

VALIANT IN FIGHT

Valiant in Fight

by

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"Behold the Man!"
"The Shepherd Psalm,"
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FOREWORD

The Bible is largely a book of biography, dealing with the lives, words, and works of the men and women who are the subjects of sacred history, through all the ancient world, from the gates of Eden to the Isle of Patmos. The apostle James counsels Christians to take those "who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."

The profound influence of these Bible characters over the lives of the people of God through the ages can never be fully estimated or appreciated.

The part they have played in character development has been beautifully set forth in the poem "The Psalm of Life" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

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J · O · H · N

A Voice in the Wilderness

The New Testament has its real beginning with John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah and one of the greatest characters of all time. We read: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is He that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." Matthew 3:1-3.

This is the substance of John's message and is the first recorded appeal and warning in the New Testament. It is also the summary of the preaching of Jesus: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17. It is really the keynote of the gospel in all ages, and especially in our own day when the second coming of Christ and the kingdom of glory are at hand.

The importance of studying the character and work of

John the Baptist is emphasized by the fact that he was the divinely appointed herald of the first advent of the Messiah and was therefore a type of the messengers who are announcing to the world His second advent. The subject should therefore be of special interest to us. In order to proclaim a message that will make a people ready for the second coming of our Lord, we must have an experience and develop a character after the likeness of him who announced His first advent.

Let us notice some of the characteristics of John and his message which have been recorded especially "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." We will consider some of the striking parallels between the messengers and the messages in both type and antitype. Like the prophet Jeremiah, John was chosen, ordained, and divinely commissioned before his birth. His father, Zacharias, was a priest, and his mother, Elisabeth, was a descendant of Aaron. It was considered a double distinction and honor for a priest to marry the daughter of a priest.

Of the parents of John we read: "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Luke 1:5, 6. What a wonderful spiritual heritage was that of John! He was a child of their old age and was born in answer to earnest prayer. How different things would be if all children were wanted and prayed for! John's heritage was that of faith, righteousness, and unquestioning obedience. He

could therefore say with the psalmist, "The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Psalm 16:6, R.S.V. This is a spiritual advantage to any child, and parents should see that their children are not deprived of it. John was a priest, a prophet, and, like Noah, "a preacher of righteousness."

The typical priestly services were divided into twenty-four courses, of which Abia was the eighth. Each course served eight days, from Sabbath to Sabbath, twice a year. Lots were cast to determine which of the many priests in the course would perform special duties. To perform some of these was a privilege which might come to a priest only once in a lifetime. On this occasion the lot fell on Zacharias. "It was the great moment of Zacharias's life, and his heart was no doubt alert for the supernatural."—Ragg. While he was serving "at the time of incense," the angel Gabriel appeared "on the right side of the altar of incense." M. R. Vincent thus describes the scene: "Ascending the steps to the holy place, the priests spread the coals on the golden altar, and arranged the incense, and the chief officiating priest was left alone within the holy place to await the signal of the president to burn the incense. It was probably at this time that the angel appeared."

"The whole multitude of the people were praying without" the holy place in the courts at the time of the morning or evening sacrifice, or prayer, while Zacharias was ministering within. Luke 1:7-13. Zacharias had been praying for a son, and doubtless also for the coming of the Messiah, and both prayers were to be answered. Zacharias means "Remembered by Jehovah," and he was divinely remem-

bered in a wonderful way. John means "The Lord is gracious," an appropriate name divinely given. He was born of God and sent to herald His grace. He was designated "John the Baptist" to distinguish him from the many other Johns and to describe his work. This was a common custom among the Jews. "James the Less" and "Simon the Zealot" further illustrate this scriptural practice.

The character and work of John were foretold by the angel: "And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:14-17.

John was small in his own estimation as well as that of men, but "great in the sight of the Lord," who "seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." How different are the viewpoints of man and of God! Many of the truly great, who have lived and died unrecognized, occupying unknown and unmarked graves, will receive their rewards in the life to come. Smallness or greatness of character are determined by our attitude toward God's law, which is a transcript of His character. Jesus said: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the king-

dom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:19.

John's life was characterized by temperance and self-control in all things. "No wine or fermented drink shall he ever drink," is the Weymouth translation, third edition. Instead of being filled with "strong drink," he was "filled with the Holy Spirit." The inference is that only temperate people are great in the sight of God and can be filled with His Spirit. This was true on the Day of Pentecost, and will also be true of those who experience the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain when Pentecost will be repeated. The antitype of John's message is being given to the world by a people who "drink neither wine nor strong drink," the most temperate people in the world in an age when the drinking of alcoholic liquors is almost universal.

The angel predicted that under John's ministry there would be a movement back to God and His word, from which Israel had largely departed. The whole nation was in a backslidden state, a deplorable spiritual condition. Modern Israel likewise is in desperate need of a great spiritual revival and reformation to deliver them from their Laodicean lukewarmness in affection for God and man. This revival and reformation is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs, and demands our undivided attention. On it depends the eternal destiny of the modern church.

John was not Elijah in person, but he was to preach a message, "in the spirit and power" of that ancient reformer, who has been called the Martin Luther of ancient Israel. John was not to manifest the miracle-working power of

Elijah, for "John did no miracle." Does this infer that the performing of miracles will not be prominent in the message that heralds the second advent of Christ? Perhaps so, for then we are told that Satan will work "with all power and signs and lying wonders" to deceive if possible the very elect. Therefore as evidence of the truth and true religion, miracles would accomplish but little, if anything.

John's message, like that of Elijah, brought conviction, conversion, and reformation, a turning to the Lord. Weymouth said that he would "cause the rebellious to walk in the wisdom of the upright, to make a people perfectly ready for the Lord." And that is the mission of those who proclaim the second-advent message, to make a people, not partly ready, but perfectly ready, to meet our returning Lord. All else is secondary in importance to that supreme purpose without which everything fails.

The mention of a reformation in the home is clearly a reference to Malachi 4:5, 6. This scripture has a double application, first to the work of John the Baptist, and secondly to the heralds of the second advent. This is indicated by the statement that the prophecy will be fulfilled "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" and just before He comes to "smite the earth with a curse." These expressions cannot apply to the first advent of Christ. The message was only partially fulfilled by John. One of the first fruits of conversion is a revival of love in the home, when parents and children will be drawn together in love and unity.

The Jews believed that Elijah would return in person as the herald and forerunner of the Messiah, and they based

their teachings on the prophecy of Malachi. They were just as badly mistaken as are those today who teach that the prophecy will be fulfilled in the appearance of an individual, usually themselves, who will possess the prophetic gift and bring reformation to modern Israel. A number are making this claim for themselves at the present time and are deceiving some unwary souls. Their lives and deceitful methods reveal the falsity of their pretensions. The final message of God will be proclaimed by multiplied thousands of people "in the spirit and power of Elijah," and this will be especially true when the Holy Spirit again visits the church with Pentecostal power.

Like Abraham, Zacharias, because of his age and that of Elisabeth, was skeptical of the promise of a son, even though he had been praying for one. How human he was, especially in the light of our experience! The early church prayed for the release of Peter from prison, and then were too surprised to believe the good news when Peter appeared at the door in answer to their requests for divine intervention. How comforting it is that all Bible characters, with the exception of Jesus, were "subject to like passions as we are," and are not pictured as being faultless, as are some of the heroes and heroines of fictitious literature! God describes men and women as they really are, and for this we should be grateful. Otherwise it would be discouraging.

Gabriel means "hero of God," and is an appropriate name in the light of his heroic stand in the crisis over the revolt of Lucifer. Gabriel now stands "in the presence of God" where the mighty Lucifer once ministered as the first of the covering cherubs and "walked up and down in

the midst of the stones of fire" on the glittering pavement of brilliant jewels which compose the floor of the throne room of the Eternal. Gabriel is the angel of prophecy, and Daniel declared that he stands next to Michael, the Son of God, in wisdom and position.

Gabriel's introduction of himself to Zacharias was a rebuke for the priest's lack of faith, for he had virtually demanded a sign to prove the truthfulness of his prediction. He doubtless expected some spectacular sign such as that given Gideon, but instead he was punished with dumbness until the birth of the promised son. When Zacharias finally came out of the holy place he was unable to pronounce the customary blessing, and had to make signs that he was speechless. He had to finish his appointed temple duties in silence.

The records of the birth of both John and Jesus were written by Luke, a physician who was not disturbed by their supernatural aspects, as is true now of so many physicians and theologians who refuse to believe in miracles or to admit of the incarnation and virgin birth of Christ. Luke uses the word "conceived" four times. It is used five times in the rest of the New Testament. Luke's writings are filled with medical terms. Hobart declared that Dr. Luke used "as many medical terms for pregnancy and barrenness as did Hippocrates," who was the celebrated Greek physician of the fourth century B.C. and is known as "the father of medicine."

Then follows the physician's description of Gabriel's visit to Mary, the announcement of the birth of Jesus, and the record of her visit to the home of Zacharias and Elisabeth.

Luke 1:39-41. Filled with the Holy Spirit, both Elisabeth and Mary predicted the birth and work of the Messiah. Such supernatural happenings in connection with the birth of John convinced the neighbors that he faced a special mission and career. As soon as Zacharias indicated the name of his son, his tongue was loosed and he was given the gift of prophecy. Verses 67-79.

These predictions relate chiefly to the mission of John, who would be "the prophet of the Highest," who would "go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." His preaching would bring to an end the long, dark night of moral and spiritual darkness and usher in the "dayspring from on high," or "the sunrising" (margin) when "the Sun of Righteousness" would illuminate the earth with His glory. "Through which the daybreak from on high will come to us, dawning on those who now dwell in the darkness and shadow of death—to direct our feet into the path of peace." Verses 78, 79, Weymouth.

In presenting the Elijah message for today, the messengers of the second advent are to be illumined with the light of truth, as they reveal Christ, "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." To them comes the divine command: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isaiah 60:1-3.

The church today is counseled to take heed to the "more

sure word of prophecy" "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19. Then will be fulfilled the forecast of Revelation 18:1, where the church is symbolized by an angel who comes down from heaven "having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."

J ♦ O ♦ H ♦ N

Ambassador of God

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:6-9.

Here "was a man sent from God." He is thus described in contrast to the Messiah, who is pictured in the previous verses as "the Word," who "was God," and who "was made flesh, and dwelt among us." An apostle is one sent of God, and John was therefore not only a priest and prophet, but also an apostle. He was like an ambassador, with delegated official authority. In the prophecy of Malachi 3:1 the Lord said, "I will send My messenger." John's was therefore a heaven-sent message to bear witness to the great Light who would bring truth and salvation within reach of "every man that cometh into the world." This does not mean universal salvation, but rather universal opportunity.

In common with John it is the duty of every Christian to persuade as many as possible to believe that Jesus is the Light of life and the only hope of salvation. He is indeed the hope of the world. The language of our text indicates that other methods of revealing the Messiah had largely failed. This was the only purpose of the typical offerings and services, but the Jews had lost their vision. For centuries the Light had been shining in darkness, but "the darkness comprehended it not;" so when the Messiah "came unto His own, . . . His own received Him not." Jesus was "the true Light," in contrast to the many false religious leaders who had appeared and walked in the flickering sparks of their own kindling. His light also contrasted with the light of the ceremonial system, as well as that of His followers who were merely reflected lights.

