

WINCHESTER CONFERENCE

JUNE 8th—11th, 1935.

SATURDAY EVENING. *Prayer Meeting*, 7 p.m.

Hymns sung : 56, 111, 394, 23.

Scripture read : John xiv. 1-23.

LORD'S DAY MORNING. *Prayer Meeting*, 7.30 a.m.

Hymns sung : 56, 25, "Glory, honour," etc.

Scriptures read : John xvii. ; xvi. 26, 27 ; 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28.

Breaking of Bread, 11 a.m.

Hymns sung : 231, 188, 147, 129, 8.

Scriptures read : Luke xxiv. 46, 47, 25-35 ; 1 Cor. xi. 26 ; Luke xxii. 19, 20 ; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, xi. 23-32.

LORD'S DAY AFTERNOON. *Young People's Meeting*,
2 p.m.

Address by Mr. J. Weston.

Hymn 226. Luke ii. 7-20, 25-40. Hymn 230.

"*The Child grew*" (Luke i. 80).

There is a great deal of spiritual stagnation to-day, instead of real healthy advance. It is unspeakably sad when children of God do not grow in the Lord's things. The Christian must either grow or decline ; there is no standing still. Have any of you lost your

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early earnestness, your zeal for God and His things? Do not let anything cause you to decline, but "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

It is recorded in scripture eleven times of persons that they "grew."

1. *Moses*. "The child grew" (Ex. ii. 10). Moses grew in spite of the king's command that he was to die. So in Rom. v. 12, although death passed upon all men, God's grace is at work, and even notorious sinners who believe are, through mercy, allowed to live. Moses means "drawn out" of the water, and we are "brands plucked out of the fire," whilst the unsaved are spared for a time by the intercession of the heavenly Vine-dresser.

2. *Samuel*. "The child . . . grew before the Lord" (1 Sam. ii. 21). "Samuel did not yet know the Lord" (iii. 7), but the Lord knew Samuel, and he "grew before the Lord." God knows our down-sitting and our uprising and is acquainted with all our ways (Ps. cxxxix. 2, 3), and He records every man's deeds and words in His books. Of each one it might be said, "He is growing before the Lord."

3. *Gilead's sons*. "His wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah" (Judges xi. 2). They "grew up" to learn that they possessed a free-will, and they used it to thrust out Israel's saviour. Free-will is a terrible thing when it causes Christ to say, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

4. *Samson*. "The child grew, and the Lord blessed him; and the Spirit of the Lord began to move him" (Judges xiii. 24, 25). "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord," we read. Unlike Gilead's sons, Samson grew up to trust in the Lord and so was declared "blessed." "And the Spirit of the Lord began to move (influence) him." "As many as are led by the Spirit

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of God, they are the sons of God." How happy if in all our meetings men kept silent until "moved (influenced) by the Spirit of God!"

5. *Samuel*. "The child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men" (1 Sam. ii. 26). We must "*grow on*" in the spiritual life, and this is ensured by feeding on the sincere milk of the word, as newborn babes (1 Pet. ii. 2). "And was in favour both with the Lord, and *also with men.*" "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. xvi. 7). As Christians, we should be the kindest at home, the most helpful in the office, not sanctimonious nor repellent. Our Lord grew "in favour with God *and man*" (Luke ii. 52).

6. *Isaac*. "The child grew, and was weaned" (Gen. xxi. 8). We have amongst us too many unweaned babes, who require to be fed in a certain style, or they say they get nothing. They dislike anything to masticate. But other people's thoughts do not always produce a healthy state of soul. While gladly accepting help from others, let us not be dependent on them—we have the word of God for ourselves. The apostle John wrote the Apocalypse at Patmos, when he was in isolation. Learn to say, "My soul is even as a weaned child" (Ps. cxxxii. 2). Christian fellowship is invaluable, but lean on none but Christ.

7. *Ishmael*. "And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness" (Gen. xxi. 20). The wilderness is a dreary place. God may take away your friend or your business, or deprive you of fellowship with His people, but if you find yourself alone with God there, it is worth while, for great things are learned in the wilderness. "Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her . . . *and she shall sing there*" (Hos. ii. 14, 15).

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8. *Samuel*. He "grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam. iii. 19). What a cause for thankfulness when one finds young Christians "established"—regular at the meetings, faithful and reliable and being used of God. It will be so if we both grow, and have the Lord with us.

9. *Esau and Jacob*. "And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents" (Gen. xxv. 27). Beware of Esau's character—not after God's heart, profane, a man of the field,—“the field is the world.” Covet to be unworldly, remember the world's hands are stained with the blood of Christ. Be content to be a "plain" man here, knowing you are to be wonderfully adorned presently (Rev. xxi. 2). "Jacob was a plain (perfect) man," desiring to be perfect in spite of his wretched "old nature." Though we fall seven times, God will lift us up.

10. *Isaac*. "The man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great" (Gen. xxvi. 13). This is the young child who "grew, and was weaned." Get hold of God's word for yourself and feed upon it. "He went forward, until he became very great". Do not seek big things for yourself (Jer. xlv. 5), but let it be your one business to go on with the Lord's things to true moral greatness.

11. Of *our adorable Lord* it is written, "The Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit" (Luke ii. 40). The Holy Spirit of God repeats the words of John the Baptist (Luke i. 80). What greater commendation is possible than for the Spirit of God to use the same words about a servant as about his Lord? This is the consummation of growth in the things of God: by prayer, reading God's holy word, and meditation, to grow like Christ.

Hymn 318.

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Bible Reading, 3.15 p.m.
Hymn 392. Romans v.

In this chapter we have the conclusion of the apostle's teaching regarding God's grace and righteousness in dealing with our sins (*vers.* 1-11), and the evil root, sin (*vers.* 12-21).

