

# **Care For God's Fruit-Trees**

**By**

**H.A Ironside**

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## **Preface**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

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### ***And Other Messages***

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Revised Ed. 1945

Loizeaux Bothers, Inc.

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New York, 10 N. Y.

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## **Preface**

The book now before the reader consists of a series of miscellaneous articles and sermons which have been written or preached at different times during recent years. They have been collected at the earnest solicitation of friends who have considered them to be of some value, and they are now sent forth with the sincere desire on the author's part that they may be used of God in opening up some of the precious things of His Word to those who may have had limited opportunities for Bible study or who, in a busy life, may have passed over some of the things here emphasized. God's Word is ever new to those who have learned to love and feed upon its precious pages. In these papers I make no claim for anything specially original, but I send them forth remembering the word, "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe" (Phil. 3:1).

If God be pleased to use them to strengthen the faith of any, or to lead into a deeper knowledge of His truth—that truth which sanctifies in a practical sense—I shall feel abundantly repaid for the effort involved in their preparation.

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## **Chapter 1 The Power Of His Resurrection**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

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*“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1).*

From the moment that God, in grace, revealed His Son in Saul of Tarsus, transforming the persecuting Pharisee into the flaming apostle to the Gentiles, Paul’s great and yearning desire was expressed in the words: *“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection”* (Phil. 3:10). I would ask you to consider this remarkable expression from three standpoints.

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### **Power for Regeneration**

First, God is the God of resurrection. He works with what He brings, not with what He finds. The excellency of the power is in Him and not in us. He who created all things by Jesus Christ, so that the visible universe was brought into existence by the Word of His power alone, is the God who now works in a creation ruined by sin, demonstrating His omnipotent grace. The same power that-raised the dead body of the Lord Jesus Christ from the grave is the power that quickens dead souls into newness of life.

In the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ every Person of the Godhead had a part. He was “raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father.” He was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit,” that is, the Holy Spirit. He Himself said: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” And again: “I lay down My life, that I might take

it again... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”

Likewise, in the regeneration of lost men, in the quickening of those who are dead in trespasses and in sins, the entire Godhead has a part. It was the Father who planned our salvation. It was the Son who died that we might be redeemed. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts and attracts the soul to Christ. Jesus said: “No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him,” and, “All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me.” But “it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.” Our salvation is altogether of God. The same power that wrought in Christ to bring Him again from the dead is the power that is involved in the salvation of every individual. Through faith, he becomes a child of God.

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### **Power for Service**

In the second place, this is the only power for true Christian service. Fleshly energy counts for nothing. It is even worse than nothing, for it gets in the way of the acting of the Spirit of God. The servant of Christ needs, above everything else, to rely implicitly upon that divine power that alone can make the good seed to fructify and give life through the message. The great object of many today is to put over some kind of a program which they judge will prove effective in gaining the attention of men and in bringing them to some kind of a decision. But the true servant of Christ is not called upon to formulate a program nor to put over one that others have devised, but to live in such fellowship with the risen Christ that he will know the power of His resurrection in a practical way. Thus he will be enabled to see the working of the Holy Trinity as he, feeble and helpless, and perhaps a broken vessel, holds forth the Word of life in a scene of death.

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No one who is at all familiar with the Holy Spirit's quickening operations today questions the reality and actuality of Christ's resurrection. It takes just the same power to turn men from sin to righteousness, from the power of Satan unto God, and from spiritual death to life in Christ that it took to revivify the dead body of the Lord Jesus. To the observant Christian, happily engaged in his Master's service, life is full of miracles, every one manifesting in some degree the power of Christ's resurrection.

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### **Power for Victory**

In the third instance, this resurrection power is the dynamic for holy living. It is when I take my rightful place as crucified with Christ, and reckon myself dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God in Him, that the power of His resurrection works in me to enable me to rise into newness of life. Eternal life is far more than everlasting existence. All men, whether saved or lost, will exist forever. Eternal life is more than immortality. All believers who are living when the Lord returns will put on immortality, even as all who sleep in Christ will put on in-corruption. But this refers to the body, not to the new life which we now possess in Christ. Eternal life is the very life of God Himself, communicated to the believer in the power of the Holy Spirit. This life has its own affections and desires. Sin is abhorrent to it. Holiness is its delight. Love is its expression. So truly is it the life of God, as revealed in Christ, that He Himself is called "that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." Therefore, it is written: "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." The possession of this life gives capacity for the knowledge of, and communion with, the Persons of the Godhead. In His great high-priestly prayer our Lord said to the Father: "This

is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” This expresses the capacity which we have as possessors of that life. Such life is enjoyed only as we enter, in a practical sense, into the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings, and know Him as only they can know Him who are identified with Him in His rejection by the world and who take the place of death to all to which He died as Man. That is, we experience death to the world, death to the law, *death* to sin, in order that we may live a heavenly life down here in the liberty of grace, manifesting that holiness which the Spirit alone imparts. This indeed is to know the power of His resurrection.

This was the truth which the apostle pressed upon the young preacher, Timothy, when he wrote exhorting him to “lay hold of eternal life.” And this is the ideal which, I am persuaded, the majority of Christians have before them from the very moment of their conversion; yet many of them have to confess with sorrow that they never seem to realize it practically. What, then, is the trouble? Why is it that so few of us know the power of His resurrection in our daily lives? May I suggest again three things?

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### **Causes of Defeat**

First, it takes us so long to get to the end of ourselves! Even after we have realized that “the flesh profiteth nothing,” so far as earning salvation or justification is concerned, we still imagine that, saved by faith in Christ, we are to be made perfect by the flesh. So we endeavor to harness our carnal nature and to bring it into subjection to God by law, forgetting that the Holy Spirit has declared: “The carnal mind... is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

Therefore we struggle on, vainly endeavoring to please God on a merely human plane, “doing our little best” to work for

Him and to glorify His name, only to learn at last that this old nature of ours is as incorrigibly weak at the end of years of Christian testimony as it was at the beginning. This discovery has a tendency to cast us into doubt and gloom and to make us wonder whether we have ever been converted at all, or whether everything is a hopeless sham. At such times we are tempted to give up the conflict, to cease witnessing for Christ, and to sink back to the low level of that world from which we sought deliverance. But "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." He, the blessed Holy Spirit, holds us fast. Deep in our hearts we know, through the inward witness, that we have passed from death unto life; that a great change has taken place; and that, unsatisfactory as our actual experience may be, we are the children of God. With many there is then the tendency to assume that there is no real way to escape from the hopeless conflict as long as we are still in the body. This leads to a settling down to a low level of Christian living, as though it were the best we could expect to be under existing circumstances. Yet the Spirit of God is constantly seeking to make us dissatisfied with such a state and to long for something better. Little by little we come to the place where we are ready to admit the hopelessness of the flesh: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing."

Then, in the second place, comes another step, one that we are generally very slow to take. We have to learn that, just as we were saved through the blood of the Cross, so we enter into a life of victory through the death of the Cross. When George Muller was asked on one occasion how he accounted for the marvelous way in which God had set His seal upon his work throughout the years, he replied in substance: "There came a day when George Muller died, and then God began to work." This is the experience into which we all need to enter. Judicially, we have died with Christ; His death was



our death; but we are so slow to realize this practically and to say “Amen” to that which God has already declared to be true. Perhaps we try—try to die to the flesh, try to die to selfishness, try to die to ambition. But alas, we find in the hour of stress that we are just as much alive as ever! It is a great thing when we learn experimentally, in the presence of God, that we have died, and when in faith the soul can exclaim: “I am crucified with Christ.” Then the struggle is over, for nothing is expected of a dead man.

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### **How to Triumph**

Yet in the Word of God we are exhorted to strive, and to “fight the good fight of faith.” How shall we do this if we are dead? Ah, now we come to the third point, to that which the apostle expresses in our text. We are called to know Christ, the living Christ, and the power of His resurrection working in us, overcoming our enemies, defeating the world, the flesh, and the devil, and leading us into a life of triumphant victory. Then the soul exclaims: “Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Thus the soul’s quest is attained. Resurrection life is enjoyed even in a mortal body, and the risen Christ is seen in those whom He has purchased with His blood. This is bliss indeed—a foretaste of that which will be ours eternally in the city of God!

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## **Chapter 2 Separation, Scriptural And Unscriptural**

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### **Henry Allen Ironside**

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My theme has to do with our responsibilities as the people of God in this world, where we are called upon to let our light so shine that men seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven. I am going to take two texts. The first is **2 Cor. 6:17**, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." The other is Jude, verses 17 to 19, "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."

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### **Two Kinds of Separation**

Here we have clearly two very distinct kinds of separation indicated. In the first scripture, believers are definitely commanded to be Separate from someone and from something. But in the other scripture we find there is a carnal separation which will be one of the characteristic marks of those who turn away from the truth of God in the last days, and so we shall consider the difference between a scriptural and an unscriptural separation.

I should like you to look at the entire chapter of **2 Corinthians 6**, and especially at verse 14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what

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fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” I have no doubt that the mind of the apostle was carried back by the Spirit of God to the words in Deuteronomy where, among the instructions given to Israel, we find this, “Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass yoked together” (**Deut. 22:10**). The ass was an unclean beast, and the ox was a clean one, and its flesh could be eaten and offered in sacrifice. The apostle Paul tells us that the ox typifies the servant of Christ. We read in **1 Cor. 9:9**, “Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn” (this refers to the old-fashioned way of threshing by oxen). The apostle asks, “Doth God take care of oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes?” What it means is not that you are to be concerned only about the oxen, but that if a brother is spending his time ministering to the spiritual needs of people, you are to see that he has enough to live on. He cannot be expected to give all he has to working for other people and have nothing for his family.

The ox, therefore, typifies the servant of Christ— “Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together”—you are not to yoke up the clean and unclean in service. You can see this done today in the Orient, an ass on one side and an ox on the other. But it is a most unequal arrangement, for the one wants to pull ahead and the other wants to pull back, and the plowman has a hard time cutting a straight furrow. The apostle takes that up and applies it to us, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” and so we see in that a call to separation, for the unequal yoke in service is contrary to the mind of God.

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### **A Fatal Mistake**

A man announced to me one day that he was going to get married, and I asked, “Well, is the young woman

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converted?” “No,” he said; “but she is a very sweet and lovely young woman, and I feel sure that after we are married it will come out all right; she will come to Christ.” I said, “If she does not come to Christ before you are married, while she looks up to you as a little god, she is not at all likely to be led to Christ afterwards when she finds out how intensely human you are.”

A Puritan once said, “If you are a child of God and you marry a child of the devil, you can expect to have trouble with your father-in-law.” This passage clearly refers to marriage, and I think it would be a blessed thing if every Christian minister would say, “I will never be a party to yoking up a child of God and a child of the devil.” “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” Let that be the first question settled, young man, when you are looking for a wife, and, young woman, when you are allowing yourself to be looked for, let the first question in your mind be: Is this one who comes seeking my favor one who knows the Lord Jesus Christ?

I think of a lady who came to me in California and said, “Mr. Ironside, I want to tell you my story, and if you ever feel like repeating it when you are talking about separation, you may feel free to do so.” She said: “As a young Christian I was a very happy young woman; my heart was taken up with the things of Christ; He was all in all to me. Then I met one who seemed to me so true, so good, so manly, so noble, that when I asked him if he were a Christian and he said, ‘No/ but promised that he would join any church I belonged to if I would only marry him, I was foolish enough to think I could win him after we were married. He went to church with me until two weeks after we were married and then said, ‘I am through with this religious sham; nothing more of it for me. If you must go on with it, you go your way and I will go mine.’ I have had

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to go my way ever since. But that was not the worst, for when the children came, I wanted to bring them up for God, but my husband, who had been reading infidel literature and was getting farther and farther away from the faith of his old mother, said, 'No, these children will never be brought up in religious superstition,' and I have had to see them taken off to the world when I wanted them for God. Now every one of the six of them is utterly opposed to the gospel that means so much to me."

The unequal yoke in marriage! What a serious thing it is! "But," you say, "my circumstances are such that I am unequally yoked with an unbeliever." There is only one thing for you to do now, and that is to go to God, and if you made the mistake of disobeying His Word, confess your sin and look to Him in grace to come in and help you so to live that you may win that one to Christ. But if, on the other hand, you have been won for Christ since you were so yoked, the Word of God says, "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" (**1 Cor. 7:16**). Live for God in the home in such a way that the other partner will realize that there is something genuine about your life's testimony. We read in **1 Peter 3** that the Christian wife is bidden so to live before the husband that, "If any obey not the Word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives." There are two different ideas here. "If any obey not the *Word* (the Bible) they also may without the *word*" (literally, *without a word*, or to put it clearly, that they may *without nagging*) be won by the behavior of the wives." The unsaved husband will not stand for a constant nagging at him; that is not helping him. Instead of scolding him about his ungodly ways, go to God in prayer and live such a sweet life before him that he will be attracted to your

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Saviour.

A little Christian woman said to me once, "You know I can't understand how it is that I can't seem to get John to be a Christian. I am at him all the time. He never comes in but what I tell him, 'John, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You are going straight to hell and taking the children with you.' But he only gets mad." "I don't blame him," I said; "I would, too." Often when you cannot win them by speech, you can by your life.

But this unequal yoke not only refers to the marriage relationship but to a great many other relationships. A Christian business man said to me some time ago, "I have a splendid opportunity to go into business with a man who is working in the same firm with me and, you know, I would be glad to, but for one scripture, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.'" I said, "May God grant that you will never weaken, for right there is where many a child of God has lost out completely." You find that the other partner with his different standards can do many things that you, if you a real Christian, cannot do. Don't you see?—there will be constant friction; you will feel that yoke wearing on the shoulders and galling about the neck.

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### **Fraternal Orders**

Then there are all kinds of fraternal relationships. I have been preaching the gospel for forty years and I know how to give people a good hearty Christian grasp of the hand, but I do not know how to give them any of these fancy handshakes, and this is the scripture that has kept me from learning them: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." They say, "But, Mr. Ironside, your

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become a member of such a fraternal organization.” I say, “Are they all Christians?” “No,” they answer, “but they are good fellows.” “But my Book says, ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.’” “Well, but you know, if you would only join and come and be a Lion or a Tiger or a Vulture or something, it would help you greatly in your work.” “But,” I say, “are all these Tigers and other queer creatures children of God, washed from their sins in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ?” There are my orders; my instructions are in the Book—“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing.” That keeps me out. They come and shake hands and do the funny little things in my hand, and I say, “Brother, I don’t know what it is all about, but I know the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I belong to the G. A. R., the Grand Army of the Redeemed, and every believer is a member of that.”

