

# Words of Peace & Truth

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**WORDS OF PEACE & TRUTH**  
*(Esther 9:30; see also Zechariah 8:19)*  
**NO. 91: JANUARY-APRIL 2014**

**Editorial**

As this issue goes to print spring seems to be rushing at us here in Southern England. A variety of flowers are blooming and green foliage is appearing on many species of tree; some trees are covered with blossom.

This reminds me of the parable that the Lord Jesus spoke: “Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand” (Luke 21:29-31). Believers on the Lord Jesus have not to wait for unfulfilled prophecies concerning Israel and adjacent nations to be fulfilled before they rise to meet their Bridegroom; even so, it seems that the stage is being set for those things to happen. Moreover, not only political but also moral, spiritual and technological trends all point us to the return of the Lord Jesus.

James exhorts us, “stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (5:8). For some, the coming of the Lord will mean deliverance from severe persecution; for others, release from bodily or mental affliction, or from family or financial problems, or from other difficulties or burdens. But for all who love Him, the chief joy will surely be in seeing *Himself*.

In the meantime, let us all be waiting, watching and working for Him.

*G.S.B.*

**Editor:** *Geoffrey S. Bacon, 58 Byron Avenue, Coulsdon, Surrey, England. CR5 2JR*

**Tel:** 020-8660.2915

**E-Mail:** [bacon707@btinternet.com](mailto:bacon707@btinternet.com)

**Website:** [www.wordsofpeaceandtruth.co.uk](http://www.wordsofpeaceandtruth.co.uk)

## **THE PRESENT EFFECT OF WAITING FOR CHRIST**

There are two things which constitute the joy of a Christian, which are his strength on the road, and the object constantly before his heart. First, present communion and fellowship with God the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Secondly, the hope of the coming of the Lord. And these two cannot be separated without loss to our souls, for we cannot have all the profit without both of them.

If we are not looking for the coming of the Lord, there is nothing that can separate us in the same way from this present evil world; neither will Christ Himself be so much the object before the soul, nor yet shall we be able, in the same measure, to apprehend the mind and counsels of God about the world, if there be not this waiting for His Son from heaven.

Again, if this hope be looked at apart from present communion and fellowship with God, we shall not have present power, the heart being enfeebled by the mind being too much occupied and overborne by the evil around. For we cannot be really looking for God's Son from heaven, without at the same time seeing the world's utter rejection of Him, seeing that the world itself is going wrong, its wise men having no wisdom – all is going on to judgment; the principles of evil are loosening all bands. The soul thus becomes oppressed, and the heart sad; but if, through grace, the Christian is in present communion and fellowship with God, his soul stands steady, and is calm and happy before God, because there is a fund of blessing in Him which no circumstances can ever touch or change. The evil tidings are heard, the sorrow is seen, but the Christian's heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, and this carries him far above every circumstance.

Brethren, we all want this; for to walk steadily with God we need both this fellowship and this hope. I do not believe a Christian can have his heart scripturally right, unless he is looking for God's Son from heaven; for there could be no such thing as attempting to set the world right if its sin in rejecting Christ were fully seen. Moreover, there never will be a correct judgment formed of the character of the world until that crowning sin be apprehended by the soul. To a Christian who is looking and waiting for Christ to come from heaven, Christ Himself is unspeakably more the object before the soul. It is not that I shall get to heaven and be happy, but that the Lord Himself is coming from heaven for me, and for all the Church. It is this which gives its character to the joy of the saint; so Christ Himself says, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Where I find my delight, there shall you find yours also, I with you, and you with me – forever with the Lord.

You may think to find good or produce good in man, but you will never find waiting for Christ in man. In the world the first Adam may be cultivated, but it is the first Adam still; the last Adam will never be found there, being rejected by the world. And it is the looking for this rejected Lord which stamps the whole character and walk of the saints.

Then again there is another thing connected with my waiting for God's Son from heaven. I have not yet got the Person with me I love, and while waiting for Him I am going through the world tired and worn with the spirit and character of everything around me. The more I am in communion with God, the more keenly shall I feel the spirit of the world to be a weariness to me, although God still upholds my soul in fellowship and communion with Himself.

Therefore, Paul says, in 2 Thess. 1, “to you who are troubled, rest with us.” I get rest to my spirit now in waiting for Christ, knowing that when He comes He will have everything His own way; for the coming of the Lord, which will be trouble to the world, will be to the saints full and everlasting rest. Still it is not that we are to be “weary and faint in our minds;” it is not right to be weary of the service and conflict. Oh, no! Rather let me be victorious every day, but still it is not rest to be fighting. However, when walking with God, it is not so much thinking of combat, as joying in God Himself. I shall know it all better when I am in the glory; my soul will be enlarged, and more capable of enjoying what God really is; but it is the same kind of joy that I have now, as I shall have when He comes to be glorified in His saints, only greater in degree.

And if this joy in God is now in my soul in power, it hides the world from me altogether, and becomes a spring of love to those in the world; for though I may be tired of the combat, still I feel there are people in the world that need the love which I enjoy and desire that they should possess (it is the joy of what God is for me that sustains me and carries me on through all the conflict), so that our souls will be exercised in both the fellowship and the hope. Thus if I look for Christ's coming apart from this fellowship and communion with God, I shall be oppressed, and shall not go on steadily and properly. When the love of God fills my heart, it flows out towards all those that have need of it, towards saints and sinners according to their need; for if I feel the exercise of the power of this love in my heart, I shall be going out to serve others, as it is the power of this love that enables me to go through the toil and labour of service, from that attachment to Christ which leads to service, although through suffering for His sake. If my soul is

wrapped up in the last Adam, attachment to Christ puts its right stamp upon all that is of the first Adam.