John was also a light. Jesus said of him, "He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." John 5:35. But he was not "the Light," "the true Light," "the Sun of Righteousness," or "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." When the sun rises, the lamp is no longer needed; so when the Messiah appeared, John's mission had ended. Bruce said that the people were attracted to John "like moths to a candle." Jesus said that the people "were willing for a season to rejoice in his light," indicating that his work was temporary and was intended to be so. It was his duty to draw the attention of the people from the lesser to the greater Light, and that is also our mission. Vincent said that "the interest in the Baptist was frivolous, superficial, and short-lived excitement." It was something like

the results of many modern revivals and evangelistic efforts. Permanency in results depends wholly on the ability and willingness of the speakers to direct the attention of the multitude to the true Light.

John declared that "He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me," or "He existed before me." (Goodspeed.) John recognized the pre-existence of Jesus, who was before him in rank, but after him in the time of his birth and ministry. The apostle John said, "And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Like the manna which was furnished fresh to supply the daily need of Israel, the Messiah would furnish grace succeeding grace, or "blessing after blessing." (Goodspeed.) Grace would be heaped upon grace in an ever-abounding and inexhaustible supply so that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," so that He can save to the uttermost. Christ is the Author of both "grace and truth," which, like the law and the gospel, work hand in hand in the work of redemption.

John the Baptist was not only the connecting link between the two dispensations, the Hebrew prophets and the Christian apostles, but he was the first gospel preacher to proclaim the "good news," the "good tidings of great joy." We read: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the

baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." Mark 1:1-5.

True baptism follows, and is dependent on, repentance, confession, and forgiveness of sin. Remission of sin is the result of repentance rather than of baptism, as some teach. Baptism is therefore not a saving ordinance, but only a symbol and evidence of a death to sin and a resurrection to spiritual life, as set forth in Romans 6:4: "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." A baptism without a previous death to sin is worthless, and, in fact, a tragedy akin to the burial of a person not yet dead.

John did his baptizing "in the river of Jordan;" which precludes the possibility of pouring or sprinkling. In fact, the word "baptize" means immersion, which was the prevailing mode of baptism in Christendom before the twelfth century. *Bethany* as the R.S.V. has it, is the proper translation instead of *Bethabara*. The town is not to be confused with the suburb of Jerusalem.

Among those who came for baptism was Jesus: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me: for He was before me." John 1:29, 30. Bernard speaks of this as "the second day of the spiritual diary." The apostles also applied Isaiah 53:7, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," to Christ,

but the Jews could not conceive of a suffering Messiah who would be led as a lamb to the altar of sacrifice. It was contrary to their expectations of the coming of a conquering king, the Messiah of their dreams. John pointed to Jesus as the true paschal Lamb of God to which the sacrificial offerings pointed, the One who would atone for the sins not only of the Jews, but also of the whole world.

In the following verses it is made clear that John did not know that Jesus was the Messiah until the predicted sign was fulfilled at the baptism of Jesus. Even though they were second cousins, Jesus, who grew up in Galilee, and John, who had spent most of his life in the wilderness, had enjoyed no personal contacts. The proof that Jesus was the Messiah was the visitation of the Holy Spirit and the voice from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the evidence that John could not gainsay, and he declared with certainty, "Behold the Lamb of God," and "This is the Son of God."

The effectiveness of John's message was due to the fact that he found himself and his message in Bible prophecy. His identity and mission are described in the statement, "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: . . . In the desert prepare a road for the Lord," or "Hark! Someone is shouting in the desert, Get the Lord's way ready, make His paths straight." Mark 1:2, 3, Weymouth and Goodspeed. In those days when a king visited a city, village, or country, his coming was announced by a herald or forerunner so that the inhabitants could make preparations for the royal guest. Even in small villages at times triumphal arches were erected and the roads made straight and smooth.

History tells us of the vast preparations made for the journey of Semiramis through Media and Persia, for Alexander the Great as he marched into India, and for Vespasian's visit to Galilee. When Xerxes made a journey, he ordered that mountains be leveled or cut through and that causeways be raised in the valleys for his approach. All rubbish and other obstacles must be removed, the rough places made smooth, the streams bridged, and the roads straightened. One writer declares that a detachment was appointed "to make the road even and straight, and, if it were anywhere rough and hard to be passed over, to plane it."—*The Pulpit Commentary*, on Luke 3:4, 5. This is strikingly illustrated by the vast preparation of our modern highway system, not for the travel of kings and rulers, but for the humblest of citizens, the real kings of a democracy.

John used this ancient custom to illustrate the preparation of heart and life necessary to be ready for the coming Messiah. Deficiencies of character must be removed, the meek and lowly exalted, the proud and haughty brought low, the crooked places in the character straightened, and the rough and uncouth places smoothed. "The proud heart must be abased; the hands that hang down, the feeble knees, must be lifted up; the path must be made straight; there must be no wavering, no inconsistency, no crooked designs, but a simple, straightforward, decided readiness to receive the coming Saviour."—*The Pulpit Commentary*, on Matthew 3:3.

If such a preparation was necessary to meet the Lord at His first advent, it is surely even more so in preparation for His coming as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Pride,

haughtiness, and arrogance must give place to meekness, lowliness, and humility; those who practice crookedness in their dealings must become honest and straight; those who are unclean in word, thought, and conduct must become pure in heart, and those who are depressed and discouraged must become buoyant and hopeful. The coming of Christ is good news and is indeed "that blessed hope." It is high time that a great spiritual revival and reformation accomplish their mission among God's remnant people.

"And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? and he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." John 1:19-23.

The Jewish leaders had become alarmed over the popularity of John and had sent a committee or delegation to visit him and ask for his credentials, since they had not educated nor commissioned him. They came "to ask him who he was." (Weymouth.) They were especially anxious to know if he claimed to be the expected Messiah, but "he admitted that he was not the Christ." (Goodspeed.) This was naturally their first question "as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not." Luke 3:15. This was in fact the universal question because of the Messianic hope.

Naturally, the second question was whether or not he was Elijah, since the Jews believed and taught that the ancient prophet would appear in person as a forerunner of the Messiah. Since Jesus told His disciples that John was the predicted Elijah described in Malachi 4:5, 6, why did he deny it? It was because the Jews meant one thing and Jesus another. John was not Elijah in person, but his message would be proclaimed "in the spirit and power" of that ancient reformer.

The third question in order was in regard to the prediction of Moses recorded in Deuteronomy 18:15, that the Lord would raise up a prophet like unto him. The apostles declared that this prophecy was fulfilled in the Messiah. Acts 3:22; 7:37. The Jews thought it referred to another forerunner. John 7:40, 41. During his prison discouragement John wondered if Jesus was the Messiah, or one of the forerunners. "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" was his question. In fact, the people in general wondered whether Jesus was the Messiah or one of the forerunners. Matthew 16:14; Mark 8:28. John's answer to this third question regarding himself was the shortest possible, an emphatic No.

The delegation from Jerusalem repeats the first question. If you are not the Christ, Elijah, or the prophet, "Who are you? We must have some answer to give those who sent us here. What have you to say for yourself?" (Goodspeed.) John knew who he was and who he was not. Without any hesitancy he identified himself as the forerunner of the Messiah, and quoted Isaiah 40:3 to prove it. He found himself and his message in prophecy, and this gave his

preaching a ring of certainty and authority far different from that of the scribes and Pharisees. Like Christ he spoke "as one having authority," and that authority was based on the fact that he was a prophetic messenger with a prophetic message.

The same is true of those who proclaim the second-advent message. They are a prophetic people with a prophetic message. They can quote, not only three prophecies of the Old Testament, as could John to substantiate his claim, but at least a score in both the Old and the New Testament. This is what gives their message an assurance more satisfying than the hesitating and questioning messages from many modern pulpits. What else can be expected from those who do not believe in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?

One of the most important of these last-day prophecies is Revelation 14:6-14. Because this is the summary and climax of the gospel in all ages, it is called "the everlasting gospel." It is world-embracing and will be proclaimed to all "that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." There can be no question that it is the last message, because it is immediately followed by the coming of Christ to reap the harvest of the earth. It also calls upon the inhabitants of the earth to "fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." The judgment here mentioned is the investigative judgment, because it must take place before probation closes and Christ returns. The message demands that the Creator, rather than the creature or the things of creation, be the object of worship, and that faith be demon-

strated in the observance of the Sabbath, the memorial of creation.

This antitype of the message of John announces that the counterfeit system of religion, "Babylon the Great," has fallen and become the abiding place of devils or evil angels and that God's people must come out of her before His wrath is visited upon her in the seven last plagues. Revelation 16:19; 17:4, 5; 18:1-5. The warning is also against the sign or mark of false religion which is enforced by religious legislation. Revelation 13. Those who remain true to God receive the seal or mark of God. Revelation 7.

This prophetic message is so detailed and definite that none should fail to recognize it when they hear it proclaimed. Only those who fulfill its characteristics have the right to point to it as the evidence of their identity and mission. Those who fit the prophetic mold will not question the truthfulness or ultimate triumph of their message, which brings to an end the reign of sin and ushers in the kingdom of glory.

J ♦ O ♦ H ♦ N

A Man of Humility

One of the greatest of all Christian virtues is humility; it is declared to be the only road to honor, even as pride leads to ruin. Said the wise man: "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility." Proverbs 18:12.

Jesus set forth the same truth when He said: "For every-one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke 18:14. This is a basic principle which operates to a certain extent in this life, although the honor and exaltation are reserved chiefly for the world to come, when all are rewarded according to their works.

We are told that the Lord hates and even abominates "a proud look" and a haughty and arrogant spirit. This is not difficult to understand, for we naturally feel the same way, and there are times when we would delight to puncture the balloon of conceit in some persons. In fact, we must guard against becoming impatient over delay in the

execution of the divine sentence against the proudhearted, for it is certain in the end. In the meantime we must make sure that all pride is eliminated from our own hearts, so that we are not even proud of our humility.

Humility was one of the outstanding characteristics of John the Baptist. He was "meek and lowly in heart," as was his Master. His vision of the beauty of holiness in the Redeemer caused him to deny self and rise to the very height of self-abnegation. He made no effort to attract attention to himself, but pointed to the Lamb of God as the One "altogether lovely," "the chiefest among ten thousand." His vision was centered upon the King of glory, and he felt himself to be inefficient and unworthy. He was able to stand without fear in the presence of a corrupt and haughty monarch because with reverence he had bowed low before the Majesty of heaven.

John's humility was especially remarkable in the light of his unparalleled popularity as a preacher. We read: "There went out to him people of all classes from Judea, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem of all ranks, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, making open confession of their sins." Mark 1:5, Weymouth. Matthew adds, "All the region round about Jordan." Matthew 3:5. Josephus wrote of the great popularity of John and of the great crowds who came to hear him preach. He said that John taught men "righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God."

John not only attracted great audiences, but he also got unusual results in baptisms. If success merits pride, he had every reason to become proud. If John could keep humble

under those circumstances, surely the modern preacher ought to be able to do so, in the light of his meager results. John did what no other preacher or evangelist has ever been able to do in all history. He did not conduct his evangelistic campaign in the temple at Jerusalem, or in a great auditorium or stadium in some center of population where the multitudes were accustomed to assemble. Without any advertising or backing from the Sanhedrin or from a company of rabbis with their synagogue congregations united, John drew great multitudes of people of all ages and classes far out into the desert, where they were spell-bound by his message. The great revival was not based on appeals to human emotions, mass hysteria, or fanatical excitement, but on a quiet and reasonable presentation of the word of God with earnest appeals to both the mind and the heart. His preaching was accompanied by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, causing men and women to confess and forsake their sins.