Ver. 1. The spiritual consequences of Christ's atoning death and our faith in God are justification and peace. Peace with God implies an altered attitude on our part, not His (iii. 26). Something has intervened to satisfy God with regard to those sins we had committed; we accept the revelation of God's righteousness on the principle of faith, and rejoice in the blessings that follow. Justification does not imply the gift of a new nature, although the two truths go together. The sinner who believes is born again, and is now justified. In iii. 24 we are justified by His grace—in contrast with the law which condemned; in v. 1, by faith—man's side, and in v. 9, by His blood, the atoning basis. The ground for our justification is that the Lord Jesus was delivered for our offences and was raised again. Forgiveness of sins is a clearance from responsibility before God for those sins. At Antioch Paul preached both the forgiveness of sins and justification by Christ "from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (*see* Prov. xi. 21). The Pharisee, by justifying himself, brought condemnation on himself. The blessed result of Christ's work is that we not only have forgiveness of sins but are reckoned righteous before God. Behind, all is settled; around, all is grace; ahead, glory is awaiting us.

Ver. 11. "Joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ" is the high water mark of Christianity. It may be illustrated by the case of the prodigal son, brought back, robed and seated at the father's table,

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and feeding with him on the fatted calf. There was mutual joy between the father and his restored son. Joy in God is the highest exercise of the renewed soul. Romans starts with man not wanting God at all: but by chapter v. believers are seen brought home to rejoice in Him. What makes this joy practicable is the presence of the Holy Ghost (*ver. 5*).

Ver. 12. In Adam we inherit only sin and death, but in Christ righteousness and life. In worship we address God, rejoicing in what He is; but when we magnify God's grace toward us, we think of our sins.

In Hab. iii. 17-19, when everything else fails, the prophet rejoices in the God of our salvation. One who has peace with God may boast in Him: but as sheep do not always obey the shepherd's voice, so our experience is not always what is proper Christian experience. Scripture always assumes that we live up to the highest level of our standing; but if we fail, God on our confession provides for our failure in the blood of Christ (1 John i. 7).

Hymn 317.

LORD'S DAY EVENING. *Preaching of the Gospel*, 6.30 p.m. Mr. W. G. Turner.

Hymns: "We saw Thee not when Thou didst come," "When wounded sore the stricken soul," "He left the brightness of His home."

John ix.: "*And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth*" (*ver. 1*).

I. *The prologue* of the story consists of what Christ, the disciples, and others saw.

(1) Christ, as always, saw the man as he was. He sees us not as we wish to appear, nor as we think we are nor as others see us; but exactly as we are. All thing

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are naked and open in the sight of Him with Whom we have to do. But in seeing the man *as he was*, Christ saw him *as man was not meant to be*: so, too, He looks upon us. Man made in God's image was meant to know and glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts find no rest until they find it in Thyself." But man by nature does not do this: sin has marred him and separated him from God. Yet as our Lord looked at him, He *saw the man as he might become*, and His passing by made this blessing possible. Christ's greeting of Peter (John i. 42) is an instance: not what Peter then was, but the man Christ could and would make of him. So He looks on us as we really are in God's sight, as we were never meant to be, and as through His passing we may become: for "ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9).

(2) The disciples saw in the man only an interesting subject for religious, philosophical discussion: Why? Whose fault? How? So philosophy tinged by religion may interest the mind in the problem of evil, its origin and why permitted, and yet utterly fail to deal with the sad result--the actual need of the soul.

(3) The others passing by saw in the man simply an unfortunate victim of circumstances, needing temporal help. This may also remind us that while philanthropy may alleviate humanity's temporal wants, it does not touch the primal need and cause of man's desperate case.

II. *The story* falls into four parts:—

(1) The passing by of our Lord and the blessing thereby made possible for the man may well serve to remind us of His far greater "passing by" of the angels

to bless mankind who had been blind from birth. "Verily He took not hold of angels, but He took hold of the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii. 16), and the reason is given in Luke i. 79—mankind sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, by nature children of wrath, exposed to peril here and doom hereafter because of its sinful state, and unable to extricate itself from its sad condition, mankind visited by the Dayspring from on high through God's tender mercy (*cf.* John iii. 16). This greatest of all blessings has been made possible, but only by the passing by of Jesus our Lord to the cross, where He made a full atonement to God for sin and found eternal redemption and union with God for His people on a basis of perfect righteousness.

(2) The blessing of healing for the man, unsought by him, sprang from Christ's own compassion. He saw the need, did what was necessary, and spoke the word that created the confident obedience of faith. So in a greater degree has it been for the bringing of sinners out of nature's darkness into God's marvellous light.

(3) The story is also of a blessing received through the obedience of faith. Our Lord made clay and touched the seat of the man's disability: He also spoke the word which started the man on the way to blessing. "Go, wash," was the word, and in acting on it the man received the gift of sight he so sorely needed. By what Christ did and said, the blessing was secured, by the man's obedience of faith the blessing was received. So by what our Lord did on the cross, and by what He said, souls believing on Him receive remission of sins, eternal life, and peace with God. The pool of Siloam speaks of Himself, God's Sent One, for "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14): the application by faith of what He is to all our blindness and need, just as the man applied the water

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to his own eyes, changes our condition from darkness to dawn.

(4) The story is also of a blessing entailing confession of the Blessor with all its consequences, (a) a difference in the man ; the neighbours knew it and he confessed it, (b) a definite confession of the blessing and the Blessor, (c) a growing sense of His greatness, (d) a bold and costly avowal² of discipleship, and (e) the price ; excommunication.

III. *The epilogue* may be summarised as a well-known Voice : a hitherto unseen Face : then face to face, and what he saw and said : finally, in His company, a worshipping disciple. It is a picture of every believer now and by and by, when we see Him Whom not having seen we love. But let each one solemnly consider his actual condition by nature, the danger in which that condition places him, his inability to extricate himself, and then gratefully consider the infinite love of God and provision made by the passing by of Jesus our Lord from the highest glory to the deep shame and atoning death of the cross.

Hymn : " Just as I am, without one plea."

MONDAY MORNING. *Prayer Meeting*, 7.30 a.m.

Hymns sung : 39, 195, 5.

Scriptures read : Psalm xxvii. 4, xxxvi. 5-10, cxvi. 12, 13 ; Rev. v. 1-10.

Open Meeting, 11 a.m.

Hymns 212, 39.

W.J.R. Deut. i. 22-28 ; Numbers xiii. 1-3, 6, 17-33, xiv. 1-10.

" *The Lord is with us : fear them not* " (Num. xiv. 9).