When this love has led out into active service, then the conflict, doubtless, will be found. In 2 Cor. 1 there is present blessing in the midst of trial; but in 2 Thess. 1 it is tribulation, and not rest out of it till the Lord come – “That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.” In 2 Cor. 1:3,4 there is present blessing in the midst of the trial – “who comforteth us in all our tribulation” – so that if the sufferings for Christ's sake be ours, there is, at the same time, the comforting of God in the soul. How rich a spring of blessing is this in return for this poor little trouble of mine! I get God pouring into my soul the revelation of Himself. I get God communicating Himself to my soul, for it is really that. I find it to be a present thing; it comes home to me, to my heart, this very joy of God – God delighting in me, and I in God. He identifies Himself with those who suffer for Him.

If, therefore, the expectation of Christ and His constraining love lead us out into service, in the desire that others may share our blessing, and thereby bring us into trials or persecutions, how rich and sustaining are the consolations ministered to our hearts. “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ” (2 Cor. 1:5). May the Lord ever fill our souls with the sense of His own presence, and keep our hearts under the present power of waiting for His coming.

J. N. Darby

*Extracted from “The Christian Friend,” Vol. 15 (1888)*

## INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

When we are speaking of persons both the inside and the outside are important.

Starting with Christ; he is image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). This we might say is the outside. It is what is seen. That is the idea of an image. However, in the case of Christ, His being the image of God was not just a superficial thing. Behind the image was a great reality. *In Him* all the fulness [of the Godhead] was pleased to dwell (Colossians 1:19).

When we come to ourselves, the way we obtain salvation has both an inward and outward aspect. It is said: “The word is near thee, in thy mouth (the outward thing) and in thy heart (the inward thing): that is, the word of faith, which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth (the outward thing) Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart (the inward thing) that God has raised him from among [the] dead, thou shalt be saved. For with [the] heart is believed to righteousness; and with [the] mouth confession made to salvation” (Romans 10:8-10).

If we think of fruitbearing, we find that in the parable of the sower, the seed that fell by the wayside was eaten by the birds. It did not produce fruit because it never took root. The sowing was abortive. The seed that fell on the rocky places did not have any real root so that when the sun came up it dried up. In the first case we may say there was no reality and no profession, but in the second case there was some profession which collapsed when tested. There was nothing real underneath. In the third case there may have been some reality underneath but there was defect on the outside because the plant was choked by thorns, representing external factors that press upon us. In the last case there was both root and fruit (the inside – the unseen; and the outside – the seen). We need therefore to have a solid spiritual base inside, but the

object is that there should be fruit for God in our lives; fruit that will be evident to all (Matthew 13:1-23; Luke 8:4-15).

Then there is the parable of the two houses in Luke's Gospel. The man that built on the ground without a foundation represents a person who has no solid base in himself. He is all for what is outward and his profession will collapse when tested. The man, however, who dug and went deep and built his house upon the rock had a solid base and his profession withstood the storm. He was not one who just made a profession. He had a solid foundation underneath. (Luke 6:48,49)

In the Old Testament the law dealt largely with what was outward: what persons should do or not do. The first nine commandments related to acts of the outward man. Only the last; "Thou shalt not covet" dealt with what was inward. Paul tells us that it was this one that found him out (Romans 7:7,8). The Pharisees in the time of Christ were busy making an outward show of religious zeal but inwardly they were all wrong. Christ could see through them and made it quite clear that their righteousness was an outward show and not acceptable to God. He said: "For I say unto you, that unless your righteousness surpass [that] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of the heavens" (Matthew 5:20). Again he said: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within they are full of rapine and intemperance" (Matthew 23:25). This does not mean that Christ was only concerned with what we are inside because He went on to say: "Blind Pharisee, make clean first the inside of the cup and of the dish, that their outside also may become clean" (Matthew 23:26).

It may be noted that though the commandments and ordinances in the Old Testament almost entirely concerned the outward man, there is much in the Psalms and Prophets which show how necessary it is for us to be inwardly right as well as

outwardly doing what is in accordance with the law. For instance we have: “Behold, thou wilt have truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden [part] thou wilt make me to know wisdom” (Psalm 51:6) and “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10). Again we have: “Wash thy heart, Jerusalem, from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?” (Jeremiah 4:14) and “Turn to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God” (Joel 2:12,13).

The New Testament stresses what is inward, though what is outward is not neglected. In Romans 2:28,29 we have: “For he is not a Jew who [is] one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in flesh; but he [is] a Jew [who is so] inwardly; and circumcision, of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God.” It was necessary for Paul to say this because the Jews were concerned so much with what was outward, in particular, their religious heritage which they inherited by natural birth. Faith, which the New Testament makes so much of, is an inward matter and stands in contrast to works which are outward: “For ye are saved by grace, through faith; ... not on the principle of works, that no one might boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9). However, this does not mean that Paul in saying this denigrated works, because he goes on to say in verse 10: “For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works.”