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### **Mixed Church-Membership**

It is quite possible to enter into an unequal yoke even in church-fellowship, and that is one of the greatest blunders of all. The Lord Jesus Christ never intended the Church of God to be a body of saved and unsaved people. It was the masterpiece of the devil to bring them into church-fellowship without having been born again. When the Church extended its borders to take in people before they yielded to the Lord, it made a great mistake—“Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead” (**Rev. 3:1**). Members of a Christian church, bearing the name of Christ, supposedly having eternal life, and yet dead in their sins! In the epistle of Jude, the apostle speaks of a certain people *twice dead*. “But,” you say, “how can that be?” In **Eph. 2:1** we read they are “Dead in trespasses and sins”; that is the natural man away from God. But in the second place, according to **Revelation 3**, we read, “Thou hast a

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name that thou livest, and art dead,” dead in a false Christian profession, and that is the most serious thing of all. It is these unconverted people within the professed Church of Christ who are responsible for the spread of apostasy in the Church of God today. Of course, they are not satisfied with the old gospel, with carrying on things in the way that the fathers whose one object was the honoring of Christ and the blessing of souls, did, and so they want to please the natural man. But it is not the business of the Spirit of God to please the natural man; it is His work to show the natural man that he is lost, ruined, and undone, and you are not going to help him by yoking up with him in church-fellowship.

“What communion hath light with darkness?” If you are a Christian you are a child of the light. “But,” some say, “if we can only get these unconverted folk into the church, they will be saved.” I never heard of any one introducing a few rotten apples into a barrel of good ones to make them all good. A little boy one day brought home some linnets, put them in cages, and hung them on either side of the canary cage, explaining to his mother that by so doing they would hear the canary sing, and in trying to imitate it they would learn to sing like the canary. The mother was too wise to argue with him and so said nothing. A few hours later the boy and the mother came into the house and suddenly the boy exclaimed, “O mother, listen, our canary is cheeping like a linnet!” It was not long until the canary lost its own song and began to imitate the linnets. In the Church of God the unequal yoke never improves the worldling. To get him into the church, mix the saved with the unsaved, causes the church to deteriorate. Therefore there should be a careful testing of all who seek fellowship with the Lord’s people to find if they have ever been born again and whether they are seeking to walk in accordance

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with God's Holy Word.

When the people of Israel came out of Egypt, there was a mixed multitude with them who had never been redeemed by blood, but they said, "We will go with you up to the land of Canaan." These people were a constant source of trouble; they fell to lusting and their murmurings affected the people of Israel until they said, "We are getting so tired of this manna; there is nothing to eat but manna." The manna was a type of Christ, and they were really saying, "Nothing but Christ to feed on! We remember the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick which we had in Egypt." Yes, their memory was long on some things but very short on others. You do not hear them saying, "We remember the taskmaster's whip, the brick-making without straw." No, they had forgotten about these things.

Cucumbers and melons! Poor things to build a physical constitution! A little bit of melon or cucumber is good, but imagine a man living on them. The manna was upbuilding, edifying, but the other was like the world's literature, a little bit of it goes a long way. But this Book can be fed on three times a day.

The onions and garlick and leek, you know, cannot be eaten in secret without smelling of them in public. They are all alike in that they leave their odor behind them. They are like those worldly pleasures in which a Christian may think he can indulge in private and no one will know anything about them. He spends his evenings in worldly amusements and then on Sunday looks so pious and good, but anybody with spiritual discernment knows there is something wrong; the stench of the world is on his breath, they realize that he has not lived for God in secret. The mixed multitude will ruin any testimony for God. We

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are the children of light; we can go to man in the darkness with the gospel but the Word says, “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (**Eph. 5:11**).

“What concord hath Christ with Belial?” “*Belial*” means *worthlessness*; it is a fancy name for the devil. What concord hath the worthy One with the worthless one, with Satan? You are either a servant of Christ or a servant of Belial, and there can be no common ground until you turn away from Satan and his service and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your own Saviour.

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### **True to the Word of God**

“What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” A young man asked a young lady to marry him, and she quoted this scripture and said, “I cannot; I must be true to the Word of God; as long as you are where you are I cannot marry you, for Scripture says, ‘What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?’” “Why,” he said, as he sprang to his feet, “are you trying to insult me? I believe in a God and I believe the Bible is the Word of God.” “Oh,” she said, “but the word translated *infidel* is simply the negative for *believer*—what part hath a believer with an unbeliever?”

Then, again, we read, “What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” What is the temple of God today? It is the company of His people. He dwells in us by His Holy Spirit, and can you think to glorify God by going on in fellowship with that which brings dishonor upon His name? So the command comes, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” You know God is the Father of all believers, but He is not a Father *unto* every believer as He

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disobedience, and you knew he was getting into deep water and wanted to help him, but you said, "If I help him now, I am only going to bolster him up in his foolishness," and so you had to wait and watch? You were his father all the time, but you could not be a father *unto* him in the way you wanted to be. And then the day came when he came to you and said, "I have been very foolish; I wish I had listened to you; but now I come to you to confess it, and by the grace of God things are going to be different." How gladly you said, "I am ready to get right behind you and help you in anything that is right." So God says, "You walk in separation unto Me and I will receive you."

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### **False Separation**

But now we must consider another kind of separation. You will find those who say that the Bible teaches separation, and so they are separate from everything that does not just fit with their own peculiar notions. I have seen the man who has made his notions the standard for everybody. In **Prov. 18:1** we read: "Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom." Do not be the kind of a Christian that tries to make your conscience the judge of everybody else. The question, "What is conscience?" was asked, and a little girl quickly answered: "It is something within me that tells me whenever my brother does wrong." There are people like that. They are troubled about *their* conscience in *your* affairs. "My conscience," they say, "won't permit this." But do not try to make your conscience a standard for everybody else. Walk with God yourself, and give your brethren credit for being as honest as you are. Then we can say to our brethren, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded, and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil. 3:15).

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Scriptural separation is separation from the world, corruption, and wickedness. Carnal separation is unto mere schools of opinion and separation from people who do not see eye to eye with you. What a lot of patience we should have with each other. God give us grace to manifest patience and go on unitedly seeking the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## **Chapter 3 Joseph, A Type Of Christ**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

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The story of Joseph as given in Genesis (chapters 37 to 50) is perennially fresh and delightful. Young and old alike revel in it. Looked at as an old-world picture of customs and people long-since vanished, there is a freshness and charm about it that stirs the heart and holds our attention in a remarkable way.

But in studying Scripture there is not only the literal application, which is always important, but every part of the Word of God has a spiritual, typical, and dispensational application as well, and in Joseph's character and experience we have a wonderful type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ordinarily when we speak of any individual in the Old Testament being a type of Christ, we refer to what he is officially, and not to his personal character. David, for instance, in his official capacity is a striking type of our Saviour; Solomon, too, as the king of peace typifies Him who is yet to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords; but neither of these men could be said to typify Christ in their personal characters. With Joseph it is otherwise. His life shines forth from the pages of Holy Scripture as practically flawless. It is not indeed that he was actually sinless, for he had in himself the same corrupt nature that any other child of Adam has, but it has not pleased God to speak of any flaws or blemishes which His holy eye may have discerned in this devoted servant, but He has rather emphasized his faithfulness and practical godliness.

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If we study him as a type of Christ, we would first notice him as

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### **The Beloved of the Father's Heart**

This comes out clearly in the early part of chapter 37. We read that Israel loved Joseph more than all his children because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a coat of many colors. Here we have more than a hint of the One who from all eternity was the delight of God the Father, the One whom He ever sought to magnify and glorify, for our Lord Jesus Christ was with the Father from all eternity. There are some who question this, and particularly some who would deny His right to the term "Eternal Son"; but if He was not the Eternal Son, then there was no Eternal Father. Saintly J. G. Bellett has well asked, "Had the Father no bosom in the past eternity?" and the answer is clearly found in **John 1:18**, "The only begotten Son which is in (or subsisting in) the bosom of the Father." The expression implies a relationship of devoted attachment, of deepest affection. The Father loved Him before the foundation of the world and ever delighted to honor Him.

Then we notice in Joseph the dreamer of dreams with

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### **Premonitions of Coming Glory**

He saw in a vision his brethren and all his father's house bowing down to him, and this was the vision granted to our Lord Jesus Christ. His delights were with the sons of men and He ever looked forward to the time when, as the exalted Man, He would be the means of blessing for all His brethren and His Father's house. That term, "His brethren" includes not only Israel but we read in the epistle to the Hebrews, "He is not ashamed to call us

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brethren.” All the redeemed rejoice to own His authority and gladly bow in submission at His feet. But there is more than this involved in the thought of His coming exaltation for, “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, those in heaven and those on earth and those under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Joseph comes before us in his first active ministry as the one who left the father’s house and went forth

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### **Seeking His Brethren**

His father’s heart was toward the sons who were caring for the flock, first at Shechem and then at Dothan, and to them Joseph went forth sent by the father to see how they did and to declare the father’s concern for them. How truly this sets forth the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ who came “not to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved;” who came from the Father’s house into this dark world of sin seeking His brethren that He might declare the Father’s Name to them and manifest the Father’s love. Of this we have more than a hint in the journey of Joseph to distant Dothan, but as the story proceeds how the whole tragedy of the

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### **Rejection of the Son**

comes before us in the treatment accorded to him by those whom he sought out for blessing—hating him the more because of his father’s love and detesting him because of his superior virtue. Angered too, because of those dreams of glory, they exclaimed in indignation as he drew near, “Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see

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of their hatred and rejection we have more than a foreshadow of the treatment that Israel and the Gentiles would yet accord to God's beloved Son. While every detail does not, of course, fit perfectly with the experiences of our blessed Lord and His unbelieving brethren after the flesh, yet it is plain to see that the story is one and the same: the love of the Father's heart, the yearning of the Son, and the cruel setting at nought by those whom He loved so tenderly, all are clearly manifested. Hated, spurned by those who should have welcomed him with gladness, Joseph is cast into the pit, which speaks of death, and then sold to the Gentiles and carried down into Egypt. Of course, with our Lord He was sold first and then crucified, but both stories alike tell of the corruption of the human heart and the love of the heart of God. The scene changes and we next see Joseph as

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### **The Tempted One**

and here how his experiences illustrate the testings and triumphs of our Lord who was "tempted in all, points like as we are, yet without sin." In Joseph's case we have a man sinful by nature triumphing in the hour of testing because of the fear of the Lord. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" This was his strength. He had set Jehovah always before him and therefore he was not moved when the hour of trial came. In the case of our Lord, He was, of course, the sinless One and His temptation was but the demonstration of this. "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," it was unthinkable that sin should ever hold dominion over Him. He stood unflinchingly against every attack of the evil one, and He could ever say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." In Joseph's temptation and victory we see clearly set forth the way in which every one of us may overcome. It is as the Word of God is hidden in

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our hearts that we shall be kept from sinning against Him.

But Joseph's testing was not only in Potiphar's house. There he was tempted in the midst of luxuries. There was a further trial when, falsely accused, he suffered for righteousness' sake in the prison-house. But there his integrity was demonstrated and the fear of God preserved him. He shone just as brightly in the dungeon as he did in the mansion. D. L. Moody once said, "Character is what a man is in the dark," and this indeed comes out wonderfully in the case of Joseph. They put him in fetters of iron, but the prison-cell was only the antechamber to the royal palace.

He is as truly the messenger of Jehovah in the prison, interpreting the dreams of the butler and the baker, as when he told his own dream so long before. It is evident that there was no break in his communion with God. It was as easy for him to interpret a dream as to see visions, for he was under the control of the Holy Spirit.

And so in due time we find him

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### **Exalted in Glory**

He who had been despised and rejected, he who had been hated and spurned, given up for dead and sold into slavery, unjustly accused and imprisoned, came forth in due time to share the throne with Pharaoh as the preserver of the lives of both the Egyptians and all his father's house.

His Gentile bride, Asenath, seems to give a hint of the fact that our Lord, while rejected by Israel, has found a Bride among the Gentiles, and Joseph's two sons Manasseh (*forgetful*) and Ephraim (*fruitful*) , tell how he was made to

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ministry by the Spirit among the Gentiles. The day came when all of Egypt and the peoples of distant lands bowed at his feet asking for the sustaining corn. When they cried to Pharaoh and said, "Give us food," his answer was, "Go to Joseph," for he was the custodian of all the treasured corn of Egypt, and so today, as throughout the coming Millennium, all blessing is centered in Christ, and to every seeking soul the Father says,

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### **"Go to Jesus"**

"There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved" but the Name which was written above Him when He hung rejected on Calvary's cross, and, thank God, no other name is needed, for He declares, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." He is exalted to God's right hand, speaking peace to all who trust Him and ministering grace to every seeking soul.

Joseph's dreams were wonderfully fulfilled when his brethren came in their abject need, bowing at his feet, glad to receive from his hand that which would maintain physical life, and so now He who is greater than Joseph gives eternal life to bankrupt sinners who bow before Him confessing their guilt and owning His grace.

The tender heart of Joseph, his deep compassion for his brethren, comes out most clearly when he reveals himself to them, and again when they doubt his love after his father's death. Like the One of whom he was but a foreshadow, he was a man of tears. As he beheld his brethren, he could not refrain from weeping, and when they feared that he would remember their sins after the burial of Jacob, their distrust of his love moved him again to sobs uncontrolled. He loved to be trusted; he could not bear to be doubted, and in this how truly he portrays the

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character of the Lord Jesus.

But the type falls far short of the reality, and the book of Genesis closes with the death of Joseph and his body placed in a coffin in Egypt. Thank God, He of whom Joseph speaks lives to die no more, but just as Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones, and Israel carried those bones all through the wilderness and at last laid them to rest in the land of Canaan, so a pilgrim people today are called upon to always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in us. The bones of Joseph were the memorial of death. Suppose a stranger noticed his bier carried reverently throughout the wilderness and inquired concerning it, he might have been answered by something like this, "We were in deep distress, likely to die of famine, but Joseph our brother, whom we had rejected, saved us. Our deliverer died, and we are carrying the memorial through the wilderness to find a resting-place in the land to which we go."

And so we too have that which reminds us of our Saviour's death, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Some day we will be through forever with the memorials of death when we shall have gone to that rest which remains for the people of God, and there we shall have our blessed Lord in all His fulness to be the delight of our hearts throughout an eternity of bliss, while a regenerated world will see Him enthroned in highest glory and all peoples will be nourished by His beneficence and bow at His feet in rapt adoration.

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## Chapter 4 Four Great Truths

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### Henry Allen Ironside

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*“If Christ to His throne had not bidden farewell,  
Sad indeed were the tolling of life’s passing bell;  
If Christ on the cross had not suffered and died,  
Dark indeed were the passage of death’s somber tide.  
If Christ from the grave had in triumph not risen,  
Bleak indeed were the dungeons of that dreadful prison;  
If Christ were not living and pleading on high,  
Death indeed were our doom, death that never may die”*

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—H. G. T. Parke

The above lines were written by a poor unfortunate, a drug-addict, who stumbled into a Salvation Army Hall years ago and came to Christ. It is evident that the Spirit of God gave him a very vivid appreciation of four aspects of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, upon which Scripture bases four great truths. Upon these I desire to meditate, hoping that both writer and readers may thus enter more fully into the completeness of the divine scheme of redemption.

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### Incarnation

Think, first, of incarnation. The word itself implies a supernatural Being linking Himself with humanity, and this of course is what actually took place when the eternal Son of God became Man in the fulness of time. Incarnation means more than the mere assumption of a human body.