John's humility met the severest test possible, the temptation to jealousy, but he never yielded. There is no basis for jealousy as long as a person excels all others in talents, achievements, or popularity. The temptation comes when others begin to excel and one must take a secondary place. When John's popularity and success were at their height, another preacher appeared on the stage of action and his audiences began to dwindle and his popularity wane. It was at this crucial time that John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to Him." John 3:26. But John told them,

"A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven," and he reminded them that he was only the forerunner of the Messiah. He had declared, "There cometh One mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." Mark 1:7. Thus he placed himself in the class of a servant or slave, then John demonstrated his bigness of character in that classic statement, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30.

How many of us are big enough and unselfish enough to say what John did when it is time to step aside and give place to another who can do a better job and accomplish more good? It is evident that John's friends and disciples were the ones who were jealous. They considered Jesus a rival of their master, and they inferred blame on John for endorsing Him and His mission, and for urging the people to follow Him. How marked was the contrast between the spirit of John and the petty jealousy of his disciples!

A study of John's childhood, early training, education, and habits of life will help us to understand his humbleness. In Luke 1:80, we read: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." His spiritual development kept pace with his physical growth; and that is God's plan for all, old and young. Spiritual and intellectual progress should continue as long as there is life in the body. Some of the greatest thinkers and leaders of the modern world are men and women between seventy-five and ninety years of age. Altogether too many persons fossilize mentally,

and often spiritually, long before their bodies have ceased to function.

In the matter of growth, John was like Jesus, of whom we read: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Luke 2:52. One grew up in the hill country of Hebron, and the other in the village of Nazareth. Both grew up away from the great centers of population, which accounts at least in part for their nobility of character and success in life. Fortunate are modern children who are given similar privileges by their parents.

Since John was the son of a priest, he would ordinarily have been educated for the priesthood in the best schools of Judea; but, as with Jesus, God could not run the risk of having him spoiled for his mission by a training in the traditions of the doctors of the law. It is evident that John did not live the life of a recluse or hermit, or one of idleness, but made frequent trips to mingle with men and to observe the trends of events. He diligently studied the scrolls of the prophets, especially those pertaining to the advent of the Messiah. In the school of the One who is infinite in wisdom he received an education that amazed the wisest men of Israel, and they asked as they did of Jesus, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" Not all wisdom and knowledge and education are obtained in the classroom, nor are they indicated by scholastic degrees. Many of the most valuable lessons of life are learned by diligent effort and observation and by personal experiences.

Likewise in the antitype, the second-advent message cannot be properly given merely on the basis of training obtained in the schools of the world, even though it may

be necessary for some to go there to receive certain specialized education and the appropriate degrees. It is sad that many seeking such advanced education have either lost their faith or had it so corrupted that they cannot give the message with a ring of authority and certainty either in the classroom or from the pulpit. Those who trust only in intellect, genius, talent, or scholarship cannot possess the humility and other qualifications they must have if they are to prepare a people to meet the Lord. The noble exceptions among scholars, of the type of Moses, Daniel, and Paul, are a cause for gratitude.

John's habits of life were characterized by simplicity and modesty. "And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey." Matthew 3:4. Camel's-hair cloth is still used for the clothing of the nomads of that region and is said to be "'one of the most admirable materials for clothing, it keeps out the heat, cold, and rain.'"—*Cambridge Bible*. While it would be inappropriate attire for the temple or a synagogue in Jerusalem, or for the modern pulpit, it was a proper wilderness dress, especially for the antitype of Elijah. According to Zechariah 13:4, it was the proper attire of prophets.

"He lived on dried locusts and wild honey." (Goodspeed.) There is a locust tree which produces a pod containing a sort of bean which is used for food in that region, especially by the very poor, and this was probably the food of John. "Wild honey" means the honey from wild bees. "Wild honey is still gathered in large quantities from trees in the wilderness, and from rocks in the wadies, just where

the Baptist sojourned."—W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, page 420.

It is evident that the earthly desires of John were limited to absolute necessities. His dress and diet were simple and in perfect keeping with his environment and character. More simplicity in dress and diet and other living habits are among the greatest needs of the present generation who live in a mechanical and complicated atmosphere. Most people today eat too much for their good, and their food is too rich and the variety too great. A more simple and well-balanced program would do wonders for modern men and women.

Another evidence of John's humility was the manner in which he described and identified himself to the delegation of religious dignitaries from Jerusalem when they asked him the question, "Who art thou?" He told them he was neither the Christ, the Elijah, nor the prophet. He did not remind them that he was a priest in direct line from Aaron, though he could have done so. Nor did he say that he was the most popular preacher of his day, which would have been true. He declared that he was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness." Archibald T. Robertson, in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, said of John: "He was only a voice, but what a voice he was. He can be heard yet across the centuries."—Vol. 1, p. 25.

John knew that the multitude were not drawn to the desert by a man, but rather by his message. He knew where to place the proper emphasis. He was a little man in his own eyes, but he had a big message. He had been virtually unknown, as are most of the present-day preach-

ers with a message like his. They, too, are little men, known only to a small segment of society; but they have a big message with eternal consequences to the hearers. We, too, would be wise if we would keep the man in the background and emphasize the message. Some are inclined to give importance to scholastic qualifications and specialized training, but they have little weight in comparison with the message committed to a preacher of the word of God. As with John the Baptist, it is the message, the voice, that counts. What is said is the thing of importance, rather than the speaker.

Genuine humility is not synonymous with weakness and timidity. It is not another expression for cowardice. The truly meek and humble are the truly brave and strong. They are able to remain calm and serene and composed even in a time of storm and crisis. Humility does not indicate a negative, passive attitude that surrenders to every foe, that compromises for the sake of peace at any price, or that yields to appeasement as the way of least resistance. Moses was declared to be very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth, but he was also one of the very bravest. Daniel and his companions were very humble men, but when it came to standing for principle they entered the lions' den and the fiery furnace rather than be untrue to God. The apostles were humble men, but they suffered persecution and martyrdom rather than compromise principle.

Jesus was "meek and lowly in heart," but a braver person never lived. He is symbolized by both a lamb and a lion, the symbols of meekness and courage, of gentleness

and boldness. He was the meekest of the meek and the bravest of the brave. He meekly submitted to false arrest, to a traitor's kiss, to a mock trial in which every principle of justice vouchsafed in Hebrew and Roman law were ruthlessly trampled underfoot. He was insulted and tortured by the rabble and soldiers, and spit upon, scourged, and crucified; and He took it all with perfect composure and freedom from anger or threatened retaliation. He was afraid of neither men nor devils. He met the raging demons and threatening Pharisees with unflinching courage. With eyes blazing with fiery indignation, He drove the merchandizing profaners of the temple from its sacred precincts with a scourge of small cords which seemed to them like the flaming sword of divine vengeance.

E. Stanley Jones has given Jesus the following beautiful tribute: "A man is weak who is only passive, and weak when he is only militant; . . . he is strong only as he is passively militant and militantly passive, and Christ was both. I love the Christ of the blazing eye and the blessing hand, tender, terrible Prophet pronouncing woes over the city and then weeping over it. I love the Christ that let the storm of His redeeming fury loose upon a nation and then let the returning storm beat upon Himself on the cross to complete the redemption. I drink of the life of the Christ that loved enough to hate the evil that destroys those whom He loves—I drink of it and am strong."—*Christ at the Round Table*, page 228.

John the Baptist was a partaker of the spirit of the One whose advent he heralded, and this was the secret of his greatness and success.

J · O · H · N

A Man of Courage

The burden of the message of John the Baptist was a call to repentance. He cried out to the multitude, "Repent ye," and then gave the greatest of all reasons for repentance: "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is a special incentive for repentance, whether it be the kingdom of grace or the kingdom of glory that is at hand. This call to repentance and reformation of life has never been so important as at the present time, when Christ is soon coming to establish His kingdom of glory. How could the call for a spiritual revival and reformation be more compelling than at the time when the King of kings and Lord of lords is about to assume His sovereignty over the world?

The apostle Peter, after describing the day of the Lord, when "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," continues: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto

the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." 2 Peter 3:10-14.

This is the natural effect on the lives of those who expect and prepare for their returning Lord. When Mr. Moody was asked the secret of his untiring efforts in soul winning, with tears running down his cheeks, he replied: "The secret of my work has been my looking for the coming of Jesus Christ." Dr. R. E. Torrey declared that there had been four marked epochs in his Christian experience, the fourth being, "when I came to see the truth concerning the second coming of Christ. The latter truth transformed my whole idea of life, it broke the power of the world and its ambition over me and filled my life with the most radiant optimism even under the most discouraging circumstances."—*The Return of the Lord Jesus*, page 12. J. Wilbur Chapman said of the doctrine of the second advent: "Long years ago I came to see this wonderful truth, and I have no hesitation at all in saying that it completely transformed my ministry. If I have had any success in soul winning, if I have had any ability to turn men to righteousness, I think I must attribute it all to the influence of this wonderful truth. It has kept my eyes fixed on His coming, it has kept me with my heart longing for His return."

Thousands of others have borne similar testimony as to the effect of "that blessed hope" on their characters and

conduct. In fact, this knowledge should make of those who wait for and "love His appearing" the greatest saints of all time. It is encouraging to note that the entire Christian world is now studying and discussing the doctrine of eschatology, or the second advent of Christ, and increasing numbers of ministers are preaching it from their pulpits.

Repentance is a change of mind, followed by a change of character and conduct. It is "godly sorrow" for sin and "a complete change of mind, a new direction of will, an altered purpose of life." It is "basic to all spiritual change and progress. It calls for the complete breakdown of pride, of self-assurance, of the prestige that comes from success, and of that inmost citadel which is self-will." "It looks to the past in honesty and remorse, and then in a rightabout-face it looks to the future in resolve on a new way of life." —*The Interpreter's Bible*, comments on Matthew 3 and Luke 3. Someone has said that repentance is a sort of Janus, because it looks both ways. Speaking of the Baptist, Plummer said: "It is his office to bind them to a new life, symbolized by immersion in water."

The likeness between John and Elijah was not confined to their similarity of dress and diet and wilderness life. It was even more striking in the courage and boldness with which these reformers called for a change of conduct, a reformation of life. Nothing requires more courage than to point out specific sins and demand changes, especially in those who had been so long fixed in their personal habits and religious ceremonies. In this work, John, like Elijah, was no respecter of persons.

John's fearlessness was demonstrated in the way he

impartially dealt with all classes, high and low, rich and poor. He asked no favors and made no distinction between small and great. We read: "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," or "answerable to amendment of life," margin. Matthew 3:7, 8.

John compared these insincere leaders to the snakes that fled from before the brush fire or scurried to their holes among the rocks at the approach of an animal or person. The Pharisees and Sadducees represented the ruling class in contrast to the "multitude." The high priests were chosen from among the Sadducees. The word Pharisee means "separatist;" they withdrew themselves from everything and everybody that they thought would contaminate them and hinder their strict obedience to the Mosaic law. But behind their smooth exterior and pretended piety was hidden malice and venom, indicating that they were the seed of the great serpent rather than of Abraham. Jesus said to them, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44.