We are all looking on to that rest which remains for the people of God. God gave way here, if we may so

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say, to the people's reluctance, owing to their lack of faith in Him, to go into the land (Deut. i. 26). Abraham did not go into the land of promise until his father was dead (Acts vii. 4) : though, in Gen. xii. 1, he was called to leave his father's house : we must put off the old man.

The people murmured that the Lord hated them (Deut. i. 27). It recalls Jacob's distrust of Joseph, revealed after his death (Gen. l. 16, 17). The Lord loved the nation and said He would bring them out to bring them into the land, and after seeing the fruit of the land this was the climax of unbelief. May we learn from these passages the deceitfulness of our unbelieving hearts.

They may have been in their own sight "as grasshoppers" before the sons of Anak, but "the Lord is with us : fear them not," say Joshua and Caleb—and is He a grasshopper? Yet they did not enter in because of unbelief (Heb. iii. 19). We have no strength *either, but all power belongs to Him. If the enemies are giants, there is more "bread" for us when we conquer* (Numb. xiv. 9). Every exercise and difficulty is food for our souls. We may think we have a measure of strength and wisdom, but David's experience in the valley of Rephaim (2 Sam. v. 19, 23) shows that we cannot conquer our enemies always in the same way. When David went according to the Lord's bidding, the song of glory for victory went to God.

In Josh. xiv. 6-15 we have a picture of the land at rest. Caleb, who had said forty-five years previously, "If the Lord delight in us, He will bring us in," had not lost any of his strength. God brought Israel into the wilderness that they might know that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Then He brought them into the land.

The Israelites professed anxiety for the fate of their little ones (Num. xiv. 3), but it was the older ones who

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died in the wilderness, and God brought the children into the land in safety. The Lord warns the children against the fathers' example in Ps. lxxviii. 8. But there is a path through all our difficulties; remember the Gentile Jethro's word to Moses, "The Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them" (Ex. xviii. 11). So God brings us into various exercises that we may be cast upon Him, and may learn that His strength is made perfect in weakness. Paul, blessed so remarkably by being caught up into the third heaven, was given a thorn in the flesh that he might not boast. After praying three times for its removal, and receiving the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee," he gloried in his infirmity, that Christ might be magnified. What an exhortation and example for us!

In Num. xiii. 22 we read that Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt. This is the same place as Mamre, where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah and Leah were buried (Gen. xlix. 31). Eventually, David reigned there seven years before he reigned publicly in Jerusalem—a picture of the Lord's government now. It was built seven years before one of the chief cities of the land of their bondage. So we are "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world."

In our difficulties and trials we do not know what to pray for, but we have the Spirit interceding within us and we do know that all things work together for good—to them that love God, because He has first loved us, to them who are called according to His purpose, predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. As we go along our pathway, everything He does is preparing us, producing what is pleasing in His sight, that Christ may have the first place among many brethren. God wants us to be perfect to do His will (Heb. xiii. 20, 21), by presenting our bodies a living

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sacrifice (Rom. xii. 1, 2). But it is only by His working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. ii. 13) that we have the desire as well as the power. May the Lord enable us to answer more to His desire, and be more like Him Who said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God."

Hymn 151.

W.H.N. *"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry"* (Heb. x. 35-37).

I feel we have need of patience, because the Lord says so. May He direct our hearts into the love of God and the patience of Christ (2 Thess. iii. 5). How gracious He is to give us the comfort of knowing that it is only a little while that we shall need patience! Soon we shall hear His voice, and all the trials of the wilderness will be over. Meantime, let us not cast away our confidence, which has great recompense of reward.

What a sight these eyes will see, perhaps to-day! The One Who has borne so tenderly with us and fed us all the journey through, Who has loved us with an everlasting love, Who died and lives for us!

We were reminded a few years ago that in Greek the word for "a little while" may be said to mean a very, very little bit of a while. Jesus is the Coming One, and He will not tarry. Meanwhile, we all need patience, and the Lord will enable us to look away from the many things that try His saints. Look away to Jesus, and you will "live by faith," and soar above everything here, and joy in God. May He give us simple faith to live through all circumstances here to His praise and glory.

Hymn 173.

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MONDAY AFTERNOON.

Young People's Meeting, 2 p.m.

Hymns 112, 106.

Address by Mr. J. C. Kell. Heb. v. 12-14, vi. 1-3 ;
Eph. iv. 11-16 ; 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, xiii. 11.

" That we henceforth be no more children " (Eph. iv. 14).

The word for children in this verse from Ephesians is the same as that translated " babes " in 1 Cor. iii., and Heb. v., and " child " in 1 Cor. xiii. It means one who has not yet reached discretion or knowledge. We are to seek to grow out of that state spiritually and not to be " big babies," as the apostle crushingly called the Corinthians, who thought themselves very wise. God does not want us to remain babes, and the passage in Hebrews shows us how believers in the Lord Jesus may become men. When they are very young they have to learn the meaning of repentance from dead works, faith towards God, and (particularly if they are Jewish) the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Those recently converted need to know more of these things, but God wants us then to go on to full growth, or perfection, as it is called here. Consequently the priesthood of the Lord Jesus is unfolded by the Spirit of God, and the key is given to us of many types from the Old Testament.

Comparing 1 Cor. iii. 1 and x. 15, Paul changes the description of his readers from " babes " to " wise men." In the mean time they have been taught, first, what to do when evil comes in among God's people, which sometimes happens through young persons bringing in what they get outside ; then, that all family and household relationships must be put on a new

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footing among God's people; that their hearts must not be set on idols, but on the one God and one Lord, as revealed in the scriptures; next, about the breaking of bread and how they should behave when they "come together." We must not think these subjects are unimportant.

When you first come to the breaking of bread, and you know the object of being together, your heart is filled with what is going on, and you join in the thanksgiving. But later, as the result of private reading, you are able to remember and give thanks for what you have learned for yourself about the Lord Jesus out of the scripture, and you do not only wait for what others have to say.

Before going on to Ephesians, it is well to remember that there are perhaps three ways in which the scriptures are spoken about to young people. The most common is to apply them to a believer's daily life as an individual—practical truths. The next is to use them to bring out truths concerning the Lord and His work. The third, which is really included in the second, is to teach God's will regarding our relationship to other believers and to the Lord in heaven. It is most important to know what is pleasing to God in worship and what is for the glory of Christ in our coming together. Gospel hymns and children's choruses are splendid, in their right place, but we must go to the scriptures in order to grow. Do not neglect the Bible Readings, at which you may gather something to store in your heart from what others say. During the silences you may also gather something by reading for yourself, not letting your minds wander, but looking to the Lord for the guidance of His Holy Spirit, and seeking to be occupied with the subject before the meeting.