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In Scripture we are told, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled] among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (**John 1:14**, R.V.). The two changes from the Authorized Version, which are embodied in the Revised, are, as every student of the original knows, fully warranted. He was not "made" anything. He "became flesh." It was a voluntary act on His part. He who subsisted from all eternity in the form of God, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, emptied Himself of the outward semblance of Deity, and took upon Him the form of a bondman; having come in the likeness of men, and being thus habited as a Man, He humbled Himself still lower, becoming obedient unto death, and such a death—that of the cross. In doing this, He linked Deity with humanity in such a way that He did not cease in any sense to be God, while He became, nevertheless, in the fullest possible sense, Man. He had a true human spirit. "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled," we are told, and on the cross He exclaimed, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." We hear Him saying, "Now is My soul troubled," and we read that He "poured out His soul unto death." His body was in no sense a phantom, as some have taught in early days, but a true human body, the earthly vessel in which the heavenly One took up His abode, in order that He might be slain for our sins. All this is involved in the fact of incarnation.

But though a true Man, He was a sinless Man, and not only sinless in thought and act, but impeccable; because being as truly God as Man, it is unthinkable that He could in His humanity do that, under any circumstances, which was repugnant to His Godhead, and God cannot sin. Thus He fulfilled the types of old; He was the unblemished, spotless Lamb; like the unyoked heifer, He never came under the yoke of sin. He was as pure within as He was

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without, thus answering to the burnt offering which had to be laid open and examined in every part, and could only be presented to God if found inwardly perfect.

In order that this might be so, He could not come into the world through the process of natural generation, for this would have made Him heir to all the fearful entailment of sin and infirmity which characterized the human race as proceeding from fallen Adam. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, a distinct creation in the womb of the virgin, and thus He entered this world through the portals of birth, but as the Second Man, the Lord from heaven. Herein lies the importance of the doctrine of the virgin birth, which some today insist has no real bearing upon the question of His Saviourhood. But His incarnation must be sinless and impeccable, or He could not be the Saviour of sinners. If there were within Him the least evil or tendency to evil, He must needs have a Saviour for Himself, and He could not stand in the breach for us.

We speak of His sinless incarnation. On the other hand, it is quite inaccurate to apply the term "the immaculate conception" to this wondrous mystery. This latter term is used very loosely by many Protestants who fail to realize, or forget if they ever knew, that it is the name given by the Roman Catholic Church to the Romish doctrine of the sinless, yet natural conception of the blessed virgin Mary. No such term is ever used in the Bible, nor does such a term belong in Protestant theology in connection with the sinless incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These truths need to be emphasized more than ever today, for if we lose sight of them we become confused in our thinking, and we shall be further confused as we go on to consider the work of His cross. He had to be what He was in order to do what He did. If He had been in any sense

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less than God manifest in flesh, He could not have offered up Himself in the power of the Eternal Spirit for our redemption. If He had been other than the One of whom it was written, "He knew no sin," He could not have been made sin for us.

While we are not saved through His incarnation, and our present union with Him is not because He took our humanity upon Himself, but because we have been linked to Him, the glorified Man in heaven, by the Holy Spirit, yet it is of all importance that we hold fast to the truth that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." Bethlehem must precede Calvary. He became Man that He might die for men.

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### **Propitiation**

In the second chapter of Hebrews, we are told in verse 17, "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." The word here translated "reconciliation" is more accurately rendered "propitiation" as in **1 John 2:2** and 4:10: "He is the propitiation for our sins;" "God... sent His Son to be the propitiation." This word is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, made in the third century before Christ, commonly called the Septuagint, and expressed generally as the LXX, to translate the Hebrew term which occurs again and again in the Old Testament, and is rendered in many different ways in the English Version, a few of which are as follows:

1. "Pitch," in **Genesis 6:14**, as used for the "covering" of the ark.
  2. "Appease," used in **Genesis 32:20**, where it means
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literally “to cover the face.”

3. “Atonement,” used in many places in **Leviticus 16**, and particularly in **Leviticus 17:11**.

4. “Satisfaction,” used in **Numbers 35:31**.

5. “Ransom,” used in **Job 33:24**.

6. “Put it off,” or, as the margin gives it, “expiate,” used in **Isaiah 47:11**.

7. “Reconciliation,” used in **Daniel 9:24**.

8. “Pacified,” used in **Ezekiel 16:63**.

If we put all of these English translations together, they do not by any means exhaust the real meaning of this word, but they do throw wonderful light upon the Scripture doctrine of propitiation. They tell us that in the death of Christ God has found a ransom for sinful men, and that a covering has been provided to shield us from the storm of judgment. Atonement has been made for our sins, full satisfaction has been rendered to the divine justice for our iniquities. God’s judgment is appeased; sin is expiated, and God is pacified toward us for all that we have done, because of the perfection of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now He Himself is our propitiation and we come to God alone by Him.

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## **Resurrection**

But although the death of our Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished the putting away of sin so that every believer is justified by His blood, it is through His resurrection that we know God is satisfied with the work that His Son accomplished when He took our place in judgment and bore our sins in His own body upon the tree. He “was

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delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.” It is not that we are justified by His resurrection, but it is that His resurrection proves that the work which justifies has been accomplished, and we come into the benefit of it all when we put our trust in the Risen One. Everywhere the apostles went they preached Jesus Christ and the resurrection. Just as incarnation without propitiation is in itself unable to save us, so propitiation without resurrection would be incomplete. None could know certainly that God was satisfied with the work of His Son if Christ had not burst the bands of death asunder and risen in triumph from the tomb.

More than this, had He remained enthralled in the arms of death, it would have given the lie to His entire testimony and redemptive program. It was imperative that He rise again the third day. It was this that proved Him to be in very truth the Son of God and the all-sufficient Sacrifice for sin. And so today the message that goes out to all mankind is as of old, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” It is the Risen One whom God has exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. He has been made both Lord and Christ to give repentance and remission of sins to all who turn to Him in faith.

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## **Intercession**

As the risen Christ, our Lord is carrying on a special service now on behalf of all believers here on earth as the minister of the heavenly sanctuary. Therefore we are told, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost [that is, forevermore], that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever

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liveth to make intercession for them.” He ministers in the holiest of all as our great High Priest with God, giving every believer a perfect representation before the eternal throne. He is there also as our Advocate with the Father, keeping the feet of His saints, and insuring the restoration of every failing Christian.

We often speak, and rightly, of the finished work of Christ. This refers, of course, to the work of propitiation, as we have already seen. To this nothing can be added, nor can anything be taken from it. It is complete. To attempt to add to it would be only to try to spoil His finished work. But on the other hand, it is just as correct to speak of the unfinished work of Christ, for He began a service in behalf of His people when He ascended to heaven which has been going on ever since, and will not be finished so long as there is one saint left on earth in the place of testing and possible failure. We have a sample of His intercession in **John 17**, where we find His great high-priestly prayer. In that wonderful chapter He anticipates the cross, and we are permitted to listen reverently to the tender words He speaks on behalf of His own to the end of time. In **John 13** we see Him acting as Advocate, washing the defiled feet of His disciples, thus picturing the work He has been carrying on ever since He returned to the glory. He is the girded Servant still, and will be so as long as we need Him. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous,” and “He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” His advocacy is based upon His propitiation.

Were it not for this present service of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first sin committed by a believer after his conversion would destroy communion with God, and there would be no way to restore that communion again. It needs to be remembered that there are two links that bind

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every saint to the Saviour, and these are union and communion. The link of union is indissoluble. Once formed, it can never be broken. The link of communion is delicate indeed. The least sin will break it, and it would never be formed anew were it not for the intercession of our Lord Jesus. He meets every accusation of the enemy. He presents our case before the Father. He, through the Holy Spirit, brings the Word to bear upon our consciences, and thus He brings us to contrition, confession, and restoration.

How full is our salvation! How wonderfully has God provided! The Incarnate Son became Himself our propitiation. Resurrection attests our justification, and His intercession carries us on to the end of the journey.

If it be asked, “Why do we need an advocate?” the answer is, “Because we have an accuser, Satan, ‘the accuser of our brethren... which accused them before our God day and night.’” But “who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (**Rom. 8:33, 34**). Jesus Christ meets every charge of the adversary. His propitiatory work is the answer to every accusation. And He will minister all needed grace to meet present need and restore the souls of His failing saints, until the glad hour when He will call us all to meet Him above and to share the joys of the Father’s house.

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## **Chapter 5 The Gospel Of The Ever-Faithful Servant**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

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It is interesting to notice the special object the Holy Spirit has in view in His presentation of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ in each of the four Gospels. In them we have four pen-portraits of our Saviour. It was given to Matthew to set Him forth particularly as the King, the Messiah of Israel, hence the genealogy proving Him to be the Son of David and Son of Abraham. This also accounts for the many references to and quotations from the Old Testament Scriptures. Luke presents Him as the perfect Man, the unique Son of Man who came to seek and to save the lost. A singular feature of his record is that of the table-talk of Jesus. Is there any function where a man relaxes and opens up his heart like a dinner-party? And in Luke we see our Lord on many such occasions. Luke traces His genealogy back to Adam through Heli, the father of Mary and hence the father-in-law of Joseph (**Luke 3:23**). John tells us plainly his object was to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, "believing ye might have life through His name." John shows that He is the Eternal Word who became flesh for our redemption.

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### **Why There Is No Genealogy in Mark**

To Mark it fell by divine appointment to show us the Son of God acting in lowly grace and devoted subjection to the Father as the perfect Servant and Prophet of the Holy One. He plunges at once into his subject. In the short space of sixteen chapters he sets forth the busy Servant engaged in one work of mercy after another, hastening from place to

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place as He does His Father's bidding. Because we are not concerned about a servant's forbears, but rather about his ability, there is no genealogy at all in this Gospel, but a marvelous record of activity in doing good and in making known the mind of God. It has often been pointed out that Mark uses a word variously translated "immediatedly," "straightway," "forthwith," and "anon," over forty times, and this word is only found about the same number of times in all the rest of the New Testament. "The king's business requireth haste," and Jesus was ever busy in the great work for which He came into the world.

The sacrifice of the cross is presented differently too in each Gospel—and that in accordance with the Levitical offerings (**Lev. 1** to 7). John tells of the death of the Lord as the burnt offering, the Son laying down His life to glorify the Father in the scene where He had been so dishonored by sin. Luke portrays that great sacrifice as the peace offering, Christ making peace by the blood of His cross that God and man may be reconciled and have hallowed fellowship together. Matthew, as becomes one whose theme is the government of God, clearly identifies the work of the cross with the trespass offering, where the Lord could say, as in **Psalms 69**, "Then I restored that which I took not away."

But in Mark's account we gaze in awe and wonder at the Holy One made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. It is the great sin offering that is before us, Christ dying not only for trespasses committed, but because of what we are as sinners by nature, which our practice but makes evident.

I dwell on these points because of the foolish things many have taught, as for instance that Mark's was the first effort

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this was amplified and altered by the writers of the other Gospels who may or may not be the persons whose names are linked with them. But we may be assured that all such speculations are idle and vain. The imprint of the divine mind is on every page of these records, and their very divergences (but never contradictions) as well as their agreements are but evidence of God's inspiration.

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### **The Object of Mark's Gospel**

Mark's supreme object was to show the Gentile world the active love of God in Jesus the Christ serving needy men, seeking after sinners and saving all who trusted Him. If one had no other part of Scripture but this brief Gospel, there is enough in it to show to any troubled heart and conscience the way of life and peace.

That Mark may, from the human standpoint, have been indebted to Peter for much of the information conveyed, need not be questioned, but all that is written is arranged by the Spirit of God and that with a definite object in view.

It was given to Isaiah to prophesy of Messiah as the Suffering Servant of Jehovah (**Isa. 52** and **53**). Moses predicted the raising up of a Prophet whose word on all questions would be final (**Deut. 18:15-19**). Mark was the evangelist chosen by the Holy Spirit to portray our Lord in these two offices, as Servant and Prophet. But we are not to suppose that this means the ignoring of other aspects of His nature and character. He was never more kingly than when serving, nor more divine than when He willingly limited Himself.

Peter the Great, after he had built up at great cost the Russian Empire, decided he must have a navy. But no one in Russia knew the art of shipbuilding. So Peter vacated his throne for a time, appointed his consort Catherine

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regent, laid aside his royal apparel, and, dressed as a common laborer, journeyed to Holland and to England, in which countries he learned ship-carpentry by working in the great shipyards side by side with men who little dreamed of the dignity of the apparently uncouth artisan who toiled with them day by day. Peter was none the less an emperor when he wrought with hammer and adze than when he returned to his throne.

In studying any book of the Bible it is well to have clearly in mind its main divisions, or outline. The outline given here may help us as to this Gospel.

Christ's prophetic ministry is emphasized throughout, but more particularly in the third division, where in Chapter 13—as in **Matthew 24** and **Luke 21**—He carries us on to the last things, viewing with the eye of the Seer the conditions He knew would prevail until His return in glory to set up His kingdom. It is noteworthy that when He speaks in this servant-character as Prophet of Jehovah, He declares His self-limitation, “Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (13:32). As the perfect Servant He chose not to know what the Father was not pleased to reveal (**Deut. 18:15, 18, 19**).

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### **Mark's Background**

John Mark was the son of a wealthy woman named Mary, probably a widow, whose home was large enough to serve as a meeting-place for many of the early disciples after the Pentecostal outpouring (**Acts 12:12**).

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas, to whom he was related, to Cyprus, but later returned to Jerusalem, a proceeding which Paul thoroughly disapproved (**Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:37-39**). Later, however, Mark redeemed

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himself and became a trusted minister of Christ and companion of Paul and Peter (**2 Tim. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:13**). It is like God to select the one-time unfaithful servant Mark to tell the story of the ever-faithful Servant, His own blessed Son!

According to a well-known tradition of the early Church, Mark was referring to himself when he told the story of “a certain young man” who followed Christ right up to His entry into the house of the high priest and then, when the guards sought to lay hold of him, left the linen cloth that had en-swathed his body in their hands and fled from them naked (**Mark 14:51, 52**). The fact that no other Evangelist records this incident perhaps may not be sufficient ground for connecting it with Mark himself, yet, on the other hand, because of its wide acceptance in early days it may possibly be the truth. In that case it would imply that young John Mark had listened to the teaching of the Lord while he was in Jerusalem, and his heart had gone out to Him insomuch that he thought he was ready even to die with Him, but in the hour of testing he fled, as did the other disciples. How many there are who really love the Lord and yet lack that moral courage that enables them to go through with Him at all cost! As we think of this fine young man and the difficulties he faced in getting really started in the service of the Lord, and yet remember that later on he proved himself an efficient minister of Christ, we may be encouraged to rise above our own fears and shortcomings, counting on God to make us true ambassadors of the gospel of His Son. As we study the record of Him who said, “I am among you as He that serveth” (**Luke 22:27**), may our own hearts be bowed in lowly subjection before Him and may we truly yield ourselves unto Him as the One now risen from the dead, to serve in the same lowly spirit that characterized Him when

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Father, even though we pass through this world  
comparatively unknown and unregarded.