Dean Henry Alford said that the Pharisees represented "hypocritical supersitition; the Sadducees, carnal unbelief;" and of John's rebuke to these leaders, Dean F. W. Farrar said: "Let it be borne in mind that only teachers of transcendent holiness, and immediately inspired of God with

fervency of insight, may dare use such language." In fact, no more severe rebuke can be found in Holy Writ. These leaders were doubtless enraged by the rebuke, but the multitude were delighted with John's exhibition of courage, and more than ever he became their hero. They admired him for the enemies he dared to make.

Suspecting insincere motives on the part of these leaders who were anxious to join the mass movement for the sake of popularity, John said to them: "Therefore let your lives prove your change of heart" (Weymouth), or, "Then produce fruit that will be consistent with your professed repentance" (Goodspeed). He told them to demonstrate their sincerity, not by mere profession, or emotional excitement, or mere sentiment, but by their conduct. A mass movement had developed, and such is always dangerous. It had become popular to hear John preach and to be baptized. Repentance is not regeneration or the new birth, but a sorrow over the old life and a desire for a new. It is not a question of tears, emotion, or a flight of feeling, or a participation in a new ceremony to gain the divine favor. With the majority at that time ceremonial religion had taken the place of righteousness, and rabbinical rules and regulations constituted an indulgent attitude toward sin. It was time for a moral reformation based on a spiritual revival.

Righteousness is, first of all, right-being, which always produces rightdoing. Conduct is the fruit of character or of righteousness. The fruit therefore is not the change of heart, but rather the acts which grow out of it. It is possible for any person to perform acts that are good in themselves,

but only a good man can produce a harvest of right acts and correct habits. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," declared Jesus. Many fail to distinguish between the tree and its fruits, between character and conduct. Genuine repentance produces the "fruit of the Spirit" in place of the "works of the flesh."

The Pharisees and Sadducees were not only poisoning the people with their false teachings, but they themselves were deceived by one of the worst of delusions—a feeling of false security based on pride of natural inheritance and privilege. To them John said: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." There can be no hereditary salvation. If a sinner is the child of a saint, he will be more responsible in the judgment than will the child of a sinner because of the greater light and opportunities. Pride of race is still characteristic of the Jews, who often manifest a sort of spiritual superiority because of the history of the past, which is sometime made an excuse for the lack of personal piety. Jesus said to the same class addressed by John, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." The Jews forget that the Arabs are also the descendants of Abraham and that, if physical relationship is the test, the Arabs could not be excluded from the Abrahamic covenant.

In his statement to these religious leaders, John touched a very tender spot, for Abraham was the foundation on which the Hebrew church so fatally reposed, as well as the rock on which it was finally wrecked. John virtually told

them that the thing that really counts is the fruits rather than the roots. The modern church faces the same danger: "In the ranks of every religion, and among members of every Christian denomination, there are those who seem to think that their acceptance in the eyes of God is based upon ancestral title deeds."—*The Interpreter's Bible*. Every pastor knows this to be a fact.

Pointing to the stones on the shores of the Jordan, John told these men that God was able to raise up of these stones children unto Abraham. This power was demonstrated in the birth of Isaac, a miracle of creative power. The apostle Paul said: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham," and "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:7, 29.

Continuing, the Baptist said: "And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." "And already the ax is lying at the root of the trees." (Weymouth.) The divine Woodsman had already laid the ax of judgment at the root of the tree of Israel, whose years were numbered, and "the times of the Gentiles" were at hand. The storm was gathering which burst forth in all its cyclonic fury a few years later and destroyed the city, temple, and nation. Divine justice is no respecter of persons, but only of character.

John then declared that while he baptized with water unto repentance, the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire, that the church would be cleansed, and that the chaff would be separated from the wheat and

burned. He did not threaten them merely with hell-fire but with the searching, refining, cleansing work of the Spirit to burn out the dross of sin in all who would submit to the regenerating process. Water and fire are the cleansing agencies, and they are symbolic of the Word and Spirit, the two instruments mentioned by Jesus in His conversation with Nicodemus, which alone can produce the new birth and assure an entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

Another Gospel writer records the further words of John: "And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise," or "Let the man who has food share it with others." (Weymouth.) Luke 3:10, 11. The question asked of John is similar to the one asked of Peter on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:37, 38. John did not advise them to do penance to gain favor with God, but to practice generosity and unselfishness in dealing with the needy. At that time the wealthy and those holding positions of influence and authority wore two coats as an evidence of their rank and prosperity. The extra coat or garment was therefore a luxury, especially in the light of the fact that many were destitute of the one garment so necessary to their comfort and physical well-being.

"Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you." Luke 3:12, 13. "Never exact more than your fixed rate." (Moffatt.) This is the first time the publicans or taxgatherers are mentioned in the New Testament. Taxes constituted

the most painful and disagreeable of all the many reminders to the Jews that they were a conquered and subject people, and they looked upon these agents of Rome with intense hatred and scorn. A Jew could not possibly stoop lower than to become a publican.

The Romans did not collect their own taxes, but leased the privilege to speculators, who appointed subordinates to do the work. There was much graft and extortion, and many, like Zachaeus, became wealthy. The feeling toward publicans was also strong in other countries where Rome held sway. The Greeks called them "plunderers" and declared that an innocent publican was a marvelous phenomenon. Suidas described their conduct as "unrestrained plunder, unblushing greed, unreasonable pettifoggery, shameful business," and Demosthenes described a publican as one who "glides about the market like a scorpion, with his venomous sting all ready, spying out whom he may surprise with misfortune and ruin, and from whom he can most easily extort money, by threatening him with an action dangerous in its consequences."—Quoted by A. T. Robertson in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

This throws light on the counsel of John, as well as on many of the statements of Jesus regarding the publicans. Extortion was their universal sin, and this is attested to by many historians. The advice given by the Baptist also constitutes a warning to the business world in the greedy, covetous, and grasping generation in which we live. In the judgment the God of justice will not overlook the crooked dealings of any, especially of those who claim to be Christians. The Scriptures demand of us strict honesty.

"And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Luke 3:14. It was a common practice for soldiers to increase their small wages by extortion through intimidation and threatened violence, especially in their dealings with the wealthy. It had become a racket, a species of blackmail. Complaint and dissatisfaction over wages was quite common then, as now. It took great courage for John to point out the besetting sins of the various classes who came to him seeking salvation. Such counsel would be very unpopular today.

Today the scholastic world argues about relativities, but John insisted on a definite dividing line between right and wrong. He taught that men must live godly lives in harmony with the standard set forth in the law and the Scriptures, and that it is far better to err on the side of scruple than of laxity. Sin must be confessed and pardoned, or the tree will be cast down and destroyed as a cumberer of the ground. The great spiritual Surgeon insists that the cancer of sin be removed by an operation before it infests the whole body.

But the greatest of all of John's exhibitions of courage was the fearless manner in which he denounced the sins of Herod Antipas and Herodias. "Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet." Matthew 14:3-5.

"For John had repeatedly told Herod, You have no right to be living with your brother's wife. Therefore Herodias hated him and wished to take his life, but could not; for Herod stood in awe of John, knowing him to be an upright and holy man, and he protected him. After listening to him he was in great perplexity, and yet he found a pleasure in listening." Mark 6:18-20, Weymouth. According to Luke, John rebuked Herod not only about Herodias, but "about all the wicked deeds that he had done." And now he added a crowning act by putting John in prison. Luke 3:19, Weymouth.

Herod Antipas was the youngest of the sons of Herod the Great, and he inherited his father's cruelty, ambition, lust, and love of display and luxury. He was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39, when he was deposed by Caligula. Herodias was also a descendant of Herod the Great and had married another of his sons, Philip, whom he had disinherited. Philip and Herodias lived in the city of Rome, where Antipas met her and the unlawful infatuation began. She was not only the sister-in-law of Antipas, but also his niece. She came to live with Antipas on condition that he put away his wife, the daughter of King Aretas of Arabia. He did this, but the act involved him in a war that brought about his eventual downfall.

Herodias was a fortune hunter. Not content to be the wife of an ordinary citizen, she courted rank and fame and luxury. Antipas was the leading prince of the Herodian family, and she lured him to his ruin. She would not lose her prize without a struggle, and nothing was beneath her. She was too dissolute to possess a guilty conscience because

of incest and adultery. She was a second Jezebel living with a second Ahab. Theirs was a matrimonial mess comparable with many today. They were not only living in adultery, but marriage to a sister-in-law is expressly forbidden in Leviticus 18:16; 20:21. On two separate counts their marriage was therefore unlawful. Josephus tells how their marriage was especially repulsive to the Jews, how Herod's treatment of John was considered the worst of his many crimes, and how it became the real cause of his subsequent defeat and disgrace.

Because of John's repeated appeals to Herod to break the unlawful union, Herodias was furious and reacted violently. She had no defense and therefore used the only weapon she knew. The marginal reading is that she "had an inward grudge against him." She would have had him murdered but "she could not;" that is, not yet, but she bided her time. She had the will, but not the power. Herod feared both John and Herodias, the first because of his noble character, and the latter because she was cruel and unscrupulous. He was so favorably impressed with John's preaching that he sent for him several times and "heard him gladly" and "did many things" by way of reformation, many things except the one thing John most insisted on his doing.

Herod was haunted by a guilty conscience. He finally silenced the voice of the prophet; but he could not silence the voice of the Spirit, from which there is no escape except by way of repentance. He could not face the unwelcome fact of his sin, which could not be banished to the dungeon with his accuser. Only sincere and honest men are big

enough to accept rebuke and profit by it. David's ability to do so was one of the virtues which made him a man after God's own heart. How strong must have been John's appeals to the conscience-stricken slave of passion, that Herod should keep sending for him to come to his palace and explain the Scriptures, leading to corrections in Herod's life and conduct!

The courage of the Baptist was almost without parallel in history, unless it be that of Elijah facing Ahab, and Nathan facing David. Robertson declared: "It cost him his head, but it is better to have a head like John's and lose it, than to have an ordinary head and keep it." No wonder Jesus gave him the glowing tribute that there was none greater than John the Baptist. John possessed a clear sense of justice and spoke out against wrong, even though it resulted in his martyrdom. With him began the age of Christian heroes. He was the first of the noble array of martyrs who glorify the history of Christianity. He was not influenced by the popular modern maxims, "Watch your step" and "Discretion is the better part of valor." His was not the caution that ends in compromise, or the cowardice which leads to treason.

It is comparatively easy to denounce sin in general, and it is also quite safe. It requires no special courage to point out the failing of those who cannot retaliate. John placed his finger on the besetting sins of the various classes, including men in places of authority with power to mete out revenge. The arrogant prince and his harlot queen received the same treatment as did the lowly peasant. Those who most influence their generation for good are the men and

women of strong conviction who refuse to be silenced when it is their duty to speak.

That this is the greatest need of the present hour is beautifully expressed by a well-known writer: "The greatest want of the world is the want of men,—men who will not be bought or sold; men who in their inmost souls are true and honest; men who do not fear to call sin by its right name; men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole."—Ellen G. White, *Education* page 57.