Just as your prayers have grown and developed since their simplicity at your mother's knee, so there should be growth in your participation in the prayer meetings,

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not just waiting for the prayers and thanksgiving that others bring, but bringing your own.

From Ephesians iv. 11-16 we learn another aspect of growth out of babyhood. All believers are members of Christ's body, and He is the Head in heaven of the body on earth. From Him the whole world-wide body, "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth . . . maketh increase . . . unto the edifying of itself in love." Christ Himself is the source of all growth, but we each have a responsibility to the other members, as well as to the Head. This is more than applying the scriptures to our daily life, or learning more about the Lord Jesus. Spiritual growth is immensely important—let us get it from the scriptures, not merely as individuals, but as members of Christ's body. There is no growth, as there is no salvation, apart from Him. Let us no longer be babes, but grow up "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Hymn 107.

Brothers' Meeting, 2 p.m.

Foreign Work, 3.15 p.m.

Hymn 389.

Mr. J. N. Voorhoeve read Heb. xiii. 7, 8, and spoke on work in *Belgium* and *Holland*.

Telegrams read from Luxor, Cairo and Sydney.

Letters and greetings read from Spain, Lagos, Sydney, Cape Town, Greece and France.

Mr. E. Brockhans spoke on *Russia* and *Germany* (see Letters of Interest, June, 1935, p. 403).

Mr. M. Behnam spoke on work in *Egypt* (see L.O.I., June, 1935, pp. 393, 394).

"*Glory, honour, praise and power.*"

MONDAY EVENING. *Address* by Mr. W. J. Hocking,
6.30 p.m.

Hymns 222, 16.

Gen. xxii. 1-3, 15-18; xxiv. 1-8, 62-66; Rom.
viii. 14, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23; Gal. iv. 1-7; Eph. i.
3-6; Rev. xxi. 1-7.

*"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons
by Jesus Christ to Himself"* (Eph. i. 5).

I wish to draw attention to the truth that runs through all these scriptures: from Genesis to Revelation we find God's purpose for the sonship and heirship of believers is continually in His thoughts and in His revelation to man. God's thoughts are infinitely higher than ours, but He has been pleased to reveal some of them to us, not merely to satisfy our curiosity about heavenly things, but that we might have the blessing and joy of being acquainted down here with His purpose. The enemy's aim is to occupy our attention so completely with our transitory circumstances that we shall have neither time nor care for these heavenly truths.

The great fact stands out in God's word that He meant to have a company who should be conformed to the image of His Son, and that they should be not only His children, knowing Him as Father and entering into the things revealed by the Spirit, but should be His sons. The two names, "children" and "sons," are kept distinct in scripture: do we understand our special privileges as sons of God?

God established the principle of sonship and heirship in the family of faith from the beginning. Abraham, the father of all that believe, God called out from his country and family, to go into a land of which he knew nothing. God promised Abraham that he should possess this land and that through him and his seed all nations

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of the earth should be blessed. After many years of pilgrimage in the Holy Land, God interposed by His almighty power and gave a son, in their old age, to Abraham and Sarah, the heir of these divine promises. Then in Gen. xxii. we find God's promises established in Isaac and confirmed with an oath. In dark visions at night, before that time, Abraham had seen the smoking lamp passing between the divided sacrifices and had heard God's voice saying that his seed should be strangers in a land not their own, but should come forth from bondage in the fourth generation. Thus Abraham learned that there was something of affliction and captivity before his seed, as well as blessing.

In Gen. xxii. we see this son established before Abraham as the heir of promise by the way of sacrifice. He knew from Shem what a burnt offering was, for Abraham learned from him that after the deluge an altar was erected and the fragrance of the sacrifices upon it went up gratefully to Jehovah (Gen. vii.) And now the voice of God directs Abraham to offer his only son, on whom all the world's blessings hung, for a burnt offering. Would he do this in the strength of his faith in God? or would he refrain, feeling that something was wrong in such a command? Abraham believed God, and he and Isaac went together. What a beautiful picture of the great Sacrifice, the only-begotten Son of God! The truth of sonship and heirship to the promise must be established in sacrifice, and Isaac, type of God's beloved Son, goes in the strength of his manhood and in the knowledge of God's promises, with the wood bound upon his shoulders, submitting with all meekness to the secret mission, the son obedient to the father. Day by day Abraham's pride in his son increased, seeing him entering so thoroughly into the obedience of faith in his own heart. How it speaks to us of the Father watching with delight His beloved Son walking through this world!

On Mount Moriah the type fails when Abraham's knife was arrested; but Jehovah saw the significant foreshadowing of the son bound and offered in sacrifice upon that mountain, and He confirmed His promise by an oath. His promises are ever faithful, why then the oath? That we might have two immutable resting-places (Heb. vi. 17, 18) for our faith—God's promise and His oath to His own Son. Abraham in figure received his son back from death (Heb. xi. 19), so that in resurrection these great promises were renewed to Isaac, figure of Christ, as Gal. iii. 16, 17 (N.Tr.) plainly shows.

In Gen. xxii. 16-18 we have a special promise to the seed. Previously the blessing was on earth, infinite multiplication and possession of the enemies' gates. But there is an addition now, "In thy seed shall all the nations . . . be blessed." This is unconditional, and Paul shews (Gal. iii.) that it has special application for those belonging to Christ, slain but risen. In Him, declared the Son of God by resurrection, we get our blessings of sonship and heirship. There is the sure foundation, immovable before God, upon which salvation and peace come to the whole world, and sonship and heirship to the children of promise.

In Gen. xxiv. we have the special way in which Isaac's bride was found. So far as scriptural history shows, the son of Abraham, unlike the son of Isaac and the sons of Jacob, always abode in the promised land, the type of heavenly places. Does not this feature speak of the Son remaining in the heavens while His bride is being prepared for Him?