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## **Chapter 6 Jottings On The Gospel Of John**

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**Henry Allen Ironside**

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In John's Gospel we have unfolded, as in no other portion of Scripture, the varied glories of the Son of God. I desire that these "jottings" may, under the Spirit's instruction and guidance, be useful to some of the Lord's dear people in leading them into a clearer apprehension and deeper appreciation of its treasures.

The book falls naturally into two parts. The first twelve chapters give the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son become flesh, to a needy world. The last nine chapters present Him in various aspects for the contemplation of His own beloved people.

Each division begins with "His own." In chapter 1, verse 11, after the wondrous introductory portion letting us into the glorious secret of the mystery of His exalted Person, we read that "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." The first expression is in the neuter, and might be rendered, "His own things," or, "His own possessions." The second is personal. He came, bringing grace and truth into the world His hands had made, and to the nation whose chief glory was the temple of which He was Lord; but alas, His own people received Him not. They were His own by creation, and, after the cross, by purchase, too, as are all men in this sin-burdened world today. But they had no heart for Him; for His coming, His ways, His words, and His life were the condemnation of their sin even though, in richest grace, He offered life and peace.

The second part also begins with "His own," as we see in 13:1: "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." This is precious indeed. Though the mass refused Him, a little company was "drawn by

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that love that knows no measure” unto Himself. He became their Saviour and the Object of their hearts. Therefore in a far fuller sense than that of chapter 1, they became “His own.” Not only were they His by creation and purchase, but also by redemption (for the cross is anticipated in this second division), and likewise His own by the Father’s gift, as seven times expressed in His high-priestly prayer of chapter 17. Nor was this all, for He had subdued their spirits and bound them to Himself, and therefore they were His own by subjugation. In this fivefold sense, they were linked with Himself.

Although the chapter and verse divisions are of human origin, we find in each chapter a characteristic revelation of Himself which, laid hold of by the soul, opens up the chapter and reveals the marvelous beauty of this divine portrait gallery.

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## **A Revelation to the Unsaved**

In the first division, we have a twelvefold presentation of the Lord Jesus to the world.

Twice repeated in chapter 1 is the Baptist’s cry, “Behold the Lamb of God.” On this the attention is focused. He is the Lamb for sacrifice and for example.

In the second chapter He is made known as the Creator, who turns water into the wine of gladness, thus “manifesting forth His glory.”

Chapter 3 presents Him as the Sin-offering, the antitype of the brazen serpent. Lifted up, He gives life to all who trust Him (*cf.* **2 Cor. 5:21**).

To the thirsty Samaritan woman, in the fourth chapter, He makes Himself known as the Satisfier of famished souls, giving living water which springs up perennially unto

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everlasting life.

It is the Judge in chapter 5, who yet walks among men in grace, imparting strength to the helpless. Soon, as easily as He restored the paralytic with a word, shall He summon all the dead to appear before His face.

In chapter 6 He is the Bread of God come down from heaven, as the manna of old—the meat that endureth, like the living water, unto everlasting life.

In chapter 7, on the last day of the formal, lifeless feast of tabernacles, Christ declares Himself to be the One who gives the Holy Ghost, leading some to cry, “Never man spake like this Man,” while others deride and jeer.

Chapter 8 manifests Him as the Light of the world from whose presence hypocritical Pharisees hasten to go out, while the repentant sinner, left alone with Him, hears His words, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”

But if He were only the Light, it would avail little for blind men; so, in the next chapter, He is also the Enlightener “whose glory shines through the darkened lids” of the man born blind and “lights them forever,” penetrating likewise to the depths of his moral being.

In chapter 10 our Lord cries, “I am the Good Shepherd,” and in one lovely picture after another, as also by plain and solemn statements concerning the death He is to die, He assures the hearts of His sheep of His unfailing care.

The special theme of chapter 11 is Christ as the Resurrection and the Life, while, in the twelfth chapter, He is the Touchstone of every heart, who, being lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to Himself either in grace or in judgment.

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It will be noticed that every fresh revelation of His glories is an added test to man. In each instance some hearts cleave to Him, leaving the mass whose enmity ever deepens, until at last He has to say in view of the cross, "Now is the judgment of this world." He has been offered to men in every possible character. If rejected, God has nothing more for them but utter condemnation.

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## **A Revelation to Believers**

Turning then to the second division of the book, we find added glories made known to the hearts of those who have been won by the former presentation.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Advocate in chapter 13, keeping clean His people's feet as they tread their pilgrim way, by the "washing of water by the Word."

In the fourteenth chapter, above all else, He is the Coming One, whose return is to be the hope of all His own.

The True Vine, the source of all fruit for God the Father, is the character which He takes in chapter 15, while in the next, He is the Sender of the Comforter, who is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us.

As we read chapter 17 we are permitted to listen to the breathings of the soul of the Son of God as He enters upon His high-priestly service as the Intercessor, bearing all His people on His shoulders and on His heart, like Aaron of old.

Chapters 18 and 19 are too closely linked to be separated, presenting Him in His perfect obedience unto death as the Burnt Offering, who "loved us and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

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In resurrection glory He appears in chapter 20 as the Gathering-center for His saints—"in the midst" when they are together in His name, speaking peace and showing His hands and His side!

The last chapter makes Him known as the Restorer of our souls, a character in which every saint has often had to meet Him.

Thus throughout this portion of the Word of God, the soul is led on step by step to "know Him, and the power of His resurrection,... being made conformable unto His death." May our hearts be more and more occupied with Himself until we see His face and are at home with Him forever.

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## Chapter 7 Living The Resurrection Life

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### Henry Allen Ironside

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*“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory” (Col. 3:1-4).*

We often hear of the higher life, the victorious life, the blessed life, and similar expressions, all of them more or less scriptural. But, after all, for the believer there is only one life: “He that hath the Son hath the life, he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life” (1 John 5:12, R.V.). This life may have a higher display in some than in others, but the life itself is that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us, and this life comes to us through faith in the risen Christ. Therefore it is resurrection life which the believer is called upon to manifest as he walks through this scene.

For forty days after our Lord came forth from the dead, He walked in resurrection life through this world ere He ascended to the Father, and those forty days suggest the life that we are to manifest, for we have died with Christ, but we have been raised in His resurrection and we are now called upon to manifest that resurrection life in this scene of death.

The Israelite of old was to wear a ribband of blue around the border of his garment (Num. 15:38-40), and as he looked upon it he was to remember that he belonged to the God of heaven, for blue is the heavenly color, and that the Lord had said, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” That ribband of blue ran

around the skirts of the garment at the very place where they came closest in contact with the earth. How significant this is! We are the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, called upon to manifest the heavenly character everywhere we go. In all our dealings with our fellow-men we are to display the ribband of blue, which is the sign of resurrection life. Whether at home, in the church, in business, or in society, we are to be different to others who do not possess this divine life. Thoreau, the naturalist-philosopher, in defending some of his oddities, wrote once, "If I do not keep in step with others, it is because I hear a different drumbeat." The Christian may well say this. If our inner ears have been attuned to the music of the heavens, we hear the drumbeat of the skies, and therefore we must of very necessity seem to the world to be out of step with all that goes on down here which is contrary to the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. But as we keep step with that other drumbeat, we shall live the resurrection life to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## **Chapter 8 Messiah's Appeal To Israel And The Nations**

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Submitted by **H A Ironside** on Mon, 01/14/2008 - 06:00

*"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow" (Isa. 50:10, 11).*

These words come to us at the conclusion of a wonderful presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ as seen through prophetic eyes seven hundred years before He came into the world. It is interesting when reading the book of the prophet Isaiah to notice that he flourished in the days of Uzziah,



Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah and other kings of Israel who lived in the eighth century before the coming into the world of the Lord Jesus. And looking down through the years, Isaiah sees the Coming One by faith, and Christ is represented as speaking to us all like this in verses two and three: “Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?”—no man to welcome Him, no man to recognize Him—“when I called, was there none to answer? Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.”

Who is the speaker in these verses? Evidently the mighty God Himself who in years gone by had wrought such marvelous deliverances for the people of Israel. It was He who dried up the sea when Israel fled from Pharaoh and his hosts when they went out of Egypt with a high hand. It was He who rolled back the waters of the Jordan, when after the forty years’ wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, they were about to enter the land of promise. It was the same God who controls the elements. He says, “I clothe the heavens with blackness and I make sackcloth their covering.” There can be no question but that the speaker here is God Himself. And yet, look at the next verse. It is exactly the same speaker in the next verse, but now He speaks as a man. How can that be? How can He speak as God in one verse, and as Man in the next? Only because the speaker here is Immanuel, “*God with us*,” true God and yet true Man.

And now speaking as the Incarnate One, He says, “The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the disciple” (verse 4). Just think of the same One

who says, "I clothe the heavens with blackness and I make sackcloth their covering," now saying, "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of a disciple. He opens My ears, He speaks to Me morning by morning, that I might know how to comfort the weary with the Word." There, you see, you have God incarnate; God become Man, and day by day in communion with the Father, being taught of the Father. Jesus said, "I speak not Mine own words, but the words of Him that sent Me." And, oh, how marvellously He could comfort the weary with the Word! Have ever words been heard like this down through the centuries—"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? How many millions of souls have heard those words and have come to Him, and oh, how they have been comforted! What peace, what rest of heart and conscience they have found at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ!

A poet has written:

"Low at Thy feet, Lord Jesus,  
This is the place for me;  
There I have learned sweet lessons,  
Truth that has set me free.

"Free from myself, Lord Jesus,  
Free from the ways of men;  
Chains of thought that once bound me  
Never shall bind again.

"None but Thyself, Lord Jesus,  
Conquered my wayward will;  
But for Thy grace, Lord Jesus,  
I would be wayward still."

Have you heard His voice? Has He spoken to your heart?  
Has He drawn you to Himself? Have you found that comfort  
which He delights to give?

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We are living in dreadful days. We almost hate to pick up the newspaper and see what has happened last in the world. One dreadful calamity follows another, and men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth. And yet, even in days like these, the word is true, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." He knows how to comfort the weary with the Word. Oh, He has been over the path. He has passed through trial and sorrow and rejection.

And in the next verses we hear Him saying this: "The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting" (verses 5, 6). Here is the rejected Saviour speaking. It is as though Isaiah could look down through the years through the telescope of faith, and he sees the blessed Lord there in Pilate's judgment-hall; and yonder taunted by Herod's soldiers; he sees rude men spitting in His face and slapping Him and crowning Him with thorns, and in every other way showering shame and ignominy upon Him. But on His part there is no resentment. He does not call down judgment upon their heads as He well might do, because it is the day of grace and He has come to make known the lovingkindness of God to guilty sinners. And so He commits Himself to the Father, and He says, "For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (verse 7).

You remember He had been rejected in Judea before and then went back to Galilee where people were so much more ready to receive Him. But finally at the time of the last passover He was ever going to attend, when He was about to be offered up, He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. And He knew what awaited Him, He was going there to die.

He said to His disciples, "The Son of Man must be rejected and set at naught and suffer many things of this generation, He shall be persecuted and crucified, and the third day He shall rise again." Nothing ever took Jesus by surprise. The very purpose for which He came into the world was just before Him. He said, you remember, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." He set His face like a flint to go to the cross, and He exclaims, "Behold, the Lord God will help Me; who is he that shall condemn Me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up" (verse 9). Man just lives his little day and then he is gone, but Jesus was the Eternal One who in grace took the sinner's place on Calvary's cross.

And now it seems to me, in the verse with which I began, He is addressing a world in very much the condition in which it is today; men's hearts and minds rilled with questions, asking, "Why does God allow this?" and "Why does He allow that?" and "Why doesn't He interfere?" and "Why doesn't He stop this thing?" and "Why doesn't He hinder the other thing?" But listen to what He has to say: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?" Do you feel today as though darkness is all around about and you can't seem to find your way, and you are in a fog, as it were? Oh, listen to this: "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." A poet has written:

*"I had rather walk in the dark with God  
Than walk alone in the light."*

And we are called to rest in the Word of God, "For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded," and again, "I will trust and not be afraid."

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“Oh,” but another says, “the trouble with me is I have to confess I am afraid at times.” Very well, another scripture says, “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.” So at all times and under all circumstances we can just trust in Him. “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

“Oh,” but another says, “the trouble with me is I don’t know Him like that. These words are addressed to those that fear the Lord, these words are just spoken of His servants, and I am out here in darkness and confusion of mind, and I don’t know Him. He is a stranger to me. I am not acquainted with Him.”

Then, dear friend, we invite you to become acquainted with Him and be at peace. He wants you to know Him, to be acquainted with Him. He invites you to come to Him. He says, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” And you remember when He was here on earth He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.”

Have you heard His voice? “Oh,” you say, “I have often heard it. I have listened to sermons all my life and it has never yet made any impression on me.”

Yes, you have heard with the outward ear, but you have never heard with the ear of the soul. You have never given attention to the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ. “*Hear*, and your soul shall live.” Won’t you set yourself earnestly today to hear the voice of the Son of God? I know men have their own theories and their own ways, and they turn from the voice of God and try anything and everything else before they will come to Him. Listen to His words of warning: “Behold, all

ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks”—you are trying to start a flame of your own that will give you light on the problems of life and make clear your path in this dark world, and He says ironically, “Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled.” But it will all die down. In a little while you will find it will all be gone, and the light you have kindled will be succeeded by darkness. “This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” Receive the Lord Jesus Christ, hear the voice of the Son of God, put your heart’s trust in Him and you shall have the light of life. Then you will be able to find your way through this world; you will have the Key to all earth’s troubles and distresses. But if you turn away from Him, if you take your own way and follow your own vain, empty thoughts, you will have nothing but disappointment at last. “This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.”

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## **Chapter 9 The Judgment-Seat Of Christ**

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## Henry Allen Ironside

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We are told in **John 5:22** that “the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son,” so that in this sense every judgment throne is to be considered as the judgment-seat of Christ. As the resurrected Man, He has been appointed by God as the Judge of all (**Acts 17:31**). Both the living and the dead are to give an account to Him, and this includes all men, whether saved or unsaved (**1 Pet. 4:5; Acts 10:42**). But so far as condemnatory judgment is concerned, believers will never enter into this. For them all such judgment is already past (**John 5:24**). Yet, while this is blessedly true, because all our sins were dealt with in the cross of Christ, it is a solemn fact, nevertheless, that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

In our Authorized Version this expression is used twice. In **Romans 14:10** we are warned against judging one another now. We read: “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.” Some manuscripts here read “God” in place of “Christ,” and in verse 12 we are told, “So, then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.” But Christ is God, so the thought is the same whichever word is used. And in **2 Corinthians 5** the apostle tells us how he has sought to live his life and maintain his testimony in view of this fact. He says in verses 9 and 10, “Wherefore we labor that whether present or absent we may be accepted of Him, for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or

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might give an account with joy at that great tribunal. It is plain from Scripture that there is a vast difference between the judgment-seat of Christ and the judgment of the great white throne, where the wicked dead are to answer for their sins and be judged according to their works (**Rev. 20:11-15**). The first takes place at our Lord's return prior to the glorious kingdom-age, the latter at the end of time. He says in **Rev. 22:12**, "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." And in **1 Corinthians 4:5** we read, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." Our blessed Lord is as a nobleman who has gone into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return. During His absence His servants are to be occupied in His interests. They are to use what He has committed to them for His glory. When He returns they will give an account to Him of their service.