Such messengers are needed for the proclamation of the antitype of the message of John the Baptist "in the spirit and power of Elijah" "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." Luke 1:17, R.S.V.

J ♦ O ♦ H ♦ N

A Man of Stability

According to Matthew's account Herod put John the Baptist in prison to please Herodias, who was angry over his repeated rebukes and would have put him to death, except for fear of the multitude, who counted John a prophet. But Mark wrote that Herodias "would have killed him; but she could not: for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him" ("protected him," according to Weymouth). Matthew 14: 3-5; Mark 6:17-20.

These two apparently different accounts do not constitute a contradiction, for as time passed and Herod invited John from time to time to visit him, and "heard him gladly," and made several minor reformations, his attitude changed, and he protected him from the fury of Herodias. Herod and Herodias lived in the beautiful palace built by Herod the Great east of the Dead Sea, overlooking the sea and the course of the Jordan, with Jerusalem visible to the west. It was known as "The Black Fortress," and excavations in

the ruins have uncovered two dungeons deep in the rock where scarcely a ray of light could reach the prisoners. Doubtless in one of these the Baptist was confined for at least a year.

After a life of activity in the wilderness, prison life weighed heavily upon John, and he became despondent and was haunted with doubts, for which his disciples were partly responsible. Instead of talking courage, they expressed their own misgivings as to the Messiahship of Jesus, of whom they were jealous. Jesus had failed to meet the expectations of John, who now became disappointed in the results of his own mission. It seemed that his work had been a failure, and he finally sent two of his disciples to Jesus to inquire concerning His mission.

"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" Matthew 11:2, 3. Where was the destroying ax and the consuming fire that he had predicted would fall upon his enemies? Earlier expositors believed that John asked his question wholly for the benefit of his doubting disciples whose faith was waning, but modern students conclude that John was chiefly concerned over his own wavering faith, and this is evident from what followed. He was for a time in "Doubting Castle" and had forgotten or misplaced the "key of faith." His hitherto bright hope had gone into a temporary eclipse.

Except for the two messengers, John did not express his doubts to his disciples and thus injure their faith, nor did he keep them to himself and brood over them. He took them

to Jesus, the Source of all faith and confidence. He would have gone to Him in person if it had been possible. His doubts were not the result of his own unfaithfulness, as is so often the case. He had not failed his Lord, and therefore no regrets or remorse troubled his conscience. He had done his duty, and his loyalty was beyond question. No one could possibly accuse him of cowardice or treason.

If Jesus was the Messiah and could perform such mighty works, even to the raising of the dead, why had he not rescued His kinsman and forerunner from the dungeon? Did not prophecy declare that the Messiah would "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound"? Therefore we cannot blame John for wondering why his prison doors had not been opened.

Alexander B. Bruce declared that John had been in prison "long enough to develop a prison mood." At the baptism there was no question in his mind as to the identity and mission of Jesus, but now he needed some assurance to lift him out of his depression and to dispel his doubts. His question indicated that he was confused by the teachings of the rabbis that there would be more than one forerunner of the Messiah. Could Jesus be only one of them, rather than the Messiah Himself?

John needed the assurance of Simeon, who, nearing the end of life, said: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace: . . . for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." No doubts can be more dangerous than those which question the divinity of Christ, His Sonship, and His saving mission to the world; but such doubts are harbored by many today, including religious leaders. They still wonder if He

was what He claimed to be, or if they must look for another. This question is especially troubling the Jews. Was Jesus the Messiah, or should they wait for another? Someday they must decide this question, upon which depends their eternal destiny. The fact is, that there can be no other, no alternative. Jesus has no rival, no competitor. He was the Son of God, or the world's worst impostor. With the genuine Christian, it is Christ or none.

Let us notice the answer of Jesus to the disciples of John: "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Matthew 11:4-6. All day long the disciples of John watched and listened. Jesus gave them a far more convincing argument than a mere, "Yes, I am the Messiah." He virtually quoted the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah 35:5, 6 and 61:1, with which John was familiar. The healing of leprosy and the raising of the dead were considered the greatest of all miracles. The Jews believed that leprosy was incurable, as it was by any human means; and many, including the Sadducees, taught that the dead could not be raised.

Leprosy in the Scriptures is used as a type of sin because it is loathsome, repulsive, contagious, and incurable, excluding its victims from society. The same is true of the plague of sin. It separates man from God and heaven and the angels and unfallen beings. When Lucifer and his angels sinned they were cast out of heaven. Like leprosy, sin is a

living death. Paul said, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." The rabbis had a saying, "In the land where the dead should arise, the kingdom of the Messiah should commence," and they taught that during the reign of the Messiah all sickness would be healed, including leprosy.

As Jesus pointed to His works as the evidence of His mission, so the most convincing argument of the genuineness of Christianity is personal evidence. The gospel is "the mystery of God," and therefore its experiences cannot be fully explained in words, or on the basis of science, philosophy, or even theology. John's disciples had now seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears what had before come to them chiefly through other sources, and they were fully convinced and could say with the apostle John: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John 1:1-3.

Jesus also sent John a mild rebuke for his lack of faith. He closed His message by saying, "And blessed is everyone who does not stumble and fall because of My claims." Matthew 11:6, Weymouth. Jesus challenged John's faith. He had stumbled over a misconception of the Messianic mission and was even offended at His conduct in ignoring his plight, eating with publicans and sinners, and in not asserting His authority in meting out judgments on Herod and all His enemies, as he had predicted of the Messiah. John felt something like the two disciples of Jesus on the

road to Emmaus the morning of the resurrection, who in their despondency said to Him, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." Luke 24:21.

While John could not possibly understand fully, he would be blessed if he did not cast away his confidence, and the same is true of all Christians. A divine blessing is pronounced upon all who do not display or parade their doubts as an evidence of superior intelligence, nor question the providence of God, but who patiently wait for Him to fulfill His eternal purpose, and who recognize that His mercy, forgiveness, and long-suffering love are even greater evidences of His rulership than His judgments. Christ is still the greatest offender of the human race. He is the "Stone of stumbling" and the "Rock of offense." But heaven's benediction is pronounced upon all who are not offended in Him.

Why did Jesus apparently ignore the plight of His forerunner? This question is beautifully answered by Ellen G. White in her book *The Desire of Ages*, pages 224, 225: "Jesus did not interpose to deliver His servant. He knew that John would bear the test. Gladly would the Saviour have come to John, to brighten the dungeon gloom with His own presence. But He was not to place Himself in the hands of enemies and imperil His own mission. Gladly would He have delivered His faithful servant. But for the sake of thousands who in after years must pass from prison to death, John was to drink the cup of martyrdom. As the followers of Jesus should languish in lonely cells, or perish by the sword, the rack, or the fagot, apparently forsaken by God and man, what a stay to their hearts would be the

thought that John the Baptist, to whose faithfulness Christ Himself had borne witness, had passed through a similar experience! . . . Though no miraculous deliverance was granted John, he was not forsaken. He had always the companionship of heavenly angels, who opened to him the prophecies concerning Christ, and the precious promises of Scripture. These were his stay, as they were to be the stay of God's people through the coming ages. . . . God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him."

After the two disciples had departed, Jesus, fearing that John's question might give the multitudes the mistaken impression that he was weak and vacillating, began to eulogize him. If they only could have heard and reported it to John! But doubtless it was best for him to remain in ignorance of the complimentary statements of his Master. What Jesus said "may almost be called the funeral oration of the Baptist, for not long afterwards Herodias compassed his death."—Plummer.

"And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. Verily I say

unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Matthew 11:7-11.

Along the river Jordan grows a canelike reed as high as twelve feet, with a flower at the top. It is so slender that it bends almost to the ground before the wind, and then resumes its upright position. But John was no reed swayed by every wind of favor, popularity, or adversity. The people had not gone into the wilderness to see a man with a weak and unstable character. John could be trusted to stand firm in spite of temporary doubts, imprisonment, and threatened death. From childhood he had been characterized by firmness and moral power, and he had not changed after entering prison. In Isaiah 36:6 the reed is used as the emblem of undependability and untrustworthiness. John had never been a fickle, wavering man, and he carried his integrity to the dungeon and the block. They had implicit confidence in him in the past, and they must not now misjudge him because of his questions. We, too, must learn to withhold hasty judgment of the worth of others and not exaggerate their small failings or talk about them to others, but look for "the beauty of holiness." After all, the important question is the direction in which they are traveling.

John's stability is one of the greatest needs of the modern Christian. Our generation is characterized by fickleness, instability, uncertainty, irresolution, and cowardice. It is an age of unsteady, fluctuating, spineless mollicoddles who are not "rooted and grounded" in the basic principles of truth and righteousness. Not many are ready to defy

pain and brave the lions' den and the fiery furnace rather than be found untrue to God. The virtue of Joseph was severely tested, but at every point he endured the test with unyielding principle. With but few exceptions, modern youth change with every change of circumstances and surroundings. They are one thing today and another tomorrow. They are unsound at heart, and at the time when firmness and principle are most needed, they give way and betray the confidence placed in them. The antitypes of John the Baptist will be men and women of integrity, firmness, and stability.

John was not an aristocrat, a pretended ruler, or a comfort seeker. It is true that he was in a king's palace, but not as a favored prince courting the royal approbation. He was in the palace dungeon wearing a prisoner's garb. People stand in line for hours to see a king or ruler pass by or be crowned or inaugurated, but the multitude had not gone out into the wilderness to see a prince or king clothed in gorgeous apparel. They went to see and hear a very humble man clothed in a robe of camel's hair and girt with a leather girdle. He was not a cringing timeserver, or a self-indulgent man of ease and pleasure. He was a man of strength and moral stature. He certainly did not look the part of an official, or priest, or cardinal, as far as clothing was concerned.

Jesus accepted the people's estimate of John as a prophet, but said that this was not sufficient, for he was "far more than a prophet." (Weymouth.) He possessed all the sterling qualities of those who had been honored with the prophetic gift, having "vigorous moral conviction, integrity,

strength of will, and fearless zeal for truth and righteousness."—Bruce. His experience in the prison gave proof that the prophetic gift does not lift its possessor above personal weaknesses. A prophet must gain victories and develop character by the same means as others, for he is "subject to like passions as we are." Doubt is never sinful in itself. John's heart was right, and his motives were pure. He made no claim to perfection or infallibility, nor should any human being.

John was more than an ordinary prophet, first because he was the herald and forerunner of the Messiah, the special messenger of the Lord, a privilege the other prophets would gladly have enjoyed. He climaxed and crowned the long line of Hebrew prophets who had adorned the history of the past. He was also more than a prophet, because he was "the subject as well as the vehicle of prophecy."—Alford. Evidently in God's estimation it is more important to fulfill prophecy than to predict future events. Some people are so anxious to possess the prophetic gift that they imagine and even fake visions and dreams and revelations. The statement of Jesus concerning John applies with equal force to every member of God's remnant people who faithfully proclaim the final message that prepares men and women for the second advent.

Jesus climaxed His eulogy of John by declaring that of all "that are born of women," or of all human beings, there had been none greater than John the Baptist. None had ever surpassed him in the virtues which constitute true greatness—humility, unselfishness, devotion, fearless courage, zeal, holiness of life and conduct, and singleness of

purpose. In these respects he had never been surpassed. And this estimate of his character was not that of a man, but of Him who reads the hearts and motives of men.