Isaac was alive with Shem, and both Abraham and Isaac knew that God's blessing was attached to his descendants (Gen. ix. 26). So, whilst others might take wives of the daughters of Canaan, for Isaac it was imperative that the bride to share his blessing should

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be a descendant of Shem. There are many beautiful features in the narrative—Rebekah came to Isaac by the hearing of faith ; and everything was provided for her journey, so that she went across the desert upon the camels of the heir of all things to the land she had never seen. Isaac went out at eventide to meditate. Is there anything the Father has purposed for the Heir of all things that He hides from the Son ? The Holy Spirit by human agencies is bringing the Son's bride to the Father's house ; and our Lord is not unmindful of His servants' labour to present others perfect to Himself, Who is waiting to receive them. Isaac beheld the camels coming.

The bride lifted up her eyes and saw Isaac : she descended from the camels, veiled herself in her own handiwork, and met her beloved bridegroom waiting for her. They went in and were always together, the son and heir and the heiress of the promises. Such is the church's special place to-day, as is brought out in Romans and elsewhere in the New Testament.

In Romans viii. 14 the characteristics of Christians are given as being led by the Spirit and being the sons of God. Every person who knows our Lord Jesus Christ is born of water and of the Spirit and is a child of God—a high and holy privilege. He has a new nature and receives the truths of scripture, and is born of God in a sense that cannot be applied to any archangel even. But believers are more than children : they are sons also. Abraham had other children, but not one was a son in the sense that Isaac was. We are God's children by birth, and His sons by adoption. Adoption is God's way of bringing us into the remarkable privilege of sonship.

As Eliezer guided Rebekah across the trackless desert, so surely is the Holy Spirit " bringing many sons unto glory " where the Son is. Leading by the Spirit is not

a mystical notion : we know He is within us, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God ; and by Him even in moments of excruciating agony we *cry*, "Abba, Father"—as did our blessed Lord in Gethsemane.

In this chapter the expectation of the whole creation is linked up with this privilege of sonship, and with the day of its manifestation to all. Like a royal person travelling *incognito*, the official character of God's sons is not now displayed. Where is the heavenly dignity about us that would show the world that we are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ? But the time is coming when the dignity of sonship will be manifested to all. "The whole creation groaneth . . . waiting for the adoption." Then our bodies will be redeemed, and the Lord's glory appear, and we with Him shall come forth in glory, appearing as the sons of God.

God's purpose is that we may be conformed to the image of His Son : for this reason "all things work together for good to them that love God." Some of His glory is bound up with us, poor worms !

In Gal. iv. 1-7, a clear distinction is drawn between Christians and Jews. The status of the Old Testament saints was altogether different from believers. The condition of infancy (like a person "under twenty-one," regarded as a minor in the eye of the law) characterised Judaism, but do Christians know that they are what Abraham, Job and David, however much they may excel some of us in moral virtues, never were—sons of God indwelt by the Holy Spirit? God's purpose in sending His Son in "the fulness of time" into this world, under the law, was to relieve those under its fetters, and give them the liberty of sonship.

This truth affects the manner of life of every one. We as believers and sons of God may be still living under the bondage of law, behaving towards our Father

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in the way of the world, which is to do nothing more than they are by express commandment bound to do. But the service of Christ is not law, it is grace. Why do we go once a week to remember the Lord in His death? Is it merely the love of regularity and the routine of an ordered life, doing it as a legal act?

Again: if in our Christian service we copy the world's political and social methods, called here "the elements of the world," we use human formalities to restrict the sovereign action of the Spirit. We are brought into liberty as sons, and should do all out of the superabundance of our affection for God and His Son. Unlike servants, we are let into the Father's secrets: on account of this high honour and privilege, our conduct should be as becomes the sons of God.

In Eph. i. 3-6 we are led back to our election before the world's foundation. Rebekah's blessings were in Canaan, the heavenly places: what Isaac sent through Eliezer was something from the homeland: would she go across the desert to him there? So our blessings are in heavenly places, and the apostle looks up and blesses "God"—Who has chosen us—"and the Father"—with Whom we can have communion and Whom we can worship. God's purpose is that we should be holy and blameless; nothing must be discordant with His nature, in Whose presence a speck of sin would be an intrusion. More, He "predestinated us": God, before time was, looked upon us every one and chose us one by one out of this vast world, as the Lord chose His disciples individually from the multitude. And the purpose of this predestination was "unto the adoption of sons (not children) by Jesus Christ."

Rev. xxi. 1-7 deals with the eternal state, when this world will have passed away, the millennium and the judgment at the great white throne being over. In the new heaven and new earth, God will be all in all. There

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will be "no more sea," so necessary to life and its present activities: the single phrase expresses the contrasted conditions of the eternal state. The holy city which descends is the bride which previously reigned with Christ over the earth, but she is seen, still adorned for her Husband. The tabernacle of God will be with men, no longer divided into nations, as in the millennium.

The imagery of the book of Revelation is full of pain and sorrows, but in this brief summary it is said, "God shall wipe away all tears." Again we have the heavenly voice saying, "I make all things new." When scripture repeats, it is that the truth may be written deeply on our hearts. God means to make new people, surroundings, conditions. We sometimes forget these "true and faithful" words, but they were written by the express command of Him that sat upon the throne. And He says: "I will be his God, and he shall be My son." We are all included, but are addressed individually. Sonship is established for the eternal state.

He adds, "I will give unto him that is athirst . . . freely," because "He that overcometh shall *inherit* all things." Where is our strength to overcome in the struggle? The objection is anticipated. A thirsty man cannot fight, but "I will give him the water of life freely." Our lips now become parched and our tongues swell in this trying, thirsty land, and it is difficult to go forward, but that same One "will give unto him that is athirst," and he shall overcome and be heir of all, as well as son.

In Luke xv. the *son*, though unworthy to be called a son, came home, and it was manifested to all in the house, by the ring, the shoes, the best robe, that the prodigal, once in the far country but now at the father's table, was a son. So in eternity the overcomer, though chief of sinners even, will be known as a son of God.

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These truths, beloved friends, if held in our hearts, will lift us above many troubles and difficulties, will give us joy in the hour of sorrow, and keep us going forward continually to the coming glory that is ours.

Hymn 115.

TUESDAY MORNING. *Prayer Meeting*, 7.30 a.m.