If we turn to James we find him pointing out that works are necessary, because faith being an inward matter no one can see (save God) that we have faith unless we have works that correspond to our faith. James is not denigrating faith. In fact there are more references to faith in James than in almost all of the books in the New Testament of the same size as can be seen if one consults a concordance. What James says is: “But some one will

say, *Thou* hast faith and *I* have works. Shew me thy faith without works, and *I* from my works will shew thee my faith” (James 2:18). Faith being inward, it is not visible to those we come in contact with; there must be works (which are outward) to demonstrate that there is actually real faith within.

Today, in some circles, in contrast to the Pharisees who were concerned with what was outward, there is a tendency so to concentrate on what is inward, that outward things, such as the way we dress, are denigrated. The New Testament does not leave these things out of account, as we shall see. The inward side is what we have in our hearts, including our thoughts, but the outward side covers what we say, what we do and our behaviour generally. The outward things can often be done by persons who have no real faith, such as submitting to baptism and partaking of the Lord's supper. It may be noted, however, that the examples given by James of works that demonstrate faith are things that could hardly have been done by persons who had no faith (see James 2:21-26).

Scripture is often very comprehensive. For instance we have: “Let us purify ourselves from *every* pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear” (2 Corinthians 7: 1). Notice the word *every*. Both pollutions of the flesh and spirit are covered. Pollutions of the flesh may be dirty habits such as smoking, whereas pollutions of the spirit may arise from the reading of bad literature and so on. The former affect our bodies particularly (the outward man) and may cause disease, whereas the latter affect our minds (the inward man) and may go on to affect our practice.

However, when thinking of the outward side of things we need not only think of what we say and what we do (both of which are of great importance), but also of where we go, whom we associate with and how we conduct ourselves. It also covers the way we do things. It covers our deportment and dress and the way we present ourselves to others. We should certainly not try to be

what we are not inwardly, but what we are outwardly should truly reflect what we are inwardly.

Leaving aside the matter of what we say and do (an enormous subject in itself) let us just note a few passages which show that how we present ourselves is important. Dress is important, particularly in the case of women (1 Peter 3:1-7). The matter of the covering of the head in the case of women is also important (1 Corinthians 11:2-16). Without going deeply into the matter now it should be noted that if this section is abandoned as of no importance then what about all the other injunctions in 1 Corinthians? Are we to pick and choose what scriptures we should apply to ourselves? Further, it is to be noted that the teaching as to the covering is connected with the matter of headship (not lordship) and the place that women have in the scheme of things. It is clear that the ignoring of the matter of the covering is in accord with the setting aside today of the matter of headship as set out in verse three of 1 Corinthians 11. The setting aside of the truth of headship, which carries the idea of direction, is one of the great evils in the Western world today.

Our associations are also important. Jehoshaphat failed in this matter as we can see from 1 Kings 22, particularly verse 4; also 2 Chronicles 19:2 and 20:35-37. The Psalmist could say: "I am the companion of all that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts" (Psalm 119:63). With whom should we associate? Paul tells us it should be with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Timothy 2:22). Christ went in his *service* amongst tax gatherers and sinners, but His *home* was with his disciples, so that He said: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). The previous verse shows that it was the apostles to whom he said this, not Pharisees or other unbelievers. Further, it was Martha, her sister Mary and Lazarus that Jesus loved and with whom He found congenial company when here on earth (John 11:5).

Though we may be able to put on a front that masks a bad state within we may also show by careless behaviour that we are wrong within. Let us not lose sight of the fact that without being right externally we cannot hope to have a good effect on others, whether believers or unbelievers (1 Peter 3:1-4).

*Gordon W. Simmonds, October 1999.*

**“He led them on safely, so that they feared not”**

(Psalm 78:53)

TOUCHING and tender words these, stimulating our faith and stirring our renewed affections.

**“HE”**

“He led them.” Who? The only One who could do it, who would do it. The One who in love and righteousness redeemed them from “the iron furnace” of Egypt – from its hard bondage, its misery, its doom. The One who saved them by power, and with an outstretched arm, when hemmed in at Pi-hahiroth – “the gate of liberty” – by the craft and might of the foe, and who divided the waters of death and brought them triumphantly through. The One who in grace, and yet in holiness, responded to their grateful desire to make His habitation amongst them, and “who brought them out that,” true to His purpose, “he might bring them in.” “*He* led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies. And he brought them to the border of His sanctuary, *even* to this mountain, *which* His right hand had purchased. He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.” Such was His grace to them, and in it we can see a faint forecast of His grace to us.

“HE *LED*.”

He did not *drive*. “I *drew* them with cords of a man, with bands of love.” “I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms” (*Hosea 11:3,4*). Thus He delights to lead. True, He may have to use “the bit and the bridle,” but circumstances and chastisement are not the normal mode of His love. He would keep us together as one flock, and lead us on, near to Him and near to one another, by the attractiveness of His Person. But to this end we must have no will of our own. It is essential in one who is led to yield himself to Him who leads. Alas! too often we are like “a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.” The yoke of implicit subjection to His Father’s will was never galling to Christ when He was here. Let it not be irksome to us. In His submission even to death we discover the secret of divine guidance, as well as of perfect rest and true progress and blessing.

“HE LED *THEM*.”

Yes – *them*. Ignorant, obstinate, unbelieving they often were, yet He still led them. Why did He not give them up? Because He loved them. Thus He led them from the brickfields of Egypt to the cornfields of Canaan. “When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt” (*Hosea 11:1*). Why did He love Israel? Ah, why does He love us? We cannot tell. “We love Him, *because* He first loved us;” but there is no such “*because*” attached to His love to us. It is self-moved; its motive and origin are found, not in its object, but in itself – in the fathomless depths of the heart of the great and eternal Lover!