And while none would dare claim superiority to John in character and conduct, yet "he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." What did Jesus mean by this paradoxical statement? In what respect are the Christians of the new dispensation greater than John? In privilege and opportunities. Later Jesus said: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them." Matthew 13:16, 17.

Those in the new age, ushered in by the teachings of Jesus, would have a clearer vision and greater knowledge than all the prophets who had lived and prophesied before the advent of the Messiah, and even greater than those who listened to the preaching of John. John did not live to enjoy the fullness of the gospel illumination, or to see the glories of the cross, and the glorious fruitage of Pentecost. He did not witness the events which constitute the dividing point of history, after which all things have been different. After him came the dawn of the new creation when all things became new.

But because of the greater light and privileges, there is a corresponding increase of responsibility. These greater privileges might be illustrated by opportunities which come to the present generation to enjoy conveniences unknown to their forefathers, because of modern inventions and

their accompanying comforts and privileges. We of the modern generation are not greater in character, though we enjoy superior privileges in material things. But the greatest of all privileges in the entire history of the church will come to those who receive the latter rain of spiritual power and have a part in the finishing of God's work in the earth.

Jesus followed His eulogy of John with a strange and paradoxical statement which has been difficult to understand: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." Matthew 11:12, 13. "The kingdom of the heavens has been suffering violent assault," is the Weymouth translation. "Suffereth violence" might properly be translated "exercises its power," contrasting the old and the new operating spiritual forces. "The kingdom of heaven advances violently," says the Greek lexicon. Rudolph Otto thus translates the statement of Jesus: "From John's time until now the kingdom is exercising its own spiritual force, and men of spiritual force are able to lay hold of it, for the law and the prophets were until John, but now the new age has come."—*The Kingdom of God and the Son of Man*, pages 108-112.

The new age is pictured in the Revelation as coming in like an invading army "conquering and to conquer," and this army is described in Scripture as being "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." May all of us learn to appreciate more fully the superior privileges that are ours and use them to the full in this hour of opportunity.

M · A · R · Y

Mother of Jesus

In all history the most highly privileged women in the estimation of mankind have been those of the royal line who have given birth to princes destined to rule over nations. To each of them could have been said: "Thou art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

The most highly favored woman of all time was a Jewish maiden, a peasant girl of the hill country of Galilee, by the name of Mary, who became the mother of the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. The prophet Isaiah said that His name would be called "Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," and that He would eventually take upon His shoulders the rulership of this world, and "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end."

This maiden, estimated to have been about eighteen years of age, became the most distinguished mother in the history of man, the medium through whom the Eternal God visited the human race.

Few mortals have been visited by the highest-ranking

angel in heaven, the mighty Gabriel who ministers before the throne "in the presence of God," to be told of the favor of celestial beings. To Daniel the angel Gabriel brought the message that his prayer was heard and would be answered, "for thou art greatly beloved." The most outstanding experience of this kind came to this hitherto unknown Judean girl who received the most wonderful message ever conveyed to a human being.

Let us read the account of the angel's visit in Luke 1: 26-35: "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Unfortunately this language has been misinterpreted by many who have virtually deified Mary and placed her on a pedestal far above that intended by the Lord. To them she was a sinless being to be accorded veneration akin to worship, and being sinless, she was not subject to death and was therefore transported to heaven to become a mediator on an equality with her Son, if not above Him. Of necessity this fallacious belief gave Jesus sinless flesh, which placed Him beyond the possibility of temptation and sin, and thus deprives us of a Saviour who "took on Him the seed of Abraham" and "suffered being tempted" so that "He is able to succor them that are tempted." Because of this false view, others have been inclined to go to the opposite extreme and thus fail to give Mary the honor and glory which is due one so highly favored.

Matthew and Luke describe the virgin birth, and the fact that Luke was a physician adds force to his words. While several modern translations use the terms "maiden" and "young woman," in Isaiah 7:14, the King James, the Revised Standard, and most other versions use the term "virgin" in these New Testament texts. Of course, all these terms are correct. In fact, it takes all three terms to fully describe her, for she was a maiden, a young woman, and a virgin.

This virgin maiden from the Palestinian hills was as innocent and unspoiled as a little child. Pictorial art depicts the angel of the annunciation presenting to her a lily as the emblem of beauty and the symbol of purity. Leslie D. Weatherhead, pastor of the City Temple of London, wrote: We "see a simple peasant girl, probably not more than fif-

teen or sixteen years of age, healthy, with rosy cheeks and hands rough and red from housework in a poor home, a girl of unsullied character, a girl of unwarped mind, unspoiled by overfussing, unsophisticated in the ways of the world, unconfused by the quarreling of rabbis, a girl similar to the kind of fresh, virginal maiden whom one finds in one of our villages, one of the loveliest treasures in our national life. Notably, one imagines Mary to have been of exceptionally devout and receptive piety."—*Personalities of the Passion*, page 112.

No mention is made of Mary's parents, and some therefore believe that she was an orphan. This may be indicated by the fact that after the conception she went to spend three months with her cousin, Elisabeth. Her parents doubtless had been noble and godly people and deserve much credit for her nobility of character and conduct. The announcement of the angel came as a terrible shock to the maiden, and she was afraid. The consequence could mean disgrace and even death by stoning, the penalty for adultery. It could also easily wreck her marriage plans. But she bravely said to the angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Mary was betrothed, or engaged to be married, to a man named Joseph. When he learned that his intended wife was with child, the shock and embarrassment were indescribable, and his soul was pierced with sorrow. To him, Mary had been the very essence of innocence and purity. He was doubtless in agony for days, possibly weeks. We can imagine this devout man going to the synagogue for consolation, and one Sabbath the Scripture reading being

some of the Messianic predictions of the prophet Isaiah concerning the soon coming of the Messiah. These were very popular at that time, for all "people were in expectation" of the anticipated event.

Among these scriptures we can imagine the rabbi reading Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Such a forecast would come to Joseph as a message from heaven so that he was overwhelmed. Could it be possible that the experience of Mary was a fulfillment of the prophecy? Could Mary be the predicted mother of Immanuel? He could not imagine a more appropriate instrument than the maiden he knew and loved. If so, it would be a tragic mistake for him to make a wrong decision.

We are not told how Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy. If she told him, there is nothing in the record to indicate it. If she had, it would be difficult for him to understand. Among the Semitic races betrothals continued about a year before the marriage, and were considered as sacred and binding. Betrothal was entered into with a ceremony and could be terminated only by legal steps. If the man died during the engagement, the woman was considered a widow. At marriage there was another religious ceremony when the bridegroom took the bride to his own home. This throws light on the statements, "Joseph her husband" and "Mary thy wife" which were spoken during their betrothal. The church is now betrothed to Christ, and the marriage and marriage banquet take place after the second advent, as is described in Revelation 19:1-9.

It is then that Christ takes the church, His bride, to the home prepared for her in the New Jerusalem.

Joseph was in a dilemma, because "an informal cancellation of betrothal was impossible."—McNeile. He must choose between one of two courses—make a public example of her, or put her away privately, the latter being the most merciful method. Being "a just man," he was supposed to obey the rules of law. He could expose her to public disgrace, or he could privately give her a bill of divorcement or annulment before witnesses without giving cause. We can imagine Joseph passing through a struggle to decide between his legal conscience and his love for Mary.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Matthew 1:18-23.

The dream did not fully solve Joseph's problem, because the strange circumstance could not be concealed. He

decided to endure whatever stigma might come. He could not expect anyone to believe the facts, which would seem fantastic. It was too incredible to believe, as he knew from experience.

In honoring Mary, we must not forget or neglect Joseph and his noble part in the birth and training of Jesus. No boy ever had a better foster father, or one who was more godly. Jesus must have loved him dearly and from him learned the carpentry trade and many of the valuable lessons used in His later ministry. Joseph was both kind and just in all his dealings with the boy Jesus, who was as dear to him as if He were his own son.

Both Mary and Joseph were divinely instructed to call the son Jesus. This is the Greek form of Joshua, and means "The salvation of Jehovah," or "Jehovah is salvation." Jesus would be the Joshua who would eventually lead spiritual Israel out of the bondage of sin and into the heavenly Canaan. Joshua was therefore the type of Christ.

Because of His miraculous birth, how careful Joseph and Mary, and especially the latter, must have been in teaching Jesus the Scriptures and schooling Him in strict obedience to both parental and divine law. His nobility of character was not all due to His divine origin. The importance of the early influence of the home in character development cannot be overemphasized. In fact, a full realization of the responsibility of parents would be almost frightening. Mary never marred the character of Jesus by mistaking mere sentiment for love, by substituting indulgence for discipline, or by inviting the mother fixations so often exhibited. She did not thwart His mental and

spiritual growth by narrow ideas or a dominating spirit.

A well-known writer said of Jesus: "His mind was active and penetrating, with a thoughtfulness and wisdom beyond His years. Yet His character was beautiful in its symmetry. . . . As a child, Jesus manifested a peculiar loveliness of disposition. . . . With deep earnestness the mother of Jesus watched the unfolding of His powers, and beheld the impress of perfection upon His character. With delight she sought to encourage that bright, receptive mind. Through the Holy Spirit she received wisdom to co-operate with the heavenly agencies in the development of this child, who could claim only God as His Father. . . . His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 68-70.

As Jesus grew toward manhood, Mary doubtless had the difficulty most mothers experience in trying to adjust her thinking to the changing relationships which naturally come with such development. Jesus was different in many ways from other children and was therefore not fully understood. His statement later that "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house," was made in the synagogue in Nazareth where He grew up, and it tells much in regard to the attitude of not only the neighbors, but also the family toward this strange and unusual boy.

Mary was puzzled and even perplexed by many things Jesus said and did, but she wisely "kept all these things, and

pondered them in her heart," ever remembering His miraculous birth and divinely appointed mission. What else could she expect in His life but things hard to understand? A severe test of faith came when Jesus reached the age of twelve and accompanied Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem for the first time to attend one of the great annual religious festivals. He wandered into the temple and the classroom, where at specified times the "doctors of the law," perhaps on this occasion including the noted Gamaliel, permitted and answered questions. These scholars and theologians were amazed at the questions and answers of the boy Jesus.

When the pilgrims left for their homes, Jesus was not among them, and His absence was not detected until they had gone "a day's journey," or a third of the way to Nazareth. This was not strange, since men and women often traveled in separate companies. Joseph thought Jesus was with Mary, and Mary thought He was with Joseph. At night when the family had their evening meal, they discovered His absence. After searching among the relatives and friends in the camp, they turned back to Jerusalem in a three-day search. They finally found Him in the temple discussing theological questions with the scribes.

Mary reproved Jesus with the question and statement, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing," or "anxiously," or "in anguish," according to other translations. His answer was a mild rebuke that amazed them: "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" or "Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?" (R.S.V.) He virtually said, "Why did you worry? Were

you surprised because I wanted to be in My Father's house?" The record is, "And they understood not the saying." In fact, it is still rather puzzling to us. Then we read that He went with them to Nazareth "and was obedient to them," and that His mother kept these things in her heart.

Another puzzling experience is recorded in Mark 3:31-35. Mary and her step-children came to see Jesus and found a multitude listening to Him preach. He was told that they were there seeking Him, but He answered, "Who is My mother, or My brethren?" He then looked around upon the crowd and said: "Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother." This, too, was hard for the family to comprehend, and may have wounded the feelings of Mary.