It is well to remember that believers will be in their glorified bodies when they give this account. It will be after the resurrection of the sleeping saints and the rapture of those still in the body that we shall be manifested before our blessed Lord, either to receive His approval or to learn that we must suffer loss because of unworthy behavior. In **1 Corinthians 3** we have the outstanding scripture which deals with this judgment. A careful reading of verses 11 to 15 will make clear just what it is that will be brought to light in that day:

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be made manifest: for the

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day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Observe, this has to do only with those who are building upon the one foundation, our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore they are already saved people. They have been regenerated and added to the Lord, and to Him they are to give an account in the day of Christ. It is every man's *work* that is to be made manifest; that work may consist in building gold, silver and precious stones upon the sure foundation, or, on the other hand, wood, hay, stubble. The searching flame of God's infinite holiness will try every man's work of what sort it is. It does not say, "of how much it is." It is the *character* of the work rather than the *amount* of it that is in question. The gold, silver and precious stones speak of that which is estimable, which is in accordance with the Word of God and for which there will be a reward. The wood, hay, and stubble speak of that which is either utterly worthless or of transient value, and will all be consumed in the judgment fire of that day. Whatever is according to the flesh will be destroyed; for that there can be no reward. Instead, we shall have to suffer loss. Everything that is of the Spirit and therefore in accordance with God's Holy Word, will abide, and for that we shall be rewarded.

These are serious considerations which ought to be borne in mind by everyone seeking in any way to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. Unquestionably there is much work that is done professedly in His name, but is contrary to His Word, which perhaps attracts a great deal of attention and receives the applause of unspiritual people, who are not

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able to discern what is really of God and what is simply of man. All of this will be burned up at the judgment-seat of Christ. What a lot of so-called church-work the fires of that day will consume. Much which we have taken for granted as being in accordance with the mind of God will then prove to be simply the product of ecclesiastical machinery, and much of it without a passage of Holy Scripture behind it. When we stand before that august *bema* of Christ, everything will be brought to light. All the self-seeking, all the carnal egotism, all the fleshly energy, all the self-confidence that so often is back of our ministry will be made manifest, and all of this will go for nothing when our blessed Lord is looking for that which He can reward.

On the other hand, much that is looked upon with contempt by high-minded and heady brethren will then be seen in its true character, and of many a hidden saint, who has been passed by as insignificant and doing nothing of any real moment, the Lord will say, as He said of Mary of Bethany so long ago, "She hath done what she could." He will discern gold, silver and precious stones in the lowly but faithful service of "the quiet in the land" (**Ps. 35:20**), who have been content to be passed by and ignored here on earth, but whose one earnest desire has been to have His approval.

"He is coming! Oh, how solemn  
When the Judge's voice is heard,  
And in His own light He shows us  
Every thought and act and word.

*Deeds of merit, as we thought them,  
He will show us were but sin;  
Little acts we had forgotten  
He will tell us were for Him."*

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God loves reality. "He knoweth the proud afar off." He dwells in the heart of the humble and it is the meek of the earth who glorify Him, whereas the haughty and self-sufficient dishonor His name.

Nevertheless He will find in every believer something to approve, for we are told, "Then shall every man have praise of God." But even though all one's work should be burned up, the Spirit of God tells us the believer himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. But who that knows the saving grace of God and appreciates the love of Christ would wish thus to stand before Him? It is for Him we should labor. His glory should ever be before us, and then when we receive our rewards at His hand, it will be because of the delight which He Himself has found in our service.

The sphere of reward will be the coming glorious kingdom of our blessed Saviour. When He comes forth as our Melchizedek priest to sit as a king upon His throne, He has promised that we shall reign with Him. The sole condition is, *if we suffer with Him now we shall have part with Him in that day*. This expression has been used to strike terror to the hearts of some sensitive souls. Fearful that they are not suffering sufficiently to merit a place in the kingdom, they shrink from the judgment-seat of Christ as though it were a place of condemnation; but it is well to remember that it does not say, "If we suffer *for* Him we shall reign with Him," but "If we suffer *with* Him." All real Christians suffer *with* Christ, though some of us perhaps have not suffered very much *for* Him. But we could not be possessors of the new nature and not suffer in a world like this, where there is so much to wound the heart and grieve the spirit.

*"Saddened, ah yes, saddened  
By earth's deep sin and woe."*

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*How could I pass unheeding  
What grieved my Saviour so!"*

Shall it not be ours, then, to rejoice that unto us it is given not only thus to suffer *with* Him, but to suffer *for* His name's sake? Shall we esteem any trial too great or any sorrow too severe if it makes Christ more real to us, and gives the opportunity of glorifying His name to a greater extent than we could otherwise do? We will be content in that day if it is our privilege to hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

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## Lord Jesus

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*“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4:10, 11).*

This fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians is the Apostle Paul’s statement of power for ministry. He shows us in these stirring verses that God is not looking for brilliant men, is not depending upon eloquent men, is not shut up to the use of talented men in sending His gospel out in the world. God is looking for broken men, for men who have judged themselves in the light of the cross of Christ. When He wants anything done, He takes up men who have come to an end of themselves, and whose trust and confidence is not in themselves but in God. There were those who were calling in question the apostleship of Paul himself, for he did not seem to them to be what an apostle, according to their estimation of the office, ought to be. There was not the pomp nor the dignity they would expect; he did not come to them with great swelling words, there was no making anything of what he was after the flesh, no drawing attention to his natural ability or education; and in this the method of the Apostle Paul was in very vivid contrast to the method pursued by many today who pose as servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. This man went through the world a broken man, a lowly man, a man seeking only the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the blessing of souls, a man who might have occupied a very high place among the great and distinguished of earth. But he was a man who for Jesus’ sake had turned his back upon all that, and could say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (**Gal. 6:14**).

That cross spoke of the deepest shame and ignominy, and Paul gloried in it because through the work that took place upon it his soul had been saved, and he had learned that the preaching of the cross, while it is “to them that perish foolishness,” is “unto us which are saved the power of God” (**1 Cor. 1:18**). And so he went forth content to be broken in order that the light of the grace of God might shine out.

You will notice in verse 6 that “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” It is easy to see what he has in mind. He is thinking undoubtedly of that very striking incident of which we read in Judges, when Gideon and his three hundred men took their lives in their hands, were delivered unto death, as it were, and went forth against the vast armies of the Midianites. Surely no other army was accoutred as this one. They carried in one hand a trumpet, and in the other a pitcher, and in this pitcher was a lamp. The light of the lamp was not seen though it was already lit. It was not seen as long as it was in the earthen jar. They surrounded the army of the Midianites in the middle of the night, and suddenly at the command of their leader the jars were crashed to earth, and the light shone out, and the Midianites sprang up startled. They heard the crash and saw the light, and thought that they were surrounded by a tremendous army, and they turned their swords upon one another. It was God through Gideon that led the army to victory. A broken pitcher in order that light might shine out! The apostle says, as it were, “That is it! If you want to be a light for God in a world like this, be content to be broken, to have your hopes, your ambitions, all dashed to pieces, and then God can take you up and use you in order to carry the light of Christ to darkened hearts.”

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How are we broken? By affliction, by trouble, by the discipline of the Lord, sometimes by sickness, by pain and anguish. All these are the divine methods for breaking God's pitchers in order that the light may shine out to His praise and glory. Men may misjudge us, misrepresent us, persecute us bitterly; we may not have enough food to eat or water to drink; we may be cast down; we may suffer all kinds of sorrows; but it is all right if it breaks us in order that God may be able the better to use us. And so he says, "We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" for in all these experiences we are simply "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body." He "came from Godhead's fullest glory down to Calvary's depth of woe."

We sometimes sing a little hymn that always stirs the heart. I remember hearing Dr. Torrey say that he believed of all the hymns that were used in his great meetings around the world, it was the one that seemed to be most blessed of God to the people. It is:

*"I surrender all,  
I surrender all,  
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour,  
I surrender all"*

But that hymn never had the appeal it ought to have for my own heart until one day I found myself changing that chorus. I was thinking of Him who though He was "in the form of God, thought equality with God not a thing to be grasped; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:6-8).

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*He surrendered all,  
He surrendered all,  
All for me, my blessed Saviour,  
He surrendered all.*

And then my heart said, “O Lord, it will be easy to sing it the other way now, for what have I to give up, to surrender, in comparison with what Thou didst give up in order to redeem my guilty soul from going down to the pit?” It is as you and I realize from day to day what it all meant to Him that we can bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Dying day by day to our own hopes and ambitions, dying to the good opinion of people, dying to human praise and adulation, to everything that the natural heart grasps, dying in the death of Jesus to it all, because He died for us in order that “the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our body.”

You will notice that verses 10 and 11 are very much alike, and yet the great difference is this: verse 10 suggests something that we do deliberately, consciously, whereas verse 11 is something that God does for us. What is it we are called upon to do? “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus”—reminding ourselves every day that Jesus died for us, and because He died for us we are gladly to put ourselves in the place of death for Him.

Looking back to the cross the Apostle Paul could say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (**Gal. 2:20**). But this has to be put into practice daily by putting my tastes and ambitions in the place of death. That is my part. But here is God’s part: “We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.” You tell God that you are willing to take the place of death with Christ, and He will see that it is made



good; you tell God you are going to trust Him, and He will test your faith and show you what it means to trust Him; you tell Him that you are ready to surrender everything to Him, and He will put you in the place where you will begin to find out what full surrender really means. I do not know of anything that it seems should have such an appeal to the Christian heart along this line as the frequent remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ in His death, and I think it is because He realized that it is so easy for us to forget, that He said to His disciples when He gave them this memorial feast, "This do in remembrance of Me" (**Luke 22:19**). And the Holy Spirit said, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (**1 Cor. 11:26**). Every time we are called upon thus to remember the Lord it is a new challenge to ask ourselves, "Am I simply remembering Him in a cold, formal, intellectual way because it is customary, or am I truly in heart remembering the One who went down beneath the dark waters of death for me, and am I truly ready now to always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus?"

What a poor thing it is to come together in assemblies to participate in the communion of the Lord's Supper and then go out from the building and forget what it all really means, forget that our Saviour died, that we are linked up with the One who died, and that He has left us an example that we should follow His steps—that is, we should always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. This seems to me to be linked very intimately with several Old Testament references to which our attention is drawn in **Hebrews 11**. We read, "But Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones" (**Heb. 11:22**). Did you ever stop and ask why the Holy Spirit selected that particular incident to dwell upon? He has instanced something that you and I would probably have passed over altogether. What did

Joseph do? “Gave commandment concerning his bones.” In **Genesis 50:25** we read where Joseph, talking to the children of Israel, says, “God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.” That is the close of Genesis. What an odd way to close the book! But God wants us to think about the bones of Joseph. They are there in a coffin in Egypt, but they are to be carried to Canaan. In **Exodus 13** we find that the children of Israel who have been sheltered by the blood of the passover lamb are starting out for Canaan, and we read, “Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you” (Exod. 13:19). Who was Joseph? He was the saviour of Israel. If it had not been for him they had all been destroyed in the famine, but he was their saviour, and now he says, “When you leave Egypt to go to Canaan, you carry my bones with you.” When they left, they were very careful to do as they were told, and all the way across the sands of the desert wherever that great caravan went, they were always bearing about in the body the dying of Joseph.

I think I see that great procession winding its way up over the hills; and the Amalekites and the Mid-ianites looking at them in wonder say, “What is that strange dark casket?” Presently they call an Israelite and ask him, and he says, “We were once in greatest distress; if God had not had mercy upon us we would have been left to die, but He raised up a saviour for us, one of our own people; his name was Joseph and he delivered us; Joseph saved us. But *our saviour died*, and we are marching on to the land that our God has given us, and until we get there, we carry with us the memorial of death, the bones of Joseph. We can never forget him; he died, but we have the memorials still.” And by-and-by when they reached the land, when they arrived at the place that God

Himself had selected for them, we are told that after everything else was properly attended to, “The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph” (**Josh. 24:32**). There was no need to carry the bones of Joseph through the wilderness any more, for they were at home now. And, beloved, you and I are passing on through the wilderness of this world, we will soon be at Home, but until we reach there we are called upon to bear about in the body the dying of Jesus, and as we remember Him in the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup, we should challenge our own hearts: Are we simply looking objectively toward that cross and saying, “There our Saviour died,” or are we seeking day by day to practically make it manifest that His death means more to us than all that this world glories in?

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## **Chapter 11 Care For God's Fruit-Trees**

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*“When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and*

*thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege: only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued"* (**Deut 20:19,20**).

Many are the salutary lessons which the Holy Spirit has put before us by means of the instruction given to Israel. We are familiar with the fact that the things which happened unto them were for types, and written for our learning. And such is the passage quoted above. Just as, when God commanded Israel, saying, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," He had His own servants in mind ( as so clearly shown us by the Apostle Paul in **1 Cor. 9:9-14**), so here, may we not see pictured by the "trees good for food," these same servants in another aspect, and made the objects of the Lord's particular care?

The people of Israel were admonished against all recklessness and waste in felling standing timber when they besieged the cities of the land. They were careful to ascertain the character of each particular tree before venturing to lift an ax against it. All fruit-trees were to be spared, because they were part of God's gracious provision for ministering food to His people.

And may we not say that God would have us make the same distinction today? There are trees, to the very roots of which the ax must be laid; trees that are either mere cumberers of the ground, or producing only that which is noxious and poisonous. Such are the present-day advocates of human righteousness as a basis of acceptance with God, or the propagators of wicked teachings that deny the very foundations of the faith. Soldiers of the Lord of Hosts may be assured of His approval when they use the ax against these—exposing their fallacies. "Every plant," said the Lord

Jesus, “that My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.” To fearlessly oppose such evil teachers and denounce their doctrines and practices, is in accord with the spirit of the Lord Jesus and of His apostles. None reproved hypocritical pretensions more scathingly than Christ Himself. No modern controversialist, with any claim to piety, would be likely to use stronger words than those of John the Baptist when he sternly arraigned the “generation of vipers” of his day. Tremendously telling are the denunciations of the Apostle Paul, when necessity compelled him to meet the errors of false teachers troubling the early Church. John, Peter and Jude hesitated not to decry the antichrists, the purveyors of damnable heresies, and the ungodly men “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ,” who were creeping in among the saints, and seeking to overthrow their most holy faith.

But, be it noted, those so solemnly accused and vigorously combated, were not erring saints, or brethren with mistaken views, but they were relentless “enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things.” And wherever such are found today, and manifestly proven to be such, they should be dealt with in the same way.

But there is grave danger lest the ax be lifted up against another class altogether—the *fruit-bearing* trees—whom the Lord has forbidden our judging or condemning. Every fruit-tree is the object of His tender solicitude. Such are truly born of the Spirit, and genuine lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ. They may at times, in their zeal for God or their earnest passion for the souls of lost men, over-step bounds and use methods of which their more conservative or better-instructed brethren disapprove, but they are the Lord’s

servants, who has said, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.”