“HE LED THEM *ON*.”

Progress; yes, progress. Little, perhaps, but yet some. Many a slip, a slide, a stumble did they make, “but he led them *on*.” True, they wandered for forty years, as another has said, “to put Egypt out of their hearts and Canaan in;” but eventually, when they had learnt the lesson of the brazen serpent, “the children of Israel set

forward and they journeyed ... toward the sunrising.” Thus “He brought forth his people with joy, *and* his chosen with gladness; and gave them the lands of the heathen, and they inherited the labour of the people; that they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws” (*Psa. 105:43-45*). He led them *on*; He leads us *on*. Do we not crave to be in the van of those whom He is leading on? Aye, surely! How is it to be brought about and maintained? We must have the eye on Him who is the Leader of our salvation. Thus shall we “keep rank” with our brethren and press forward. Some one has said that one negative proof of being where the Lord would have us be is the utter confusion we get into as soon as our eyes are off the Lord Himself. Order, unity, concord, quietness, assurance, progress in love and truth and in doctrine and life – everything that is good and holy results from following the Lord.

“HE LED THEM ON *SAFELY*”

“The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him” (*Deuteronomy 33:12*). Amalek might oppose Israel. “Great nations and mighty kings, Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan,” might block their way. Balaam might try to curse them and teach Balak, and perhaps Moab, to spread a snare for their feet, and Midian to reduce them. The lion might roar, the wolf raven, the serpent hiss “in that great and terrible wilderness;” but “in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (*Isaiah 63: 9*). Yes, He led them on safely,

“*SO THAT THEY FEARED NOT.*”

Why should they fear? What or whom had they to fear? Omnipotent power – the Lord of *hosts* – was with them. Infinite *grace* – the God of Jacob – was their refuge. Why should we fear? Does the future daunt us? Is the outlook gloomy? “The Lord is near.” The Shepherd’s sleepless eye is upon us, His hand and heart

are both for us. Has He been disciplining us collectively of late? “Let us not lose heart in well doing,” but “hear the rod and who hath appointed it” (*Micah 6:9*). Feeble, faulty and sometimes faithless we may be, but He never gives His people up, nor does He ever give up His purposes of love concerning them. He still gathers us, still guards us, still guides us, and leads us on safely so that we fear not.

“Jesus, Lord of glory,  
As we breast the tide,  
Whisper Thou the story  
Of the other side.”

S. J. B. Carter (1858-1938)

*Extracted from “The Believer’s Friend,” Vol. I [1909].*

## **THE PRAYERS OF JABEZ AND EPAPHRAS.**

(1 Chronicles 4:10; Colossians 4:12)

WHO that has read the two brief accounts of Jabez and Epaphras recorded in the Holy Scriptures would not be stirred to more earnest and fervent prayer? The Spirit of God has brought before us in a few words the devotedness of these godly men. Although many centuries lay between the days in which they each lived, still both were men of prayer. Jabez lived in a day when the light was not shining like it did in the days of Epaphras. The Holy Ghost had not come to take up His abode in the hearts of believers, shedding abroad the love of God there; it was not the time, then, for the Spirit of God to form a company upon earth. The day had not arrived when these things should be revealed; still the will of God was made known by holy prophets, and to men such as Jabez that which was revealed was appreciated, so that they could rejoice in Jehovah their God, while the sorrows of others were multiplied because they hastened after other gods (Psa. 16:4). Even through

the darkest ages faithfulness and devotedness were seen in one and another. How full of deep meaning was the desire of this devoted son of Judah! “And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chron. 4:10). Although it was individual, and his own blessing was in view, and that of an earthly character too, still is there not in it an application to us in our more favoured day? We most assuredly need to have our own souls brought under the power and influence of divine things if others are in any way to be affected through us; in other words, we must first be affected before we can in any measure affect others. How much there is about us which is only surface work: the things of God have not taken very deep root in us! We need to have spiritual vision to perceive the evil around us; we need to be enlarged in our thoughts with respect to God, and separated in heart and ways from the entire course of things here. May we not draw upon the resource we have in God, and cry to Him in earnest and believing prayer? He will surely grant us our request. These are sleepy, half-hearted days, and many are getting out of the way. May we know and realise divine support; in getting before God in prayer He would draw near to us, our difficulties would be overcome and we should perceive the gracious hand of our God in a more definite way. Instead of bearing our own burdens we should cast them upon Him who careth for us.

The Spirit of God has been pleased to bring before us another striking example of a man of prayer in Epaphras. He evidently had a great care for the saints of God. The apostle speaks of him thus: “Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col. 4:12). How valuable such men are to the church of God! We get the first mention of him in Colossians 1:7-8, “a faithful minister of Christ.”

He was one who could perceive in the saints love in the Spirit. Thus it always is that when we are near the Lord and in communion we can appreciate in the saints that which is the fruit of the Spirit's work. When that is so we are preserved from a fault-finding spirit, to which, alas! we are so prone. But Epaphras had a great zeal for the saints: blessed state to be in! His heart was enlarged, and thus his mouth was open in prayer to God about them. We doubtless value the ministry of the word, and those whom God has raised up to minister to His lambs and sheep, and would esteem them highly for their works' sake; for without the gracious ministry of the Spirit our souls would be lean and barren. As for ourselves, we would not overlook nor neglect the important study of the scriptures if we are to be fed and nourished. All these things have their place in the furtherance and education of God's beloved people. But prayer is the privilege of all. May the blessed Lord keep us from distraction in the present state of things, that not only individually but in a collective way we may experience more spiritual power and support from God. E.J.E.