Hymns sung : 224, 370, 5.

Scriptures read : Ps. xliii. 3 ; Is. liii. 11 ; 2 Cor. i. 13, 14.

Open Meeting, 11 a.m.

Hymn 196.

J.N.V. 2 Thess. ii. 13-iii. 18.

"*The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of the Christ*" (2 Thess. iii. 5, N.Tr.).

Two objects are set before us in this verse—the love of God and the patience of Christ. Christ's patient continuance in the will of God is an inspiration for our walk in faith, love, hope, prayer and reading the word. But here the apostle is not speaking of the patient waiting for Christ, but of the patience of the Christ (New Translation). It is His patient waiting for the moment when He will come for His bride, to take her to Himself. God's love exceeds our highest thought, is the source of our salvation, the beginning of all things ; and the end is the coming of Jesus Christ to bring us to glory.

But let us first look at what is said in this passage of different kinds of men, and we shall be struck by the wonderful love of God and Christ. In chapter iii. we find four kinds of men—labourers, enemies, obedient and disobedient believers.

Labourers are zealous, praying, dependent men, with

a heart for souls. Even Paul asked (*ver.* 1) for the prayers of the weak brethren—no servant of the Lord can work alone. Of course, he must have his Master, but he needs to be constantly sustained by his brethren. Further, he must realise that, though the Lord uses him, he is not indispensable. Labourers must set a good example, as Paul did (*vers.* 7-10), and not be weary in well-doing. Let us pray more for them in their difficult work for the Lord.

“ *Unreasonable and wicked men* ” include perhaps the Jews mentioned in 1 Thess. ii. 14-16 as being always against all men, including the apostle. We have not only to pray for the labourers, that they may walk with the Lord and have strength to preach, but also that they may be kept from wicked men and from men who are a hindrance, being enemies of the Lord's work.

It is good for all of us to be *obedient* to the Lord's commands, through His apostle, and then His name will be glorified. The apostle was assured that the Thessalonians would do so. And we? Is it the desire of our hearts to do in all things God's will?

There were *disobedient* believers in Thessalonica too; those walking disorderly. As in an army, we must bow to God's discipline, and obey His voice (1 Thess. v. 14, 2 Thess. iii. 6). There must be godly order in the meetings, and in our daily lives too; we must not act like busybodies, speaking about all kinds of things instead of earning our own bread. From such we must withdraw, or we shall be disorderly too. If anyone disobeys the apostle's word in this Epistle, we are to note him openly (*ver.* 14) and have no personal fellowship with him. In withdrawing from such, let us not forget he is a brother, but love and admonish him (*ver.* 15). We are not to judge our brethren, but exhort in love. If they will not listen, we must still pray for them, that the Lord may restore them.

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The "Lord of peace" (*ver.* 16) is a title not used elsewhere, though "God of peace" occurs six times (Rom. xv. 33, xvi. 20, 2 Cor. xiii. 11, Phil. iv. 9, 1 Thess. v. 23, Heb. xiii. 20). The apostle wishes them always and by all means—in different manners—peace from the Lord of peace Himself, commending them all to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, when we consider these four types of men, and we see the love of God and the patience of Christ, we exclaim, "How blessed to know the love of God and to have the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ with us, and the Lord of peace giving us all we want as believers!" The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, and Jesus is not only the Lord in our midst, providing all things, but is Master of us all, controlling our service. He has made peace, and He gives us His peace, the peace of God. All things spring from God, and are for the glory of our Lord.

God gave in His love His only begotten Son, Who came to find us. What wonderful love we find in God's heart! This love is beautifully seen in John iii. 16—a great God in His great love to a great multitude gave a great gift and a great invitation, a great deliverance and a great inheritance. This love is in our hearts by the Holy Spirit and we have to keep ourselves in that love. Sorrows and burdens may come to us, difficulties in our lives. But God's love knows all. Let this be our rest in this poor world! If anyone or anything is taken from us, let us not forget, *love* did it, for our God cannot act otherwise than in love.

The patience of Christ occurs also in Rev. i. 9—we must be patient not only in tribulation, and looking out for the kingdom, but also in waiting for our Lord Jesus. In Rev. iii. 10 we read of those who keep the word of His patience. He is waiting patiently till all His beloved are with Him. And the saints in Paradise

are waiting for the redemption of their bodies. Have we fellowship in waiting with them, in the patience of Christ ?

Christ is waiting for the Father's time, but we may expect Him any day. He is longing for us to be in His presence, and we are longing to be where He is. What a wonderful fellowship ! We are not only to *obtain salvation* by our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. v. 9), but also to *obtain His glory* (2 Thess. ii. 14, John xvii. 22, 24).

Let us therefore "stand fast, and hold the traditions which we have been taught," in the words of scripture ; and the Father and the Son will come, as One Comforter, to stablish us (2 Thess. ii. 16, 17).

As we go our ways to our own circles, may our God and Father comfort us with everlasting consolation, may we look for the Lord's return, Who is coming to bring us into His own glory, and may our hearts be longing for Him.

Hymn 202.

W.R.K. Hebrews xi. 5, 6.

"*Enoch . . . pleased God.*"

The fact that Enoch is stated to be the seventh from Adam (Jude 14) suggests that a sort of perfection was reached in him. Men began to call on the name of the Lord (Gen. iv. 26), and went on until Enoch came. Then in the sixty-fifth year of his life, Enoch began to walk with God. He walked with Him three hundred years, and had the testimony from God Himself that he "pleased God." The Lord God doubtless walked in the cool of the day in Paradise that He might find pleasure in the work of His hands, but alas, He found one who had sinned. Surely God looked with more or less

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pleasure on all those who were faithful to Him, but Enoch walked so wondrously that it was testified that he, no matter what the world was like, walked with God.

Enoch walked by faith, believing that God *was* (*ver.* 6). It suggests that the world around did not even believe that there was a God. When he was about three hundred years old, nearly all the antediluvian patriarchs were alive, but of Enoch alone is it written that he so pleased God that He took him to be with Him. Moses and Elijah were on the mount of transfiguration, but Enoch is with God. When the world was very evil, it was a delight to God to find one man walking with Him, one trusting Him ; and that one is now on high with Him.