The spirit of criticism may lead to very unhappy results, and oftentimes one is in danger of finding himself arrayed against men and movements which God is owning and blessing. The utmost care is required to distinguish things that differ—that what is of God and what is of Satan may not come into the same sweeping condemnation. And our Lord Himself has given us the rule whereby we may make this distinction. He has said, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” A corrupt tree produces corrupt fruit, whereas a good tree brings forth good fruit. In either case the fruit may not always be the same in quantity or quality, but it will be either deleterious or “good for food.” Because healthful fruit is sometimes small, or not up to the standard, one does not necessarily chop down the tree, but rather, wisely uses the pruning-knife and purges it that it may bring forth more and better fruit.

And this pruning process is one that all God’s fruit-trees have at times to undergo; and often He uses one servant to correct and help another; but this is accomplished far better by a kindly personal admonition, or a brotherly effort to instruct, than by unkind criticism and a hard judging spirit. A beautiful example of this gracious care for one of God’s fruit-trees is given us in the book of Acts, in the case of Apollos, whose earnestness and love for the Scriptures appealed to the hearts of Priscilla and Aquila, though he was not at all up to the standard of New Testament truth. He had not got beyond the baptism of John. But this godly couple, instead of exposing his ignorance to others, or roundly denouncing him as a legalist without true gospel light, take him into their home, and there in true Christian love expound unto him the way of God more perfectly. What precious and abiding fruit was the result!

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It is to be regretted that the same gracious spirit does not always characterize us when we meet with, or hear of, those who are manifesting similar devotedness, while ignorant of much that we may value. How senseless the folly that leads us oftentimes to array ourselves against such servants of Christ, in place of manifesting a godly concern for them. We thoughtlessly lift our axes against God's fruit-trees, and would destroy where we might save. Many a one who is ignorant of much precious truth, is nevertheless bearing fruit in the salvation of souls and the refreshment of the spirits of believers; while, on the other hand, one may have a very clear intellectual grasp of divine principles and understand much that is called high truth, who produces very little of this same blessed fruit.

Oh, beloved brethren, let us keep our axes sharp for the deadly upas-trees of sin and fundamental error that abound on every side; but shall we not seek grace from God that we may have spiritual discernment to refrain from damaging in any way trees that are good for food?

Satan and his emissaries can be depended upon to bestow enough abuse on real Christians and true servants of the Lord Jesus, without their fellow-servants joining in the same unworthy business. Let us not forget the words already quoted, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." And the Holy Spirit goes on to say, "Yea, and he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand."

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## **Chapter 12 Meditations On The Life And Letters Of The Apostle Paul**

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## **Henry Allen Ironside**

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There is a marvellous symmetry and orderliness evidenced in the manner of the divine revelation to mankind. God has spoken in His Word—the Word personal and the Word written. The law and the prophets were until John. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Following His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, the Holy Spirit came to form the Church of the new dispensation and to be the Guide, Comforter and Teacher of the saints until all should come to the unity of the faith and be presented faultless in the presence of Christ's glory. He selected different servants to emphasize various phases of truth. To Peter, James and Jude it was given to open up sanctifying truth as to the believer's relation to the kingdom of God, while that kingdom is still rejected by the world. To the Apostle John was given particularly to make known precious and intimate things having to do with our place as children in the family of God. And to Paul, foreordained to be an apostle to the nations, was revealed in all its fulness the great mystery of the Body of Christ. These various lines of truth are not antagonistic one to the other, neither does one supersede and so make needless any other line of truth. All are required in order that the believer may be perfect or mature, wanting nothing. For the Christian is, at one and the same time, a child in the family, a subject of the kingdom, and a member of the Body.

Had it been the mind of God that Paul's ministry should have set all the rest to one side he would have been the last to write. But the fact is that all of his epistles were written, and he himself was probably in heaven, when Peter wrote his second epistle, and all of John's writings

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earth had ceased. These considerations alone should impress upon us the value of every portion of the Word of God.

How like God it was to choose for the special mission to the Gentiles one who had been a stern, bigoted Jewish zealot, who could not brook the thought of any further revelation than that given by Moses and the prophets, and who was so blinded by prejudice that he failed to see in Christ Jesus the One of whom all these prophets spoke. His remarkable experience on the way to Damascus opened his eyes to heavenly realities and blinded them to all human religiousness and worldly glory. It was the revelation of God's Son in him that revolutionized him completely. Henceforth he would know nothing among them but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Hidden for a time in Arabia Petra, he was instructed by the Lord Himself as to the message he was to carry to the world. His was to be a double ministry: that of the gospel and of the Church.

From the first he went beyond the twelve in his proclamation of the gospel, for he preached justification from all things, in addition to remission of sins. And he declared even in Damascus that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Peter had declared Him to be Christ the Servant of God; for if the Revised Version be referred to, it will be seen that this is the term used in **Acts 3:13, 26**; 4:30. Peter did not deny His Sonship. He calls Him Lord and Christ, which implies full Deity (**Acts 2:36**), and as recorded in **Matthew 16**, he had already confessed Him as Son of the Living God. But in presenting Him to Israel in the beginning, it was as the Servant of Jehovah he proclaimed Him. But from the very first Paul was led to insist upon His Sonship. Side by side with this mystery of the gospel went the mystery of the Body. The other

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apostles saw, in measure at least, that Jew and Gentile were to be blessed on the common ground of grace (**Acts 15:7-10**). To Paul was vouchsafed the great truth that the middle wall was done away completely and all who believed were baptized by one Spirit into one Body and so, as intimately related each to the other as the members of a human body are to its head and to one another (**1 Cor. 12:12, 13**).

To Paul it was given to complete the Word of God by unfolding all His counsels and purposes. For though others wrote later, as we have seen, yet no new doctrinal unfoldings were added to this revelation of the mystery.

A thoughtful consideration of Paul's letters will reveal the wonderful scope of his ministry, linking itself intimately with that of all his fellow-servants and yet transcending them all.

In the epistles to the Thessalonians, which are the earliest of his letters to be preserved for the edification of the Church, he unfolds precious truth as to the consummation of the Christian's path, the coming of our Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto Him. In the first epistle the emphasis is laid upon our Lord's coming for His saints, to take them to be with Himself. In the second letter he dwells largely on Christ's revelation from heaven with all His saints when He descends to take the kingdom and reign in righteousness over a redeemed universe.

Next in order of time we have the epistles to the Corinthians. In these we have, in the first, the order and discipline of the Church of God viewed in responsibility, in the place of testimony on the earth, and in the second, that edifying ministry which the risen Christ has given to

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Scripture the Church is never, as in Romish conceptions, the teacher, but Christ has given gifts to His Church that it may be taught of Him through His servants. Were the churches today more subject to what the Lord has given us in these Corinthian letters, godly order would displace fleshly confusion.

It is not possible to pronounce with absolute certainty as to the order in which all Paul's epistles were written, but it is evident that Galatians and Romans are most definitely related. In the former law and grace are fully discussed and the relative place of each, in the divine scheme, made clear, while in the latter we have the fullest unfolding of the gospel of God that has ever been made known. That gospel reveals the righteousness of God, showing how God can be just and the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus. It harmonizes God's present work of grace among all men with the promises made of old to Israel and shows the practical results that flow therefrom.

Colossians and Philemon belong together. Whether written, as some suppose, in prison in Cesarea or with others in Rome, both were carried by Onesimus, the converted runaway slave, to Colosse. The great theme of the longer letter is the Headship of Christ, a truth that was in danger of being side-tracked because of false teachers, and so needed full reiteration and explanation. The shorter letter has been well described as "the finest specimen of early Christian personal correspondence extant." It illustrates beautifully the great truths of substitution and acceptance.

Ephesians is the capstone of the Pauline revelation. Here we have restated that "whole counsel of God" which Paul tells the Ephesian elders he had already declared unto them. It opens up the truth of the Church as the Body of

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Christ with its glorious privileges, as well as the walk that should characterize those so richly blessed.

Philippians is the epistle of Christian experience and so it is radiant with the joy of the Lord. For real Christian experience consists of the knowledge of, the enjoyment of, and the manifestation of, Christ Himself, and of this the letter treats.

The pastoral epistles to Timothy and Titus stress the importance of sound teaching coupled with sound living in order to combat the growing evils of the age.

Hebrews, I know, is not ascribed to Paul by many. I have given my own reasons elsewhere<sup>1</sup> for holding to the Pauline authorship. It is the call to converted Hebrews to come outside the camp of Judaism, giving Christ the pre-eminent place, as He has fulfilled all the types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation. As such, it is a fitting close to this wonderful scope of ministry given through Paul.

His life was one of intense devotion to the Christ who had won his heart, and separated him to be His ambassador to the Gentiles. In this calling he gloried. He magnified his office. But, on the other hand, he never ceased to have a passionate, yearning love for Israel, and wherever he went, his message, to the very last, was to the Jew first. No one saw with clearer vision the sins and failures of his people, but no one was prepared to endure more on their behalf if he might but win them for Christ.

The record of his sufferings is simply staggering. One wonders how any man was able to go through all that he was called upon to endure for the gospel's sake. But he bore it all gladly, desiring only that Christ might be magnified in him, whether in life or in death. As we today

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look back over nineteen hundred years of human history, he towers high above all the men of his time, challenging” us to follow him as he followed Christ.

<sup>1</sup> The Epistle to the Hebrews and Lectures on Titus. Same author, \$1.25 cloth; 60c. paper.

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## **Chapter 13 Uzziah, King Of Judah, Or The Danger Of Success**

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## **2 Chronicles 26**

The danger of success is very real in the case of fallen creatures, even though they be children of God, and devoted in their measure. The Lord's word to Baruch, "Seekest thou great things for thyself; seek them not," may well be pressed upon every one of our hearts. We cannot be trusted. It is humiliating, but it is true; and because true, it becomes intensely important that Christ and His glory be alone before our souls in any service done or attempted for God.

King Uzziah, as he is called in **2 Chronicles 26**, or Azariah, as his name is given in **2 Kings 14:21** and 15:1-7, is a striking case in point. He began well but ended badly. Succeeding his father, Amaziah, at the tender age of sixteen years, he from the beginning sought the Lord, "and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (**2 Chron. 26:5**).

It was a most remarkable thing for a lad of this age to come out so boldly for God and His truth. There can be no question but that there had been a real work of grace in Uzziah's soul, doubtless as a result of the faithful instruction received from his father, who in spite of considerable lack of wisdom was nevertheless a man whose ways in general had the divine approval. The mention of the mother's name, Jecoliah of Jerusalem, would also suggest that she was probably the guide of her son in his early years, directing his footsteps in the way of righteousness. It is a wonderful thing for a child to have godly parentage. How strikingly this comes out in the Word of God, as also in the experience of hundreds of outstanding Christian leaders in our own dispensation.

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But beside parental help, we learn that there was a man of God who had a commanding influence over Uzziah for good, namely Zechariah, “who had understanding in the visions of God.” We do not know much about this man of prophetic insight, as he does not seem to be mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. We are told that in his days all went well with Uzziah. Evidently he was the kind of a man who needed a check and a helper or counsellor, and he found both in Zechariah. The danger came when he had to be cast, as people say, upon his own resources; though no child of God should ever be cast on aught but the power of God.

For a time Uzziah’s life was one long record of success such as few kings have known. He went out to war and was everywhere a victor. Through his prowess Judah assumed something of her Davidic and Solomonic glory. He built towers in the desert for defense, thus enlarging his borders; and digged many wells for refreshment and blessing. In the gentle art of husbandry he was likewise active; a man who delighted to till the ground and cause it to bring forth what would be for cheer and nourishment. His was not the field of the slothful, bringing forth thorns and briars, but the tillage of the diligent receiving blessing from God.

All this is most suggestive and may well speak to us, we who are called to contend for the faith in the present difficult days. Like Uzziah, we need to be concerned about the defense of the gospel. We are called upon to stand unflinchingly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We need to be nourished and builded up with words of sound doctrine. This is no time for carelessness or indifference in regard to the truth of God, that great deposit which has been committed to us. Enemies there are on every hand who would seek to rob us of our rightful heritage, but as we go forth in humble dependence on the Lord, feeding

upon His Word and devoted to His interests, we can be sure of triumph and victory over every foe.

Uzziah recognized the importance of the principle later enunciated, "In time of peace prepare for war." Therefore he fortified Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah. And he made provision for the storing up of food in case of siege. He had, too, a great army of 307,500 men led by valorous and efficient officers numbering 2,600; an army we read "that made war with mighty power to help the king against the enemy" (ver. 13). Nor was this army an unorganized mob, but it was well-drilled, properly accoutred. An army without ammunition would be a failure indeed in the face of an enemy, and it is to be feared that many in the army of the Lord today are poorly provided with weapons wherewith to meet their spiritual foes. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood," we are told in **Ephesians 6**, "but against wicked spirits in the heavenlies, even the world rulers of this darkness." And in order to stand against them, we need the whole armor of God. All this seems to be suggested by the preparations that Uzziah made in order properly to equip his great army, as a result of which he went from victory to victory in happy dependence on God.

For how many years he went on in this godly, orderly manner we know not; but in verse 15 we find a sudden break in the happy record: "He was marvelously helped till he was strong." While he was little in his own eyes, God could trust him with success; but when he was strong he forgot, in some sense, that the victories were not of his own prowess and that he had nothing that he had not received. "When he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense" (ver. 16).

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It is very evident that something had been working in the heart of Uzziah which had not hitherto come to the surface. Even his very success had fostered to a certain degree a feeling of self-satisfaction with a desire for self-exaltation. What a warning is this for every one of us. Who can trust his own heart? We are so corrupt by nature that even the very blessing of God upon our service may but minister to the pride of our natural hearts if we do not go through everything in fellowship with Him who has called us to minister in holy things. How easy for us to forget that we have no might, no power, no sufficiency in ourselves! "But our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the new covenant." Therefore we have no reason to boast in anything we accomplish, for has not our blessed Lord said, "Without Me ye can do nothing"?

But Uzziah forgot this. So used had he become to success that he seemed to have reached the place where he felt that whatever he attempted to do must be right, and would be owned of God. He must have known that it was the prerogative of the priests alone to burn incense in the Holy Place. But he sought to usurp this priestly service though he had no title to do so. That God should have called others to do something in which he had no part was apparently gall and bitterness to the haughty king. Instead of being content to use his own gifts in subjection to the Lord and fill the place allotted to him, his restless nature made him yearn to do what God had forbidden.

Azariah the priest sought in vain to show him his error. He would not be humbled or hindered. God had declared that none but an anointed priest should approach to offer incense. Uzziah was king but not priest; therefore to persist in going in was rebellion against the Lord. Faithfully, Azariah warned and entreated, rebuking him too in Jehovah's name. But all was in vain. Puffed up with pride, he would not be

persuaded so he angrily caught up a censer and proceeded to carry out his intention.