*Extracted from "The Believer's Friend," Vol.II [1910].*

### **Heaven or Earth?**

Difficulties are apt to discourage us if we do not see the true character of the race we are exhorted to run, and if we do not know the gracious use which God makes of the attendant exercises. The first thing we need is to be assured that we are in the right path, and then it is a great cheer to know that whatever opposition comes in the way is discipline for us, and is "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness."

A man does not run very fast when he is not quite sure that he is in the right road. He is apt to be looking aside or behind, and every unexpected obstacle raises a doubt in his mind. The Hebrew believers had taken what was to them an entirely new road in becoming Christians; they were breaking away from associations

of long standing and divine origin, and the only outward result was that they were plunged into difficulties and persecutions. Under such circumstances it became needful for God to encourage them by reminding them that the path of faith was no new thing. The eleventh chapter proved this. It is the history of men and women who trod a path in which were difficulties and dangers of every kind, and who in different ways *gave up the earth*. They accepted strangership, reproach, sufferings, and death in this world, because they looked for “a better country, that is, a heavenly.” All this is brought out as encouragement; it is as much as to say, “You see you are on the right road; now, *go on*.” When you are sure you are on the right road, the more difficulties there are in it the more anxious you are to shorten the journey, so you *run*. The Spirit of God calls upon us to “run with endurance the race that is set before us” (*Hebrews 12:1*).

It has often been said that the first question with a soul is, Heaven or Hell? We can well understand John Bunyan’s pilgrim running to the wicket gate with his fingers in his ears lest any voice should persuade him to turn back. It was heaven or hell with him; his eternal weal or woe was at stake. I dare say some of us run rather fast at that stage of our experience. But farther on in his journey, when the pilgrim came to the hill Difficulty and found the arbour, he settled down and went to sleep. The second question with the soul is, Heaven or Earth? Many are glad enough to escape hell who are not at all anxious to get away from earth. They settle down and go to sleep instead of running.

Of course no one would *run* to a place he did not want to reach, but if we are partakers of the heavenly calling (*Hebrews 3:1*), and know the heavenly Priest, our hearts are attracted to heaven; we have links with heaven, and heaven is an attractive place to us. I do not believe anyone is in the race here spoken of (*Heb.12*) who does not like heaven better than earth. The Son of God has come down from heaven that He might throw the golden

chain of divine love round our hearts and link us with Himself for ever. And He is now in heaven to attract our affections thitherward. Heaven is a most attractive place to everyone whose affections are set upon Christ, and such are all eager to run the race which has heaven for its goal. This race is not, as some suppose, the race of life; it is a moral journey – a race from earth to heaven – and those who are in it have turned their faces to heaven, and they want to get morally away from the earth and nearer to heaven.

The first indication that one has entered upon this race is the discovery that certain things are a hindrance to us; we begin to feel the “weights.” Some believers do not seem to have any “weights”; you never see them laying anything aside. The fact is, they have never made a start in the race. A man who was sitting still might have a heavy weight in his pocket without being conscious of it, but if he began to run he would soon feel it and want to lay it aside. The longer and faster you run, the more sensitive you become to “weights.” ...

The motive power for all this lies in “looking off unto Jesus. If a Christian surrenders or lays aside anything without an adequate divine motive, he will either secretly hanker after it, and probably ere long return to it, or he will take credit to himself for having given it up and become self-righteous and spiritually proud. A certain school of religious teachers at the present day makes much of ‘surrender’ as the way to attain blessing, but it ends in *self-sufficiency*, because the only motive that is presented for it is the acquisition of a better spiritual state, or power for service, or something of that kind. A *divine motive and attraction* is needed if souls are to be drawn into the race and prepared to surrender things in a truly spiritual way, and this divine motive and attraction is an Object outside ourselves altogether. It is CHRIST IN GLORY.”

*Extracted from “The Way of Holiness” in the volume “Spiritual Blessings,” by C.A. Coates (1862-1945)*

## A PLEA FOR SPONTANEITY

Much that takes place in the world around us today has been planned and rehearsed beforehand, and there are, no doubt, activities which need to be approached in this way. A wedding is a good example of this, or a military operation. But when a politician, in response to a simple question, reads from a script that has been previously prepared, probably by a speech writer, are we getting his own true feeling or simply a trotting out of the party line, or what is considered expedient to say in the circumstances? Or when an announcement is made on behalf of a commercial company in response to some occurrence or claim, are we just hearing a stock answer? In contrast, it is refreshing when you feel that what you are hearing is spontaneous, sincere and from the heart.

More importantly for us as Christians, from where do our words and actions come? Do they spring from the working within us of life which is according to God? Charles A. Coates remarked that “outward correctness can be imitated, but the spontaneity of life cannot.” At that fountain of Jacob’s outside Sychar the Lord Jesus spoke to the woman of a “fountain of water, springing up into eternal life” (John 4:14) and a helpful note to the Darby Translation (verse 6) distinguishes between the word used for the well, in which the spring was, and the word which he renders as “fountain,” used also “for what springs up as life in the renewed man.” Oh, that we might know more of this!