At the circumcision of Jesus when He was eight days old, Simeon prophesied that a sword would pierce the soul of Mary. How and when was this prediction fulfilled? First, in the disgrace she endured through life in being falsely accused of fornication, which placed her among the outcasts from society. Even though Joseph in his love did everything possible to protect her reputation, the event became known, and the stigma followed her to the grave. The facts could not be satisfactorily explained, especially to His enemies, who said to Jesus, "We be not born of fornication" as You were, a thrust which must have hurt.

She was also cut to the heart in her inability to understand Him and His mission and especially His death, for she shared the Messianic ideas believed by the Jews and even by the disciples. She was also deeply wounded by

the Son's treatment and final rejection by the Jewish leaders who considered Him an impostor and blasphemer. On His visit to Nazareth His sermon produced a riot, and the people attempted to take His life. How could this happen if He were really the Messiah? Most of all, she was crushed by the condemnation by the Jews and His crucifixion by the Romans. As she watched Him being crucified, the nails also pierced her hands and feet, and her heart was also being broken. As she "watched Him there" she suffered with her Son many of the agonies of the cross.

At the time of His death she was about fifty years of age, and doubtless carried in her face the record of care and toil. She, too, had spent a sleepless night of mental anguish. For a long time He seemed not to notice her, and how comforted she was when He finally looked down from the cross at her and smiled, as He said to her, "Woman, behold thy son," and then to John, "Behold thy mother." They both understood and acted accordingly.

The question naturally arises as to why she was not cared for by one of her own children, the sons and daughters of Joseph. We do not know. At that time they were doubtless not yet Christians. We are not told anything about the relations or associations of Jesus and Mary during the period after His resurrection and before His ascension, and we should not conjecture. The question also arises as to their relationship through all eternity in the Paradise restored. Again the Bible is silent.

THE WIDOW

A Liberal Giver

In this chapter we shall discuss a nameless heroine of the New Testament whose sacrificial giving called forth from Jesus one of His greatest commendations. While she rests in an unmarked grave, her exhibition of unselfish liberality has given her an ever-increasing popularity even above that of many of the so-called great of the earth. In contrast with the greedy, grasping, covetous spirit of the world, her character shines with expanding brilliancy. She accomplished far more for the church of Christ in financial affairs than the imagination can grasp or statisticians can compute. The divine Head of the church credited her with being the world's most liberal giver.

Here is the brief record of the one who went beyond the second mile in giving: "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And He called unto Him His disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they did cast in of their abundance;

but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Mark 12:41-44.

This incident is recorded thus in Luke 21:1-4, Weymouth: "Looking up He saw the people throwing their gifts into the treasury—the rich people. He also saw a poor widow dropping in two farthings, and He said, In truth I tell you that this widow, so poor, has thrown in more than any of them. For from what they could well spare they have all of them contributed to the offerings, but she in her need has thrown in all she had to live on."

It doubtless comes as a shock to many professed Christians that the One whose eyes are "as lamps of fire" and who discerns "the thoughts and intents of the heart," attends our services of worship and watches to see how much and in what spirit each worshiper contributes when the offering is received. Many seem to have the idea that the Master centers His attention on the prayer and sermon and music, and that the offering is only incidental and unimportant, a necessary but unwelcome part of the service to be followed with a sigh of relief. Evidently this misconception is the result of a wrong sense of values.

Why is the Lord so interested in the part of the service which pertains to the church treasury? First of all, to see if His people are obeying His own instructions in regard to holy convocations or services of worship, when He said: "And none shall appear before Me empty," and, "They shall not appear before the Lord empty." Exodus 23:15; 34:20; Deuteronomy 16:16. This instruction is too explicit to be misunderstood.

The same instruction was given through the psalmist:

"Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come into His courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before Him, all the earth." Psalm 96:8, 9. This language indicates that we should not come into the courts or sanctuary of the Lord without an offering, and that we cannot give Him the glory He deserves or worship Him "in the beauty of holiness" if we appear before Him empty-handed. How can we expect His approval and blessing when this clear instruction is ignored?

The chief reason for this instruction is that the offering is a definite part of worship, as much so as the sermon and any other part of the service. Evidently church leaders have largely failed to make this clear to their congregations, for multiplied thousands attend services week after week in disobedience to the Lord's command to "bring an offering" when they "come into His courts," to worship. They treat the collection plate as though it were an intruder and unrelated to the rest of the service. It seems strange that so many church members feel no sense of responsibility in regard to the operating expenses of their church home.

The example of the poverty-stricken widow in obeying the command of God leaves no excuse for any person, old or young, in this age of plenty and unparalleled prosperity, for not making some sort of contribution whenever the offering plate is passed. Wise parents will see to it that their children make this a fixed habit of life so that it will continue as they grow into manhood and womanhood.

No minister should apologize for preaching from time to time on gospel finance, for a surprising number of Scriptures deal with this topic. In fact, great stress is placed on

giving as the central and dominant principle of the plan of redemption. John 3:16 sets forth the gospel in miniature, and Jesus declared, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Giving is therefore a spiritual act, a sacramental duty, an ordinance of worship.

As strange as it may seem, Jesus said more about money than about repentance, the new birth, and many other subjects of vital importance in the plan of salvation. He gave almost forty parables, and more of them have to do with finance than with any other subject. This is because the use we make of our money is one of the best of all indexes to character. Therefore those who are free to complain of the frequent mention of money are really criticizing Christ and are probably under condemnation because of their own neglect of duty.

Great emphasis is placed on the importance of the instruction given in 1 Corinthians 15 on the hope of the resurrection, but many fail to notice that it is immediately followed by the statement, "Now concerning the collection," with the accompanying counsel for each member to give "as God hath prospered him." It is the duty of all church leaders to talk to their congregations "concerning the collection," not only because money is needed in ever-increasing amounts to support the church in her world-embracing program of evangelism, but also because of the principle involved in the spirit of giving, with its spiritual consequences.

Liberal giving is the greatest of all safeguards against covetousness and the corrupting influence of Mammon, or "filthy lucre." "The love of money" leads to a whole host

of evils, and none are exempt from this danger, which is a species of idolatry. The following instruction and warning were never more greatly needed than today: "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." 1 Timothy 6:8-11.

The ancient Israelites were a liberal people, their tithes and offerings amounting to at least a fourth of their income. Some religious organizations today are very liberal compared with others. The followers of Mohammed are required to give 40 per cent. A Moslem in this country was asked if many of his people obeyed this injunction. He replied that most of them did, "otherwise they would not be Moslems, for to be a Moslem is to obey what the religion teaches, and the faith teaches 40 per cent; so we give 40 per cent."

It was during the last visit of Jesus to the temple at Jerusalem that He "sat over against the treasury" and observed how the worshipers contributed. The treasury was a room near the entrance. Along the wall were thirteen brass chests called "trumpets," because of their shape. One has described them as "swelling out beneath and tapering upward into a narrow mouth or opening into which the contributions were put." These were labeled for the various funds, as are the modern tithe-and-offering envelopes.

The Lord still observes all worshipers to see if they discharge their financial obligations to their church, and the motives and characters of the givers are the special objects of His searching gaze. The wealthy still give "of their abundance" or superfluity, or of that which is over and above their needs or wants after they have been fully satisfied. While their gifts are not sacrificial, there is no evidence that the Lord does not accept them. He doubtless appreciates their liberality. As He observed that day, He saw much that was commendable. Since "He knew what was in man," He was well acquainted with each donor as well as the motives prompting the gift.

A wealthy woman, living in a luxuriously furnished apartment in the most exclusive residential section of one of our great cities, excused herself to her pastor for not making more liberal contributions. She was prevented from doing so because of her heavy expenses in keeping a butler, chauffeur, and several maids, together with high taxes and the cost of living, including a regular seat at the opera. Her alibis were acceptable neither to her minister nor to the One who appraised the gift of the widow. How often those most able contribute the least! In fact, the great bulk of the means used in the gospel enterprise comes from those in moderate circumstances.

There were doubtless many poor people among the contributors whom Jesus observed, including other widows. But it was the gift of the poorest of them all which made such a favorable impression on Jesus. The one He pointed out to His disciples was worn with toil. The mite or "minutia" of her gift was the smallest copper coin known

to the Jews, so small that the rabbis required that no contribution be less than two. In value the mite was less than a quarter of a cent. In order to make the required offering she gave "all that she had," or "all her living." There was nothing left in her bag or at home. She was helping to finance the work of her Lord out of a deficit rather than a surplus. She knew not that she was being watched, and doubtless cast in her gift when she thought no one was looking. She therefore did not give, like the Pharisees, "to be seen of men." It was after her act of sacrifice that she heard Christ's words of commendation.

Unknowingly this widow, who made the smallest contribution in money value that day, stepped out of the shadow of obscurity into the blazing light of history as one of the greatest characters and liberal givers of all time. What Jesus said of Mary Magdalene applies with equal force to this widow: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Mark 14:9. The widow really transacted big business that day, her act constituting one of the greatest financial transactions of all history. It has brought unnumbered millions of dollars into the treasury of the church. She was the most liberal giver of all time.

Her gift was the gift of love, and love is a spendthrift whose contributions cannot be counted on the basis of arithmetic or with adding machines. No church treasurer can compute the amount of such gifts in his annual reports. Ambrose declared that what "God esteems is not that which you proudly present, but what you offer with humility and

devotion." Love knows no burden or sacrifice but finds pleasure in serving to the last measure of devotion.

Let us notice some of the lessons we may learn from the experience of the poor widow whom Jesus commended. In the first place, the Lord expects all of His people to go into His sanctuary at the appointed times for worship, and warns against "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is," but urges us to make the Sabbath a holy convocation as an important part of Sabbath observance. Neglect in this respect is largely responsible for the low spiritual ebb of the church at the present time. In fact, it is the beginning of backsliding and apostasy. In the second place, the Lord expects all worshipers to give an offering as an act of worship and privilege, and it is impossible to compute or even imagine the spiritual blessings lost as the consequence of neglect in this respect. A great spiritual reformation is needed to bring "the lost sheep" back to the fold and the ministry of the Great Shepherd.

In the third place, the Master watches each worshiper to determine why and how much and on what basis he gives. Is the amount determined by a balance between love and prosperity? In this matter the Lord "trieth the hearts and reins," or the motives, the amount being of secondary importance. The divine principle that should rule in our giving is beautifully set forth in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: "Remember this: The man who sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and the man who sows generously will reap generously. Everyone must give what he has made up his mind to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion; God

loves a man who is glad to give. God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance so that you will always have enough for every situation, and ample means for every good enterprise." (Goodspeed.) The ability to give is increased by liberality. John Wesley gave good counsel to Christians when he said: "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can."

After all, the gift that costs is the gift that counts. Paul said of the Christians of Macedonia: "While passing through great trouble, their boundless joy even amid their deep poverty has overflowed to increase their generous liberality." 2 Corinthians 8:2, Weymouth. For them, love made sacrifice a pleasure. It is the incense that makes our gifts fragrant. In fact, without love our giving is worthless in the estimation of heaven. Paul wrote, "And if I distribute all my possessions to the poor, and give up my body to be burned, but am destitute of love, it profits me nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:3, Weymouth.