Then God intervened. As the king in his haughty self-will pressed forward to mingle with the priestly company the leprosy rose up in his forehead! He was smitten of the Lord, as Miriam and Gehazi had been before him. It was hardly necessary now for the priest to “thrust him out;” for “himself hasted also to go out,” realizing in that awful moment whose hand it was that was laid upon him.

The law as to leprosy in **Leviticus 13** distinguishes between leprosy of the body and leprosy of the head. Both speak of sin: the former in its grossness as the lusts of the flesh; the latter in its more subtle, though less obnoxious form in the eyes of man, but even more hateful to God—the lusts of the mind. This was Uzziah’s case. His mind was exalted through prosperity. Therefore he was smitten in the head.

To the day of his death he dwelt apart from the congregation of the Lord; cut off from Jehovah’s house. He remained to the end a sad testimony to the fact that God is not mocked. He will be sanctified in them that come nigh Him.

We are told that Jotham, his son, was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land. This means, of course, that while Uzziah was still living and unable to fulfil the kingly office because of the result of his rashness and folly, his son was made regent and administered the government in the place of the father. If we dare allow our imaginations play, we may think of Uzziah diseased and crushed, sitting in front of the separated house in which he dwelt, as an unclean leper, looking out toward the city of Jerusalem, saying to himself, “I should be there; I ought to be ruling this people; I was anointed as king over Israel. But here I am a castaway, and all because of my own self-will and foolishness.” Or one might even think of a day when the

armies of Israel went marching by on their way to battle, led by Jotham, the Prince Regent, while Uzziah gazed from afar, his heart breaking with grief to think how terribly he himself had failed, as he exclaimed in anguish, “I should have led the hosts today; I should be going out against the enemies of the Lord; but here I must remain as one disapproved of God, utterly set to one side, because I forgot that those who walk in pride He is able to abase.” Think of the disappointment and of the loss to all Israel occasioned by the self-confidence of this mighty king. And as we think of it, let us tremble lest we too should have to prove some day the truth of the words, “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

It was in the year of Uzziah’s death—still under the governmental hand of God—that Isaiah saw the Lord as related in **Isaiah 6:1**. How different the attitude of the two men. The one, a prophet, taking the leper’s place, covering his mouth and crying, “Unclean!” The other, taking the place of a holy priest, rushing unadvisedly into the presence of God and made a leper thereby! He was buried in the field of the tombs, but not, I judge, in the tombs of the kings themselves, “for they said, He is a leper” (ver. 23).

His early life of dependence on God, his terrible failure, his judgment and his death may all alike speak loudly to our souls. Oh, for grace to imitate his virtues, and avoid his error, that thus we may be kept in the hand of our God for blessing, and not have to fall under His government because of pride and disobedience!

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## Chapter 15 The Morning Star And The Sun Of Righteousness

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Henry Allen Ironside

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### Revelation 22:16-21

The Old Testament ends with the solemn words, “Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” The last word of the Old Testament is “curse” for that is all the Law could bring to man. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (**Gal. 3:10**). But the New Testament ends with the words, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

It seems so fitting that the Holy Spirit should have so arranged it that when we come to the end of the canon of Scripture the last voice we hear should be that of our beloved Saviour. You notice how He addresses His people, using the personal name “Jesus” which was given Him when born on earth. Before His birth the angel said, “Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Jesus is to us a unique name, but it was not unusual to the Hebrew people. The name “Joshua” is the Hebrew form of the word, the Greek being “*Iesous*,” or as we say, “Jesus.” Joshua means “Jehovah the Saviour.” The name tells us who and what He was. When He grew up on earth He bore that name. He was Jesus in the carpenter shop. He was Jesus as He went over the hills and through the valleys of Galilee, Samaria and Judaea preaching the gospel. When hanging on the tree,

*“They wrote that name above Him,  
That all might know the reason we*

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*Forevermore should love Him.”*

Pilate commanded and a placard was made out in Hebrew, Greek and Latin saying, “This is Jesus, King of the Jews.” It was intended as a grim jest on Pilate’s part, for the people hated that title, but Pilate practically said, “The reason I am crucifying this Man is that He is seeking to raise an insurrection against Caesar, proclaiming Himself King.”

When He arose from the dead and ascended to God’s right hand we are told that the Father ordained that “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” (Phil. 2:10). That includes even the infernal regions. “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:11).

The apostle says, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor” (**Heb. 2:9**). Now when He speaks to His own for the last time before He descends to call us to be with Himself, He says, “I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches” (**Rev. 22:16**). “I, Jesus”—Jehovah the Saviour.

John Hamilton, the converted actor, used to like to make this into an acrostic: “*Jesus Exactly Suits Us Sinners.*” The five initial letters spell “Jesus.” Have you found that out? Have you fled to Him as a poor sinner?

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief,” said Paul. So the chief of sinners is already in heaven, and everyone else can get in behind him if they will.

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Revelation, while dealing very largely with events after the Church has left the scene, is nevertheless God's last message to the churches. It is for His Church of this age, in order that they might order their lives now in view of that coming day. When I understand what is coming it helps me to take the right attitude toward this world at the present time.

"I am the Root and the Offspring of David," says Jesus (**Rev. 22:16**). "I am the Root of David"—that is, David sprang from Him. That is a title of Deity—"I am the Root of David." David came into existence through the omnipotent power of Jesus. He was David's Creator. But He adds, "I am the Offspring of David." As Deity David sprang from Him, but as Man He sprang from David. Mary was a lineal descendant of David through his son Nathan, and Joseph was a lineal descendant of David through another son, Solomon.

"I am... the Bright and Morning Star" (**Rev. 22:16**). What is the morning star? It is the herald of the dawn. This tells us of the Lord Jesus as the Coming One. Peter says we are to cherish the Word of prophecy for it shines as a light in a dark place. We are to keep it in our hearts until the Day Star arises. Jesus is the Day Star—the Bright and Morning Star. In a little while He is going to shine forth in glory—quietly, serenely, beautifully, to herald the coming day.

That is not the way the Second Coming is presented in the Old Testament, nor always in the New Testament. In Malachi, after giving the description of the terrible things to take place on the earth during the Great Tribulation, which comes between the Rapture of the saints and the appearing of Jesus in His glory, the Spirit of God says, "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (**Mal. 4:2**).

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Our Lord Jesus Christ is coming as the Sun of Righteousness to dispel all the sin clouds of earth and to bring in the reign of everlasting righteousness.

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness” (**Isa. 32:1**). “In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth” (**Ps. 72:7**). “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (**Hab. 2:14**). That is the way the people of Israel were taught to look for Him. That is the aspect of His coming that is presented in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; they are practically all occupied with His coming again as the Sun of Righteousness to bring in the kingdom; that is, the coming of the Son of Man. That term always refers to His coming to the earth.

But in John’s Gospel you get another aspect of His coming. On the last night before going to the Garden of Sorrow, with His disciples around Him, He warned that one of them should betray Him, and when Peter declared that *he* would never fail to follow Jesus but would lay down his life for his Master, the Lord said to him, “The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice” (**John 13:38**). Jesus immediately adds, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” Did you notice how these words follow what He said to Peter? Jesus knew how broken-hearted Peter would be after denying his Lord, and how he would go out in the dark and weep bitterly; He knew how he would feel when he realized the terrible thing he had done, so He said, “Even then, do not be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. You believe in God when you can’t see Him; believe also in Me, when you no longer can see Me. When I am no longer here personally to comfort and help, believe in Me, trust and confide in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions—many abiding places, resting places for you. I

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go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (**John 14:3**). There is nothing like this in Matthew, Mark, nor Luke. There is no hint in those Gospels that the first thing in connection with the Second Coming will be to take His own to be with Him in heaven. This is a new revelation, a new development of truth, an opening up of something very precious and lovely that had not been heard by them before.

This is the aspect of His coming developed by Paul through the Holy Spirit. He was used to open it more fully. He said, “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (**1 Thess. 4:16**). It is Paul who tells us, “Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (**1 Cor. 15:51, 52**). “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” That is what is going to take place when the Lord Jesus shines forth as the Bright and Morning Star.

Some of us do not often see the morning star. It shines out just before the dawn when everything is darkest down below. Through the gloom there is that beautiful star shining. No matter how dark it gets, do not be discouraged. Though apostasy is increasing, iniquity is abounding, the love of many is becoming cold, distress on earth with grave perplexity, men’s hearts failing them for fear—no matter how dark conditions may be, Jesus is

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coming. He may come at any moment now, and when the Morning Star shines forth we know that the day—the day of righteousness—will soon appear.

“I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star,” says Jesus (**Rev 22:16**). And immediately there is a response on the part of His own: “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come” (**Rev. 22:17**).

I don’t think the word “Come” here is addressed to the unsaved. Generally it is used as though this verse is simply a message to sinners. Undoubtedly the last part of the verse does, but the first two sentences have an altogether different meaning. I like to read Wycliffe’s Old English translation: “I am ye roote and ye offspring of David, and ye bright and morning star. And ye Spirit and ye spouse are saying, Come Thou. And let him that heareth say, Come Thou.” The “come” is addressed to Christ, and wherever the message is carried and men hear with faith, let them say, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

I remember one night in Stockton, California, in a German church I was preaching about the coming of Jesus. As I was in prayer I was conscious of a woman getting up and going out, for in those days the skirts would swish whenever a lady walked. It seemed to me that this lady must have gone out in a hurry. When I finished my prayer and went to greet the friends at the door, I found a woman pacing back and forth in the lobby. The moment I came she said to me, “How would you dare pray like that — ‘Come, Lord Jesus’? I don’t want Him to come. It would break in on all my plans. How dare you!”

I said, “My dear young woman, Jesus is coming whether you want it or not.” But she was indignant, irate. She told me of certain worldly interests which she had, that some

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day she wanted to be a Christian, but not until all these things had gone by.

But you cannot bargain with Christ in that way. If you put worldly things first, perhaps the day will arrive when you are ready to come to Christ but you may find you have no inclination left. The Lord says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." So harden not your heart.

But oh, if you know Him, and love Him, surely your heart says, "Come, Lord Jesus." If we are really waiting for His coming, of course we shall not be indifferent to the needs of the world. Naturally we shall be concerned about men and women who are unsaved. So we shall be glad to take up the gospel invitation given in the last part of the verse, "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (**Rev. 22:16**). Is there a poor thirsty soul here? You have tried in vain to slake your thirst on the waters of earth. What Jesus said of the water in Samaria's well is true of all that this world offers: "Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again." I don't care what it is, you may try it all but you will thirst still—"But whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a fountain of living water, springing up into everlasting life."

*"I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,  
But all their waters failed.  
E'en as I stooped to drink they fled  
And mocked me as I wailed.*

*"The pleasures lost I sadly mourned,  
But never wept for Thee,  
Till grace my sightless eyes received  
Thy loveliness to see.*

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*“Now none but Christ can satisfy,  
None other name for me;  
There’s life, and love, and lasting joy,  
Lord Jesus, found in Thee.”*

Because we know how well He can satisfy the human soul, we take up the cry and invite you to come. “Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

Now we come to two very solemn verses, **Rev. 22:18, 19**: “I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.” I shudder when I read a verse like that and think how people try to add to Scripture pretended revelations of their own and foist them upon others. Think of Mohammed making up the Koran for his religion, and trying to force it upon the people as an addition to the Book of God. Think of Smith trying to foist the Book of Mormon as an addition to the Scriptures, and of Mary Baker Eddy trying to foist upon the world her book, “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures,” as something added to the Bible. I don’t need her key, for the Bible is already an open Book.

I was speaking like this in Moody Memorial Church when a young girl sent a note up to me saying, “How stupid you are, Doctor! Mrs. Eddy’s book was never intended to open the Scriptures: it was intended to lock them.” I thought she was a rather clever girl after all.

“If many man shall add unto these things.” It will be awful for men and women to have to face in eternity the results of their work. But the next verse is as solemn, and it makes me tremble for our so-called “modernists.” “And if

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any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (**Rev. 22:19**). God says, “You will never reach heaven if you try to destroy My Word.” What a serious thing it is to teach men and women that God’s Bible is not, after all, the inspired Word of the living God!

But after these two tremendous statements we hear again the voice of Jesus from heaven—the last word that ever will be heard from heaven until **1 Thessalonians 4** is fulfilled, and “the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout.” That will be the next word from heaven. It is in **Rev. 22:20**. “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen.” And John, speaking for the whole ransomed Church of God says, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Does your heart say that?

Those who know their Bibles best and are most familiar with conditions in the world today are persuaded we are living in the last hours of the Christian dispensation. We see conditions prevailing in the Church of God—ever-increasing apostasy among some, coupled with a greater interest in missionary work on the part of others—and the signs tell us that Jesus is coming soon. We see the Jews gathering back to their own land, prophecy being fulfilled before our very eyes, and these things tell us that the fig-tree is putting forth its green leaves to show that Jesus is coming soon. We see conditions in Europe and the Far East that are working up to the very circumstances predicted in the Scriptures concerning the last days. If it were not that many of us know that Jesus is our Saviour, our hearts would be filled with fear and dread, but because we do there is no fear or dread. With joy we cry, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

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## **Chapter 16 The Father's House And The Way There**

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*“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:1-6).*

In these verses, there are two outstanding truths emphasized: first, that of the Father’s house, and second, our Lord’s personal return for His own. We are all familiar with the fact, I presume, that the Bible was not written in chapters and verses. These breaks in the text were put in by editors, and that in rather recent years, some of them as late as the time of the Protestant Reformation. And sometimes the chapter breaks seem to come at rather unfortunate places. I think such is the case here. Who, for instance, beginning to read the first verse of chapter fourteen, connects it in his mind with our Lord’s words to the Apostle Peter at the close of chapter thirteen? And yet, there is a very real connection. The Lord Jesus had been giving His last messages to His disciples. He had intimated that soon they would forsake Him and flee. He had told them that He was going away and for the present they could not come where He was to go. And in verse thirty-six of chapter thirteen we read:

*“Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.”*

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home to God by way of the cross and resurrection, and Peter could not follow immediately. But the Lord says, “Thou shalt follow Me afterwards.” Peter did not understand that, and he said to Him:

*“Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake.”*

*“Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice.”*

And then He immediately adds:

*“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”*

You see, the Lord Jesus is addressing these words, of course, to all His disciples, but directly—directly—to the disciple who was to deny Him in so short a time. And this is surely very comforting for our hearts. Peter was to fail the Lord—Jesus knew he would fail—but deep in Peter’s heart there was a fervent love for the Lord Jesus. And when he said, “I will lay down my life for Thy sake,” he meant every word of it. But he did not realize how untrustworthy his own heart was. It was a case of the spirit being willing, but the flesh weak. And Jesus knew something of the fearful discouragement that would roll over the soul of Peter when he awoke to the realization of the fact that he had been so utterly faithless in the hour of his Master’s need. In the very time that Jesus needed someone to stand up for Him and to say boldly, “Yes, I am one of His, and I can bear witness to the purity of His life and to the goodness of His ways”—at that time Peter, frightened by the soldiers gathered about, denied any knowledge of his Saviour. And, oh, the days and nights that would follow as he would feel that surely he must be

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utterly cast off, surely the Lord could never put any trust in him again! But if he remembered these words, what a comfort thy must have brought to his poor aching heart! For Jesus is practically saying, “I know all about it, Peter. I know how you are going to fail, but I want you to know this; in My Father’s house are many mansions, and you are going to share one of those mansions with Me some day. I am not going to permit you, Peter, to be utterly overcome. I am not going to permit you to go into complete apostasy. You will fall, but you will be lifted up again, and you will share with Me a place in the many mansions.”

