here *He is risen*." A few more words to the weeping woman who lingered by the grave and then the angels are silent again, for Jesus Himself speaks and they need say no more. We read of no other speech from them till the ascension, and then two *angels* are there to give the final clause, "He is *coming again*." Christ born, Jesus a Saviour, a King for all, Jesus crucified, Jesus risen, Jesus coming again. This is our gospel—Paul's gospel—the angels gospel.

And now, very briefly, what other angelic utterances have we? By the sepulchre we have, "Go, tell that He is risen," in Matt. xxviii. 7, and other places. In Acts v. 20, we have, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." In Acts xi. 13, 14 we have, "Send men for Simon Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." Why did not the angels go and tell the mourning disciples, "He is risen?" Why did not the angels go and speak "all the words of this life" to the people? Why did not the angel speak to Cornelius "words whereby he might be saved?" Because, it is the lips of forgiven sinners that are now to preach the Gospel. The weakest disciple here to-day can do something that no angel can do. If we do not convey this message—who will? Not the angels, though they would rush to bear the tidings if they might.

One word to those who are hindered absolutely from proclaim-

ing the glad tidings : the angels have teaching for you. Look at Acts xii. : Peter is in prison, chained fast ; he can no longer speak in the temple, and no angel can do it for him. What can the angel do? Open the doors of the prison and let Peter out. There are those who would gladly go to the heathen, kept at home for want of means, as directly as Peter was kept from preaching by the prison doors. Give of your abundance, or out of your deep poverty, and God will count it angelic ministry. Open doors wide for others if you *cannot* go yourselves, and He who watched the gifts cast into the treasury will say, "She hath done what she could."



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