Is Enoch not set before us in the New Testament for an example ? However glad we may be at the prospect of seeing, hearing and being with the Lord Jesus, it should be precious that we may, and shall, give pleasure to Him, Who will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Is it not a delight to think that even here on earth, though feeble, we may through God's grace so walk as to please Him ?

The Lord Jesus said, " I do always those things that please Him " (John viii. 29), expressing not only the perfectness of His walk, but His purpose as He walked. Have we such a purpose ? Do we desire to do only those things that will give pleasure to His heart, as He sees one seeking to walk according to His mind ? It should be so with every one, and there would be very little trouble about order in the assembly or our daily walk if it were so. If we are seeking to please the One Who sent His own Son into the world that we might live by Him, all will be for His glory. May we be encouraged so to walk as to please Him.

Hymn 207.

J.C.B. 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

“ Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course.”

Paul, the great evangelist and minister of the church, writing to his Thessalonian converts, asks them to pray for him. He was going everywhere confirming souls, and yet he could ask for the prayers of these young believers ! We have a great deal of truth, but we are in danger of being proud of it. May the apostle's humility be an example and a lesson to us. We are only a remnant, taking our place outside the camp because of the ruin around. Our very place witnesses to the apostasy which will increase more and more. We are permitted to be witnesses for our Lord without the camp. Let us therefore be obedient to Him.

Paul desired prayer that the word of the Lord might have free course. In Acts v. 41, 42, the apostles had been beaten and commanded not to speak any more in the name of Jesus, but though suffering they rejoiced because they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. We have not been beaten yet, but we often suffer ridicule and contempt, and we should rejoice ; and not only so, we should, like the apostles, go on with the Lord's work.

We need these two to-day—humility as to our walk and what the Lord has revealed to us, and holy boldness to go on with the Lord's work. Though there is much to discourage, we shall go forward if we have these two. Let us go on in dependence upon the Lord and His grace, and the joy of the Lord will be our strength.

Hymn 396.

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TUESDAY AFTERNOON. *Brothers' Meeting*, 2 p.m.

Sisters' Meeting, 2 p.m.

Young People's Meeting, 2 p.m.

Hymn 414.

Address by Mr. W. G. Turner. Psalm xcii. 14, 15.

"*They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.*"

A striking illustration of this is Caleb, who "wholly followed the Lord," and at eighty-five claimed to be as strong as ever. Job, in his exercise of spirit, exclaimed "The righteous shall hold on his way" (Job. xvii. 9); the psalmist here confirms this and gives the reason. Caleb was one of the two who in a great crisis in Israel's history declared themselves on God's side while the majority were provoking Him by their murmuring and rebellion. But "My servant Caleb . . . had another spirit with him, and hath followed Me fully" (Num. xiv. 24). This accounts for his fruitfulness in old age and for the special blessing which attended his course. To follow the Lord wholly means to let Him have His way wholly with me; and what God will do with such a one is an amazing revelation of the possibilities of human life. It is not that we want more of the Holy Spirit, but that He wants more of us. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy" (Ps. cxlvii. 11).

Such as Caleb have certain well-marked characteristics. He was *a man of deep convictions*, knowing God for himself, believing in His purpose of blessing, confident in His power to accomplish His gracious purpose. The majority may murmur their disbelief in God's purpose or power, and despise the pleasant land; they may consider themselves as grasshoppers, because they leave God out of their reckoning: but

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Caleb believed with deep conviction, proving Him to be his rock (*ver.* 15).

He was also *a man of rare courage*, not ashamed to confess his inward convictions openly. It aroused hatred and threatened death, but "the righteous shall hold on his way," and he not only stood firm as a rock on God's purpose, but became rooted more firmly in the ground of his confidence and brought forth "fruit in old age."

Then, he was *a man of fine character*. Whatever vicissitudes he passed through in the succeeding forty-five years, walking with God would impart fineness of character, for we are permanently influenced by the company we seek.

Again, he was *a man of steady consistency*. The great leader, and every one of his generation save Joshua, passed away; outward circumstances completely changed; but he could say, "The Lord hath kept me alive . . . these forty and five years . . . I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me" (Josh. xiv. 10, 11). And the old man with the young heart claims the promised blessing, and secures it.

What a testimony such a life became for God! To the younger generation he was a standing witness that God's power could be depended on. And this because, as we read six times, "he wholly followed the Lord."

We, too, know Whom we have believed, that His purpose and power to bless are sure. We are in a minority in a world of dissension, disbelief in God, and rebellion against Him. We too are called to have deep convictions, rare courage, fine character, and steady consistency, to show that the Lord is our rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. We are to be to "the glory of His grace" Who has "made us accepted in the Beloved," and to "adorn the doctrine"

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of God our Saviour by a life which "wholly follows the Lord."

Hymn 52.

At 3.15 p.m. Mr. W. Young gave an *address* on Psalm xlv.

TUESDAY EVENING. *Address* by Mr. J. N. Voorhoeve,
6.30 p.m.

Hymns 128, 207.

John xx. 30-xxi. 25.

In Scripture we find what we might call "the richness of the few." Think of Ps. xxiii. In a few words a richness of thoughts for now and for the future. Think of the word, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It seems to be such a short word, but what a richness is in it for every day of our life! In Scripture, the few and little things are great and wonderful.

In the end of John xx. and xxi. we read that our Lord did "many other signs," and "many other things," but it was not necessary to write many other books to record them all. The richness of the few is sufficient to make our souls happy and to give us what we need. What is written is recorded because we cannot be saved unless we "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" and because we cannot have eternal life unless we believe in His name, His Person and His work. In the writings of John we find about ninety times the word "believe" and sixty times the word "life." From John v. 24 we learn that to pass from death unto life we must hear the word of Jesus and believe God Who sent Him. Such a believer has everlasting life, and shall not only escape condemnation, but, because all has been borne by Jesus, shall not even come into judgment.