It is only the working of life that can produce fruit; mere effort cannot do it, though we do of course need to respond to the exhortation of the Lord Jesus: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me” (John 15:4). Abiding in Christ no doubt involves that we avoid things that would interrupt our communion with Him, that would grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). More positively, we need to be occupied with

what is good and nourishing – what we find in the Holy Scriptures and in Him of whom they speak, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot, of course, avoid spontaneous reactions. If the telephone rings, or an unexpected visitor calls at our door, or someone puts a proposal to us, we will give an immediate reaction, and this may vary according to our state of mind just previously. How important it is to live in close communion with our Lord and Saviour so that we react rightly when such unforeseen situations arise!

Such circumstances often occur in the course of everyday life but how sensitive are we to divine prompting when we are more specifically engaged in Christian fellowship and service? Much that has been associated with Christianity through the centuries consists in the recitation of oft-repeated statements, confessions and prayers, or in the repetition of observances, ceremonies and rituals. But such actions can be performed without there being any spiritual life in the devotee. This danger, however, is not restricted to those ecclesiastical systems which are notable for formality and ceremony. In simpler modes of Christian gathering and worship it is all too easy to pick up and repeat the kinds of expression often used, or to do things simply because they are expected. Again, even where it is claimed that the gathered believers are depending on the Spirit of God, they may pre-plan the occasion for fear of what might otherwise happen, or the speaker may write out his entire sermon beforehand for fear of losing his way.

I am not making a case for rules or prohibitions as to how we proceed, but how much do we really experience the direction of the Holy Spirit in the things of God? (See 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.) Of course, I may *claim* to be speaking the word of the Lord or to be acting by the Holy Spirit when it is nothing of the kind, but the misuse of liberty should not be a reason for taking it away and replacing it by man's administration; rather, it should humble us and drive us closer to the Lord.

But let us consider how spontaneity can be expressed in various situations. Firstly, let us see it in *the path of discipleship*. In John's Gospel chapter 1 we hear John the Baptist say (v. 36) "Behold the Lamb of God!" and see two of his disciples go off, following Jesus. This was not a matter of human arrangement but the spontaneous result of their attention having been directed to the Lord Jesus. They were evidently *attracted* by Jesus. At a later date, when "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with" Jesus, Peter responded to the Lord's challenge "Will ye also go away" by saying "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:66-68). He and those for whom he spoke (excepting Judas) had their hearts anchored in Christ. How is it with us? Are we simply maintaining a Christian profession, or are we following Christ because of what we have found in Him?

Then surely when we have learned something of who Christ is it induces *worship*. When the man who had been blind apprehended that Jesus was the Son of God "he worshipped Him" (John 9:38). Again the sight of the resurrected Christ produced worship (Matthew 28:17), as did the experience of seeing Him ascend into heaven (Luke 24:52). Do *we* worship the Lord Jesus because we have had a fresh view of Him in His greatness and glory? What an opportunity we have for this when we remember Him in the breaking of bread! It was not an occasion for the Lord's Supper at Emmaus but nevertheless the Holy Spirit caused Luke to record that "He was known of them in breaking of bread" (Luke 24:35). As we put other considerations out of our minds and concentrate with the help of the Holy Spirit on what the bread and cup mean, does the Lord Jesus not come before us in a fresh and living way so as to produce adoration and praise from our hearts?

But then one great work of the Lord Jesus is to satisfy the desire of His Father to have those who "worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). In Hebrews chapter 2 the Lord Jesus says "I

will declare Thy name unto My brethren; in the midst of the church [*or assembly*] will I sing praise to Thee.” When a pianist strikes the notes of a piano they respond instantly to his touch. How is it with us? Do we respond to the touch of Christ as He leads praise and worship to His Father, who is our Father also through grace (John 20:17)? We often hear of ‘worship leaders’ nowadays, but surely the Lord Jesus only should lead our worship. He only is the “Minister of the sanctuary” (Hebrews 8:2) and it is our privilege to respond to His leading in the power of the Holy Spirit, by whom we cry “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15).

Similarly, when we are assembled for *prayer* (that is to say, when the emphasis is more on our needs and requests), may our supplications be expressive of the real desires of our hearts. F.E. Raven said: “People come to a meeting and seem to be casting about as to what to pray for; they have nothing to say. When we come together we ought to come prepared.” Surely we should come to a prayer meeting not simply because it is a fixture but because we are carrying things in our hearts that we want to bring before God alongside our fellow-believers.

Let us, too, pray in faith and in the power of the Holy Spirit (Jude 20). Even during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, a Protestant, some Christians who felt that they could not continue in the State Church with a clear conscience were imprisoned, and even hanged. One of them (Greenwood) is on record as averse to the prayer book, saying, “Shall we think that God had left His people so destitute of His grace that they could not find words in which to express their desires, but had to be taught like children line by line?” Prayer, he said, was “a confident demanding which faith makes through the Holy Spirit according to the will of God.”\*

\* *Extracted from “The Christian Testimony through the Ages” by T.W. Carron.*

Besides meetings arranged specifically for prayer there are other times when prayer is appropriate, for example to open or close a meeting or during the 'open' part of a burial occasion. The question arises as to whether or not I am ready to respond to such needs and opportunities.