When He says, “Let not your heart be troubled,” He does not mean, “Do not be exercised about your failure,” for He Himself sought to exercise the heart of Peter, and in a wonderful way restored him by the Sea of Galilee later on. But He means this: “Do not be cast down. Do not allow the enemy of your soul to make you feel there is no further hope, there is no opportunity for you.”

I wonder if I am speaking to someone this evening who has failed, perhaps, as Peter failed. Under the stress of circumstances you, too, have denied your Lord, denied Him in acts if not in words, and the adversary of your soul is saying to you now, “It is all up with you; your case is hopeless. You knew Christ once, but you have failed so miserably, He would never own you again.” Oh, let me assure you His interest in you is just as deep as it ever was. If you truly trusted Him as your Saviour, the fact that you failed so grievously, and the fact that you mourn over it, only emphasizes the truth that you belong to Him. Still He says, “Return, O backsliding children, unto Me; for I am married unto you”—not, “I am divorced from you.” And therefore He waits for you to come back and confess your failure and your sin, and He has promised complete restoration, for, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and

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just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” And some day for you, too, there will be a place in the Father’s house.

*“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”* You see, in the days gone by before Jesus came to them at all, the people of Israel did have faith in the one true and living God. Now they had never seen Him, and Jesus is saying to His disciples, “You have believed in God when you couldn’t see Him, now I am going away in a little while and you won’t be able to see Me, but I want you to trust Me just the same as when I was here. Just as you have believed in the unseen God through the years, I want you to put your faith in Me, the unseen Christ, after I have gone back to the Father.” Do we have that implicit trust and confidence in Him, realizing that He is deeply interested in every detail of our own lives? The Word says, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.” There is absolutely nothing that concerns His people that He Himself is not concerned about. And therefore He would have us put away all the stress and all the anxiety. He says, “Be not anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” “Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”

And then He adds, *“In My Father’s house are many mansions.”* “My Father’s house,” and by that of course He means Heaven, and He is speaking of a place, a place to which He was going, and a place into which some day He will take all His own. I often hear people say, “Heaven is a condition rather than a place.” Heaven is both a place and a condition. It is true we do not read a great deal about Heaven in the Bible. Somebody has said, “Heaven is the land of *no more*.” We have more in the Bible about what will not be in Heaven than about what will be there.

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Remember in the book of Revelation we read that there will be no more sin, there will be no more tears, there will be no more pain, there will be no more sorrow, there will be no more curse, there will be no more darkness, there will be no more distress of any kind in the Father's house. The Father's house is the place where Christ is, and that is the place to which the redeemed are going.

Some of you may have thought the expression here, "In My Father's house are many mansions," is rather peculiar. Somehow or other, the word *mansion* to most of us in the United States has an accustomed meaning that it did not originally have. When we see a great building we call that a mansion. But the word as originally used did not have that meaning at all. It had rather the meaning of an apartment, as we use that word today, a splendid apartment. So one building might have many mansions in it. And Jesus is telling us, "In My Father's house are many apartments, many resting-places." There is a place, an individual place, for every one of His own, all in that Father's house.

*"If it were not so, I would have told you."* What does He mean by that? The Jews had had a belief in a heaven of bliss after death, and Jesus said, "If you had been wrong in that, I would have corrected you." But because He didn't correct it but rather affirmed it, we know that it is true, that there is a glorious home beyond the skies for the redeemed which we shall share with Him by-and-by.

He adds, *"I go to prepare a place for you"* What does He mean by that? You see the mansions are different from what they were before He went back there. Before He went back to the Father's house, the sin question had never been settled. Before He went back to the Father's house, the veil had not been rent, the blood had not been

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sprinkled on the mercy-seat. So the saints of old went to Paradise on credit. They did not have the same blessed access into the immediate presence of God that the saints have now. We read in the Epistle to the Hebrews that we have now come to the spirits of just men made perfect. They were the spirits of just men of all the centuries before the cross; God had redeemed them and taken them to Paradise, but they were not yet made perfect. They could not be until the precious blood of Jesus was shed on the cross. Now having settled the sin question, He entered into the holiest with His own blood in antitypical fashion, sprinkled His own blood on the mercy-seat above, and now a place is prepared in the holiest for all of His own, and the spirits of just men of the past have been perfected and we who believe now are perfected forever. So we are all suited to that place to which we are going. "I go to prepare a place for you."

And then He said, "*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*" Now I know that a great many people think of this as a word in regard to death, and of course, when a believer dies, that believer goes to be with Christ. But we are never told in Scripture that in the hour of death Christ comes for His people. If we may draw an analogy from something our Lord said when He was here on earth, we gather that that is hardly true. We are told that a dear child of God was dying—he was a beggar, it is true. He was an outcast, lying at the rich man's gate, but he was a real son of Abraham. He had faith in the God of all grace. And the beggar died, we are told, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. Angels carried the poor beggar—poor no longer—into Paradise. What I rather gather from that, is that the last ministry of angels, who are ever keeping watch over the people of God,

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yonder in the Father's house, and His angels usher His saints into His presence.

But He is speaking of something different here. Death is the believer going to be with Christ. That is what the Scripture tells us—"Absent from the body, present with the Lord;" "To depart and be with Christ, which is far better." But a believer going home to be with Christ is spoken of as being unclothed, having laid his body aside. He is there in the presence of the Lord a glorified spirit, but he is there waiting for his redeemed body. When the Lord Jesus fulfils that which is spoken here in the fourteenth chapter of John, then believers will receive their glorified bodies and will be altogether like Him. This coming, referred to here, is developed for us more fully in the fourth chapter of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. There we read in verse thirteen:

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep"

—that is, saints whose bodies are sleeping in the graves but whose spirits are with Christ—

*"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"*

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This is the coming our Saviour refers to when He says: “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” It is at that coming that the expectation of our completed redemption will be fulfilled. In Romans eight the Apostle Paul tells us in verse nineteen:

*“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”*

Verses twenty-two and twenty-three:

*“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—*

What does he mean by that?

*—“to wit, the redemption of our body.”*

Our spirits have already been redeemed, we have already received the salvation of our souls, but we are waiting for the complete salvation of the body, the redemption of the body at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope” (Rom. 8:24).*

What hope is it then? The hope of the coming of our Lord. And to this He refers again in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, where we read in verse twenty:

*“For our conversation (really, citizenship) is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the*

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*working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself” (R.V.).*

This is the glorious event that will take place when the Lord comes back again, when He comes back for us.

There is the widest difference, you see, between this and the time when He is manifested as the Son of Man to deal in judgment with the godless world and eventually to set up His kingdom. This was a little secret the Lord was revealing to these apostles that night in the upper room. In the three Synoptic Gospels it was not mentioned. It was the Apostle Paul who was the chosen instrument to develop it, but it seems that the Lord Jesus, just before He went away, had a secret welling up in His heart, as it were, which He could not hold back any longer and He must tell them a little about it, so He says, “I am going away, but I am going to prepare a place for you. But if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you”—not, “I will send the death angel for you,” or any other angel, but “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.”

You see, He will never be satisfied until every one of His redeemed people is with Him in the glory in the Father’s house. His heart is yearning for that.

Now a word about the Father’s house. Notice it is the *Father’s house*, and the Father’s house is for all the Father’s children. We hear a great many strange things these days. Some people would try to tell us that it is only the deeply spiritual people of God that will be caught up with the Lord Jesus at His coming. When people talk like that, how little understanding they have of the Father’s heart! You think of a normal father or mother here on earth, with, say, eight or ten children, and that is quite a

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children. I pity the home, and pity the children where the father or the mother makes distinctions among their children. I think it is a sad thing when out of a number of children one perhaps occupies a special place in the heart of the father and the others are held at a distance. "Oh," but you say, "maybe one or two are naughty children. Of course the father couldn't love naughty children as much as he loves the good children." Is that true? Why, even the naughty children are so dear to the father's heart that they give him many sleepless nights as he thinks about their naughtiness. He loves them and truly longs to see them all that they ought to be. There is always a welcome for them at the father's house.

We need to remember, too, that in the Father's house above, there is no distinction. People often say to me, "Oh, if I can just get into Heaven and get a seat behind the door, I shall be satisfied. I know I don't deserve anything better."

My dear friend, you don't deserve to get there at all. I don't deserve to go there. But I am not going there because I deserve to go, but I am going to Heaven because I have been born again, and the Lord Jesus Christ is preparing a place for me, and the Father's house is for all the Father's children.

Another thing is this: There are no seats behind the door over yonder! I wish I could say it so loudly that everybody would get hold of it. There is nothing like that in the Word of God. There are no distinctions in the welcome that believers will have in the Father's house. I repeat, the Father's house has the same welcome for all the Father's children.

You say, "Well, but doesn't the Bible indicate some will

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have nothing to do with the welcome into the Father's house. The rewards especially have to do with the coming glorious kingdom, of course given in Heaven, given at the judgment-seat of Christ, but the differences are in the kingdom. For instance, look at the Second Epistle of Peter: "So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into—" Into what? Into heaven? No; it is not true that some people will get an abundant entrance into Heaven and other folk will not have anything like so warm and cordial a welcome. What does it mean? It says that some people have an entrance ministered unto them abundantly. Yes, but into what? "Into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Do not confuse, or confound, in your thinking, the Father's house with the everlasting kingdom. The Father's house is the home of the saints; the everlasting kingdom is the sphere of service and rewards, where through all eternity, first in the Millennium and then in the ages to come, we shall be serving our blessed Lord who has prepared a place for us in the Father's house. Will you allow me to use a very old illustration? Suppose here is a good old-fashioned family, a mid-Victorian family with ten or a dozen children. Now the children are scattered all over. Christmas is drawing near, and there is going to be a house-warming. The family is gathering, and the invitations have gone out to all the children to come home for Christmas. Very well, they are all coming in. Some are coming by automobile, some by Pullman coach, some by airplane, some by bus, and perhaps one is even obliged to come on foot. But there they come from all over, coming home to the father's house for Christmas.

I can just imagine the great table loaded with all the wonderful dainties kind hands have been preparing. I can imagine Father and Mother coming in for a last look, to

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Father's place. Here is where the great big platter will be with a couple of big fifteen-pound turkeys, and all the rest of the good things that have been prepared are there on the table. Father and Mother come in, and Mother says, "Now, Father, I have put Bob right beside you."

(Bob is out in the world, he is a senator, he has made a great place for himself, but he is just Bob at home.)

"And here is the place for Mary."

(I think Mary is the president of a woman's college or something like that. You know, she is very dignified when she gets on her cap and gown, but at home she is just Mary, that's all.)

"Then here is the place for Tom." (Let's see, who is Tom? I think Tom is a general in the army, but he is just Tom at home.)

"And here is a place for Anna."

(Anna, who is Anna? Perhaps she is a physician and very distinguished in her profession, and she is Dr. Anna outside, but she is just Anna at home, you know.)

And so down the line she goes. And Mother says, "I will put a place right here by my right hand for Jim."

(Who is Jim? Well, Jim is the ne'er-do-well of the family. Poor Jim! He has tried a number of things.)

I generally think of Jim as an inventor. He has invented so many different things, but there is always one little gadget that doesn't work right. If he could only get things going, there would be millions in it, but he has used up everything he had and everything he could borrow, and still he gets nowhere. Poor Jim!

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Jim lives in the near-by city in a little hall room with a window that looks out on a well, where he can't get any fresh air, and he looks it, too, he is so white and wan. He wouldn't be home at all if Mother hadn't slipped in a twenty-dollar bill to get an extra suit of clothes so he would be presentable enough to come. And maybe one of the brothers sent over money for his bus fare. I can imagine his father and mother talking about it. And I can imagine the father saying, "You know, Mother, there's Jim— I don't know whether we had better let Jim sit at the table with the rest of them. Our family is so distinguished and have done so well and Jim has failed so miserably. Wouldn't it be better to put Jim in the kitchen? He could eat with the servants out in the kitchen."

And Mother flares up, "What is that? Jim shall have the very best we can give him! I want him to know if there is any place on earth where he is welcome it is his father's house and his mother's house. And Father, I want you to watch now when you are serving the turkey and put on an extra slab of white meat for Jim. The rest of them get turkey every little while, and probably Jim has been living on hamburgers since he was here last. And then put a big extra spoonful of the dressing on Jim's plate. Jim always likes that, that chestnut and sage and oyster dressing. Give Jim an extra spoonful, and I will look after the rest!"

And I can imagine by the time that plate gets around to Jim, it is just loaded high.

You see, at home in the father's house they are all welcome, and they are all treated as well as the father and mother can treat them.

But by-and-by the big day is over and they are separating, and Mary goes back to the college, and Bob goes back to

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Washington to the senate. And Anna goes back to her practice in the big city, and Tom goes back to the army, and so on. By-and-by poor Jim goes back to his little room yonder in the city. But I see the mother giving him a last goodbye kiss, and what is that she is slipping into his hand? It is a fifty-dollar bill. And off he goes, Jim, you know, with such happy memories of the father's house!

That is only a very, very human illustration, but perhaps it will show what I mean when I say that the Father's house is one thing and the kingdom is another. The Father's house is the home of all the Father's children. But we make our own places in the kingdom by our own devotedness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you get the difference? So there is a place for all in the Father's house.

About the way there. Will everybody get to the Father's house? I wish that they would. Richard Baxter used to pray, "Oh, God, for a full Heaven and an empty hell!" But alas, alas, many persist in rebellion against God and so that prayer can never be answered! There is only one way to the Father's house. And what is that way? I have had people say to me so many times, "We are traveling different roads, but we will all get to Heaven at last." No, no; I don't find that in my Bible. My Bible says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (**Prov. 14:12**), and it warns me against taking the broad way that leads to destruction and tells me to take the narrow way that leads to life.

And so here Jesus says, "And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him—" Thomas was honest and he was never afraid just to blurt out all the truth. He said, "We don't know what You are talking about. We have to confess we are ignorant, and we don't know where You are going, and how can we know the

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way?”

Jesus said unto him—and, oh, dear friends, you get what He said, for it is for you as well as for Thomas—“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.”

Oh, don’t talk about many ways. There is only one—Jesus is the only way. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus. Have you come to Him? Are you trusting Him? If you are, you are on the way to the Father’s house, and now you can wait with equally glad expectation for the hour of His return, for He said, “If I go, I will come again and receive you unto Myself.” When will He come? We can’t tell that, but we are waiting for Him day by day.

*“I know not when the Lord will come  
Or at what hour He may appear,  
Whether at midnight or at morn,  
Or at what season of the year.*

*I only know that He is near,  
And that His voice I soon shall hear.  
I only know that He is near,  
And that His voice I soon shall hear.”*

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