In the last two chapters of John we have the risen

Shepherd and His grace in looking after His sheep. The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, to perfect us in every good work to do His will (Heb. xiii. 20, 21). How often Jesus is referred to as the Lord in these two chapters! Mary Magdalene says, "They have taken away the Lord" (xx. 2, 13). Her first word to the disciples is not to deliver the message, but to tell them she has seen the Lord (xx. 18). The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord (xx. 20), and they told Thomas they had seen the Lord (xx. 25). Thomas's first words were, "My Lord and my God" (xx. 28). Let us always think of Him not only as Saviour, Who has settled the question of our sins for all eternity, but as our Lord, ruling over and controlling our service, our great Shepherd. He called Mary Magdalene by name, and she recognised the Shepherd's voice, and answered Rabboni—my revered Master. He shepherded the whole flock, too, when He came into their midst (xx. 19-23, 26-29) as the One with authority, giving peace to their souls and authority in His name; looking after one who got astray, and speaking of peace for Israel too (Ezek. xxxiv. 11-16).

In the last chapter of John, the Shepherd is seeking His sheep, bringing them where they have to be, feeding them. And for that He gave them a manifestation of *Himself* in His Shepherd-care.

Seven men were doing their own will! They had all seen His glory after His resurrection, when He came into the midst of them, the doors being closed for fear of the Jews. Simon Peter had said before, "Thou art the Christ," and, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," and Jesus came to him personally after His resurrection (Luke xxiv. 34; 1 Cor. xv. 5). Thomas had said, "My Lord and my God." Nathanael had confessed Him Son of God and King of Israel. The

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sons of Zebedee had desired the right and left hand places in His kingdom, whilst one of them was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the one who leaned on His bosom (John xxi. 20).

Yet, in spite of this, in spite of the Lord's promise to Peter that he should catch men, in spite of the message to all to meet the Lord in Galilee, in spite of the example of the Shepherd Who always did the will of the Father Who sent Him, Peter says, "I go a fishing," and the other six say, "We also go with thee." What a power we may be, for good or evil, by our example! Going to the meetings, or not; giving ourselves with zeal to the things of the Lord, or not? Are we a help or a hindrance to others? There is no way between, we are the one or the other!

But the Lord is full of grace, and He came where the disciples were, in spite of their disobedience, just as He came through the shut doors in the house at Jerusalem when they had gone there, ignoring the thrice-repeated reminder to go to Galilee (Matt. xxvi. 32, xxviii. 7, 10). What a loving Shepherd! He is the same now.

The fishing that night was a failure, as all self-willed effort is. There were enough fishes in the sea, but the Lord kept them from coming into the nets. They had to learn the lesson that they could do nothing without Him. Still, in infinite grace He came that morning to His failing disciples, asking them for food, though in His resurrection body, unlike His earlier life (Mark xi. 12, John iv. 8) He had no need of it: He could, however, eat (Luke xxiv. 41-43). They answer curtly, "No." Were they ashamed?

Then the Lord said, "Cast on the right side, and ye shall find." Surely they must have wondered who had such love and such authority. As fishermen, they knew that the morning was a bad time to fish, and that the left side of the boat was best. Yet, despite their

ill success all night, the fish were there on the right side, where God's blessings always are. And the One Who could keep the fish away from the nets all night could make them enter in the morning, if the disciples would obey, as they did. How often we too have toiled "all night" without result! But then the Lord, our Shepherd, broke our self-will and had all things ready for us.

John first recognises the Lord. Simon Peter loved the Lord, but the Lord loved John specially, as he records five times. Could any of us be given the wonderful name of "the disciple whom Jesus loves," because we are so often on His breast, bringing everything to Him, and asking Him all our questions? If so, like John, we shall learn the truth about the Lord before others.

Peter, on learning Who He is, says at once, "I must go to Him," though they were only about a hundred yards from the shore, and swims ashore, after donning his coat, to show his reverence for his Master. All was ready for them: the risen Lord had brought the coals together and made a fire on the shore. What a wonderful Lord! Did the fire remind Peter of another fire where he had tried to warm himself when his heart was cold (John xviii. 18)? Now all were warmed by the Lord's love.

But though all was ready, both bread and fish, the tender Shepherd asks for some of the fish they had caught. "Bring them to Me," He says, "and I will use them." Though all is ready by His almighty power, so that we have only to eat and rejoice, yet He takes what we have caught and uses it. He then says, "Come and dine." There were the seven men sitting on the shore, with the Lord in their midst, full of astonishment, rejoicing in the Lord's mercy and goodness.

Then the Lord addresses Peter, "Simon, son of

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Jonas." Three times! Simon indicates a weak man, and Jonah means "dove," indicating some one flying away. So did once Jonah, running away from God's demand; so did Peter, denying his Master before a servant-maid.

"Lovest thou Me more than these?" Three times this question is repeated, just as Peter had denied his Lord three times. Peter cannot now say he loves his Master "more than these," after what he had done. The third time the Lord lowers the standard of love in His question from the love of men to God to that of mere affection and regard, using the same word as Peter had used. This was too much for Peter, and he strengthens his assertion of the Lord's knowledge of his love from His conscious knowledge to His objective knowledge.

So, too, through all our weakness and mistakes, we say, "Lord, we love Thee": and He loves us. "Lord, *Thou* knowest *all* things!" He knows our failures, our troubles, our fears. He knows our love, too, and sees it at the bottom of our hearts. Peter is exhorted by the Lord (once) to feed His lambs, and (twice) His sheep. They all need food and watchful care, for the enemy is ready to do them harm.

The Lord then deals with Peter's martyr death. Church history relates that he was crucified head downwards, not as his Lord was. So at the end of his life did the weak man become strong, but at the same time humble. His curiosity regarding John's future was not satisfied. All things are under the Lord's control, and one servant is given more blessing than another, one more persecution than another. It is for us not to question, but individually to follow Jesus only: "Follow *thou* Me." May we, like Enoch, walk with God, waiting till the Lord Jesus comes. We are all in His hand, and He gives a different path to

each of us. "Follow *thou* Me," not only "Follow Me!"

On Patmos, John had a view of the Lord's coming, but was not to tarry here till it occurred. He is coming in "a very little while" (Heb. x. 37). "Till He come," "Till I come," what blessed words! Though our way be difficult, in the family, at the meetings, at work, though persecution may come to us, we are in the Lord's hands, and each of us has simply to *follow Him*, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! May the great Shepherd make us all faithful for His name's sake, subject to His will, and an instrument in His hands!

Hymn 325.

Hymns 5, 207, "The Christian's Goodnight."