Then in 1 Corinthians 14 Paul speaks of meetings for *prophecy*. Prophecy is not limited to the foretelling of coming events, although we cannot rule that out; we read that Agabus prophesied first a coming famine (Acts 11:28) and then of what would happen to the apostle Paul at Jerusalem (Acts 21:10). But prophetic ministry also bears on present needs; a word given in the power of the Holy Spirit can (without the speaker being aware of the need) powerfully address the state of heart and mind of someone present, even of all.

Before the Lord Jesus undertook the great work of redemption and ascended to heaven the Holy Spirit could not come to indwell believers but in Old Testament times we read that the Spirit came *upon* one and another and caused them to prophesy. We have an example in 2 Chronicles 20, where enemies were gathered together to fight against Judah. We read "Then upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation; and he said, hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat; Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid or dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle *is* not yours, but God's." Jahaziel was given a word for the moment and he faithfully proclaimed it.

It is noteworthy that before this divine intervention there had been prayer and fasting and an active seeking of the Lord on the part of Jehoshaphat and many others. Likewise at Antioch the brethren "were ministering to the Lord and fasting" when the Holy

Spirit spoke (Acts 13:2). Perhaps if we were more in that spirit we would know more of the action of the Holy Spirit among us.

It is evident that when the saints are gathered together the Holy Spirit can give something to a brother to say (1 Corinthians 14:30), and we ought to be ready for this. But the apostle also speaks (verse 26) of each one having something when we come together. Surely this cannot mean that I have hatched something out of my own mind and come determined to express it. Rather, if I have been walking with the Lord and occupied in the word of God I will have gathered spiritual substance (especially impressions of Christ) which the Holy Spirit can draw out as He pleases when we are together. The Lord Jesus said, “Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old” (Matthew 13:52).

Lastly, we may consider the place of spontaneity in the ***preaching of the gospel***. Often in the Acts the preaching arose out of a circumstance that had occurred. So Peter’s preaching in Acts 2:14-36 was a reply to the perplexity that arose over the disciples speaking in all the tongues of the cosmopolitan group which had assembled. In Acts 3:12-26 we have another preaching by Peter, this time in reference to the healing of the lame man. In Acts 8:35 Philip evangelised the Ethiopian eunuch from the scripture that the latter was already reading. At Mars Hill in Athens Paul responded to the question, “May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is*?” (Acts 17:19-31).

Such passages illustrate the importance of what the apostle Peter wrote: “and [be] always prepared to [give] an answer [to] everyone that asks you to give an account of the hope that [is] in you” (1 Peter 3:15). So ***we*** have to be prepared, and this is perhaps more important than a ***sermon*** being prepared. We see this exemplified in the case of Jonah, who at first was not even prepared to go where God directed him. But after his experience

in the belly of the great fish “the word of the LORD came unto him the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee [*or, that I shall bid thee – Darby Trans.*].” Whether we read “that I bid thee” or “that I shall bid thee” it is clear that the Lord had not yet told him what the message was. I remember a brother telling me many years ago that he always had to have his message for the coming Lord’s Day ready by the previous Wednesday. But who are we to dictate to the Lord when He may see fit to impart to us the word that is to be spoken? Perhaps many of us have had the experience of becoming convinced even while on the way to preach the gospel that what *I* have had in mind is not what *God* has in mind.

Surely we should not be negligent as we approach any occasion when we are to have the privilege and responsibility of speaking for the Lord; we should certainly give time to prayer and meditation. But the preacher *himself* needs to be prepared to be a channel of the Holy Spirit and then should be amenable to His direction at the time. Printed advice has been issued for preachers telling them to prepare their sermons well in advance, print them out and then go through them, improving vocabulary and phraseology where possible. But the apostle Paul tells us as to his own preaching that it was “not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (1 Corinthians 1:17). He also says in the next chapter that he had not come to them “with excellency of speech or of wisdom” and that his preaching was “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

Let us all be more concerned to keep what is of *man* out of the things of God and to allow room for *the Holy Spirit* to direct us both individually and when we gather together. We can be sure that if He has His place, Christ will be glorified and people blessed.

*The Editor.*

**JOTHAM;**  
OR, A WORD ON FAITHFULNESS.

Judges 9.

WISE and seasonable is the counsel of Jotham, son Jerubbaal, that fruitfulness is better than honour, and to be well-pleasing to the Lord than to be highly esteemed amongst men.

Jotham might as fairly as Abimelech have claimed to rule the people after the death of his father, but he had learned that to abide humbly with God, in the place He may have given, is far more blessed than to aspire to a path of dignity in the sight of men. God does give honour, but not to those who seek it. He does make one and another to be highly esteemed; but it is because they have not made it their object, but counted it their greatest privilege to bear fruit in which the Lord was glorified, and His people cheered and helped. Abimelech may have his dignity. Jotham values a better portion, and besides this he was alive to the low and unsatisfactory state of the people, and the miserable end which would surely follow; and he stands apart, and is able to look on all from the “top of the mountain,” and view it in the light of God. Let us read his parable. The trees put the tempting honour before the olive, “Reign thou over us.” Men feel their need of rule, though nothing is so rebellious against it when established as the human heart. This honour has no temptation for the olive; beautifully it replies, “Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?” There is no selfish consideration here; it is enough that God and man are honoured, and the one by whom the fruit is borne is willingly left in his obscurity. This may well remind one of Philippians 2, a chapter of utter self-forgetfulness, from the blessed Master Himself down to His lowly saint Epaphroditus. Oh that “this mind” were more found in each one of us!

The fig tree next is tried, with “Come thou, *and* reign over us;” but replies, “Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?” It is sufficient that others have been gladdened and strengthened by its fruit; the tree that bare it may be forgotten. Next the vine is sought, “Come thou, *and* reign over us.” No; “Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?” The bramble has nothing to leave, and is easily tempted with honour; and we know the sad end, the invariable end, of such beginnings – both people and ruler destroy each other.

We all must surely feel how much better a thing it is to be fruitful and happy than to be exalted before others, but what is the secret of fruitfulness? John 15 answers – Christ. “I am the true vine.” “From me is thy fruit found” (Hosea 14:8). We are the branches, true, and it is on the branch the fruit is seen – immense privilege for us – but it is only as the life and sap of the tree itself flows unchecked through the branches that fruit is borne; and here the question is not simply whether we are vitally linked with Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, though this must of course precede all, but whether we keep so near to the Lord in our hearts, and walk so dependently on Him as having all our springs in Himself, that His grace practically works in our souls, His strength becomes perfected in our weakness, and His life practically manifested in our mortal bodies, and this is fruit.

No doubt certain Christian knowledge must precede this, for I shall not intelligently abide in Christ until I have experimentally known the worthlessness of all that I am in myself. “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing;” so that all life and energy must entirely come from another source. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” This is a very real and profoundly blessed thing, familiar as the words may be to us. Fruit then is the reproduction of Christ in our ways. It refers not to gift by which one may preach

or labour; there may or may not be this, but all may bear fruit. Acts of service after all are but incidents in our life. Life itself is made up of countless thoughts and feelings, words, looks, ways, and in all these Christ, and not the flesh, is to be the motive power, and this can only be as we keep near to and dependent upon Him. Oh, beloved, what a privilege! How precious was the fruit He bore when down here! Fatness, sweetness, and cheer marked all His lovely ways. The hearts of God and man were gladdened by it, and it is our loving Father's purpose that some of this divine beauty should re-appear in the lives of His children. Let us too remember, that just where God has placed us is the very spot where the fruit is to be manifested. However lowly and unnoticed may be the sphere in which we are called to move, let us not think we could be more fruitful elsewhere. No, the Lord has Himself allotted us our paths, and if we do but let His fatness drop in them, the lowliest path will be illumined, and the humblest thing ennobled; for the manifestation of Christ makes everything great that may have no greatness in itself, and *all* life will have a charm, however dull and monotonous otherwise it may seem, if we but learn to look at everything as a means by which Christ may be expressed, and our Father therein glorified. The gracious Lord awaken in us all a true desire for this.

H. A. C.

*Extracted from "The Christian Friend" (1886)*

### **Fragment**

It is when we know His power that we are equal for difficulties, because, as we realise the height which is His and ours in Him, we are enabled to face the difficulties. We look up, to rise over, or rather to be able to face them. I have a feeling that every place is a moral swamp, except the opened heavens and the Blessed One there.

*J.B. Stoney (1814-1897)*

## POETIC PAGES

### God's Way

*"The way is in the sanctuary ... Thy way is in the sea"  
(Psa. 77:13-19)*

*One could not think of stopping on such a path as this.*

When inward fear and doubt assail,  
And fairest hopes and prospects break;  
When cruel foes seem to prevail,  
When rock and mountain trembling quake,  
Guide of the pilgrim, pause and say,  
How shall I find Jehovah's way?

First let thine eyes anointed be  
With heavenly salve, the gift of grace;  
Then seek, from guile and evil free,  
The sanctuary, that holy place  
Where through His chart's mysterious lines  
A thread of gold to guide thee shines.

And through the storm the pathway lies,  
Where loud the rolling thunder peals;  
The crested waves like giants rise,  
Each flash the glimmering foam reveals,  
As on that night in Galilee,  
When Jesus walked across the sea!

With tranquil mien and step secure,  
Though tempests roar and nations fight,  
Forward, faint heart, the path is sure;  
Unerring wisdom leads aright!  
Oh, who would falter on the way  
Through night and storm to glorious day?

*E.L. Bevir (1847-1922)*

## The Old-Fashioned Way

They call me old-fashioned because I believe  
That the Bible is God's holy Word,  
That Jesus, who lived among men long ago,  
Is divine, and the Christ of God.

### *Refrain*

*My sin was old-fashioned,  
My guilt was old-fashioned,  
God's love was old-fashioned, I know;  
And the way I was saved was the old-fashioned way,  
Through the blood that makes whiter than snow.*

Old-fashioned, because I believe and accept  
Only what has been spoken from Heav'n;  
Old-fashioned because at the cross I was saved,  
At the cross had my sins forgiv'n.

### *Refrain*

Old-fashioned, because I am bound to do right,  
To walk in the straight narrow way;  
Because I have given my whole life to God,  
Old-fashioned because I pray.

### *Refrain*

Old-fashioned, because I am looking above  
To Jesus, my glorified Lord;  
Because I believe He is coming again,  
Fulfilling His holy Word.

### *Refrain*

*Mrs. Civilla D. Martin, 1914.*

### **NOTE**

The Editor trusts that the selection and composition of material for this magazine has been undertaken with the Lord's guidance and that the contents are of moral and spiritual value and appropriate to present needs. The only infallible statement of truth, however, is found in the Holy Bible and the reader is, therefore, urged to follow the practice of the Bereans, who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). The Editor is always happy to receive comments and inquiries, and to consider suggested articles for inclusion in future issues.