It is to be regretted that some people use the example of the widow and her two mites as an alibi for their stinginess. A. T. Robertson in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, says: "It is a tragedy to see a stingy saint pose as giving the widow's mite when he could give thousands instead of pennies." It is sad to hear such persons say with apparent satisfaction and self-complacency, "I gave my two mites." Would such persons like to have the Lord deal with them on the same niggardly basis?

In a little cemetery near a small village is the grave of a saintly woman who went the second mile in sacrificial giving and loving service to her church and community. The peo-

ple of the whole countryside attended the funeral, and many tears were shed. Then they erected a small monument over the grave and placed on it the inscription, "She hath done what she couldn't." This would be an appropriate epitaph in memory of the widow whose noble example has inspired liberality in so many millions. In the great rewarding time when she sees the results of her sacrifice in redeemed souls, she will understand the words of Jesus: "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back." Luke 6:38, R.S.V.

MARY MAGDALENE

The Woman Who Loved Most

We shall now discuss another of the noble characters of early Christian history, one who, because of the redeeming love of Jesus, served Him with a devotion and loved Him with an affection which are beautiful beyond the power of human language to describe. In courage, integrity, and faithfulness our heroine set an example which is unparalleled. Her name was Mary, and to distinguish her from many others with the same name, she was called Mary Magdalene, or, according to most modern translations, Mary of Magdala, doubtless because her birthplace and early childhood home was in the little fishing village of Magdala on the western bulge of the Sea of Galilee, near Tiberias. She is further described as the one out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils. This indicates the special reason for her ardent love.

According to Matthew 27:55, 56, Mary was one of the many devoted women who accompanied and ministered to Jesus during His last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem to suffer persecution and martyrdom. Here Mary is mentioned

first among the women who were watching the crucifixion from "afar off," or "from a distance." (Weymouth.) They could do nothing for their Master now, but they had been doing what they could, and were watching the tragic event and waiting and hoping to be of further service.

The following beautiful comment is to the point: "That company of women is the first of a great host to whose ardent and dedicated zeal there has been no end. The little group, watching the cross from afar, stretches out in an 'endless line of splendor' till it extends through all the succeeding centuries and into all the ends of the earth."—*The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 7, p. 909.

Where were the disciples, including brave and boastful Peter? They had all fled, and only John recovered sufficient courage to return. Was the love and devotion of these women strange, in the light of the fact that Jesus had emancipated women from virtual serfdom and placed them back on an equality with men, as in the beginning? And is it at all strange that down to our own day women compose the greater portion of Christian congregations, and are characterized by their love, devotion, loyalty, and missionary activity?

Mary was also one of the smaller group who drew nearer to the cross in order to enter more fully into the fellowship of the sufferings of their Lord. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." John 19:25. As Jesus had an inner circle of disciples, Peter, James, and John, so He also seems to have had an inner circle of women devotees who are mentioned several times, and in most

instances Mary Magdalene is named first. These loving and courageous women were not ashamed to be known as His followers. They stood near Jesus in loving sympathy in the hour of His greatest agony, demonstrating the genuineness of their love and friendship. After all, it is during a crisis that real friends are revealed.

It is believed that John, to whom Jesus committed the care of His mother, led her away from the terrible scene to spare her the mental anguish of seeing her Son die, and that Mary Magdalene remained near the object of her love to the bitter end. Can we imagine the emotions of the two Marys as they stood helplessly by, one with a mother's ardent love, and the other with the intense affection of a redeemed sinner? Both had doubtless spent the night in sleepless agony.

Mary Magdalene was the first-named of the three women who came to the sepulcher at break of day on Sunday morning to anoint the body of Jesus. This anointing and embalming was begun Friday evening by Joseph and Nicodemus, who used a hundred pounds of myrrh mixed with aloes. John 19:39, 40. This embalming material was made from the gum of the myrrh tree mixed with powder made from aloe wood. The body was completely covered with the unguent, and then it was wrapped in a linen cloth.

The women found the great stone rolled away and the tomb empty. An angel gave them the good news that Jesus had risen from the dead and bade them go and give the glad tidings to the eleven disciples, but "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Luke 24:11. Physician Luke uses the medical term which describes

the idle talk or wild ravings of a delirious person. However, Peter and John ran to the tomb to check up on their story, and the record is that "Him they saw not." Luke 24:24. While they obtained considerable evidence it was not enough to convince them.

As strange as it may seem, Jesus revealed Himself first, not to His mother, nor to His most intimate disciples, but to Mary Magdalene. "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils." Mark 16:9. She was therefore the last at the cross and the first to see and greet Him as He came forth from the tomb. She loved Him most because she had been forgiven most. What encouragement it is to sinners, that no sin is so great or possession by demons so complete as to separate them from the love and forgiving grace of Christ. Mary was the first to believe when all others doubted. "Mary stood beside the cross, and followed Him to the sepulcher. Mary was first at the tomb after His resurrection. It was Mary who first proclaimed a risen Saviour."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 568.

This was not to be wondered at, since she was the first to believe the statement of Jesus in regard to His approaching death, and not only demonstrated her belief, but also her love, as had none other of His followers. In fact, we are told that "she loved much." She was the one among the many who found Him on the morning of His resurrection because she sought Him with tears. Doubtless she had but little sleep during those three tragic nights, and now her undying love was richly rewarded.

Mary Magdalene is first mentioned by name as a member of the company with Jesus on His second preaching tour, as recorded in Luke 8:2. She is mentioned again as the sister of Martha at "the time of Christ's first visit to Bethany."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 525. Here "a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house." This probably indicates that she was the older of the three and the owner of the home. Martha "had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word." Luke 10:38, 39. See John 11:1, 2; 12:1-3.

Martha was anxious to entertain the distinguished guest properly and was controlled by an inward anxiety which produced an outward agitation. Mary probably felt that because Martha was so fretful, the most unselfish thing she could do was to retire from the kitchen and let her have her own way, and at the same time she would entertain the Guest. Martha really reproached Jesus for monopolizing Mary and keeping her from her duties; or she may have been controlled by an outburst of jealousy. She indicated that Mary would pay no attention to her plea for help; so she asked Jesus to bid her to help prepare the meal. As with many hostesses, her preparations were doubtless too elaborate.

The record is: "Martha meanwhile was busy and distracted in waiting at table, and she came and said, Master, do You not care that my sister is leaving me to do all the waiting? Tell her to assist me." Luke 10:40, Weymouth. Then Jesus gave Martha a gentle rebuke, not because of her activity, but because of her agitation and lack of serenity. "Martha, Martha, replied Jesus, you are anxious and worried

about a multitude of things; and yet only one thing is really necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion and she shall not be deprived of it." Verses 41, 42, Weymouth.

It seems that whenever Jesus repeated a person's name it was a mark of pitying love, such as "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you," and "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" In commenting on our text, one writer said: "There is a wide field for the Marthas, with their zeal in active religious work. But let them first sit with Mary at the feet of Jesus. Let diligence, promptness, and energy be sanctified by the grace of Christ; then the life will be an unconquerable power for good."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 525.

Some believe that Jesus meant that one dish was sufficient instead of the many that Martha was preparing, and then gave it a spiritual application. Martha's service fulfilled only a present and temporary need, while Mary's association with Jesus would have permanent results.

Later, Mary demonstrated her love when a dinner was given in honor of Jesus in Bethany by Simon the leper. At this dinner Martha served, and Lazarus was "among those who reclined at table beside Him." John 12:2, Moffatt. See verses 1-8. Stier says: "Between the raised Lazarus and the healed leper, the Lord probably sits between two trophies of His glory." The raising of the dead and the healing of leprosy were the two miracles that the Jews claimed only the Messiah could perform.

There are four accounts of this feast, recorded in Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50; and John 12:1-9. Many Bible students insist that these describe two or three differ-

ent occasions with at least two different Simons and three Marys—Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and Mary the sinner. However, this seems unreasonable, since the descriptions are so strikingly similar and the names are identical. The writer therefore agrees with those who consider all four accounts to relate to the same event, even though Luke's narrative seems to be out of its chronological order.

This feast was given on the occasion of the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. Arriving a few days before the Passover, He and His disciples visited nearby Bethany, where on a previous visit He had raised Lazarus from the tomb and had healed Simon of his leprosy. In an attempt to show his gratitude, the latter gave a dinner in honor of his benefactor. Since Simon was a common name among the Jews, he is designated "Simon the leper." Thus we read of "Simon the Canaanite," "Simon a tanner," and "Simon Peter." Simon had invited his neighbors, some of whom were also friends of Jesus. It is interesting to note that in an old cemetery in Bethany the names of both Simon and Martha have been found.

Luke declares that Simon was a Pharisee and that he "repeatedly invited Him to a meal at his house; so He entered the house and reclined at the table." Luke 7:36, Weymouth. It was the custom then to leave the sandals at the door and recline on couches at the table with the bare feet away from the table, where the servant could conveniently wash them. Was Mary an uninvited guest? We are not told, but at that time anyone, even a beggar, was permitted to enter and watch the guests eat. We read in John 12:3, Weymouth, "Availing herself of the oppor-

tunity, Mary took a pound weight of pure spikenard, very costly, and poured it over His feet, and wiped His feet with her hair, so that the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume."

This ointment or perfume was in a flask made of alabaster, a white and yellow stone resembling marble. The ointment used by Mary was "very costly," "very precious," "very expensive," and "it cost a great sum," according to the different Gospels and translations. Nard, or spikenard was extracted from the blossoms and roots of the Indian and Arabian nard grass. "An alabaster of nard was a present for a king," declared Bruce, and it was one of the five expensive presents sent by Cambyses to the king of Ethiopia, according to Herodotus. It was the most costly and precious anointing oil of antiquity, the price being beyond all but the wealthy. The cost of the pound used by Mary has been estimated all the way up to \$500. She used "pure spikenard," which distinguished it from an adulterated variety sold in the markets, which Pliny called "pseudo nard."

Mary did not pour out a few drops only, as was the usual custom, but broke and emptied the flask. That is, she broke the narrow neck so that it could all be poured on the head and feet of Jesus. She went far beyond mere custom, prudence, and arithmetic into the realm of love that knows no sacrifice. One who loves Christ with all the heart will reckon no gift too costly to honor Him. We are told that the perfume filled the house, but it did not stop there. It has shed its fragrance to all the world and through all the centuries.

According to the different accounts, the ointment was poured out on both the head and feet of Jesus. Matthew and Mark mention the head, which was the usual procedure, and Luke and John the feet, which was unusual. "Having learnt that Jesus was at table in the Pharisee's house she brought a flask of perfume, and, standing behind close to His feet, weeping, began to wet His feet with her tears; and with her hair she wiped the tears away again, while she lovingly kissed His feet and poured the perfume over them." Luke 7:37, 38, Weymouth. To accomplish this unnoticed was easy, since Jesus lay at table with His feet behind Him. James Moffatt says: "She . . . stood behind Him at His feet in tears; as her tears began to wet His feet, she wiped them with the hair of her head, pressed kisses on them, and anointed them with the perfume." Plummer declared, "Among the Jews it was a shameful thing for a woman to let down her hair in public: but she made the sacrifice." He also said, "Kissing the feet was a common mark of deep reverence, especially to leading rabbis." Bengel said that tears are "the most priceless of waters." Mary washed His feet with the most expensive water and anointed them with the most costly perfume. Nothing was too good for the object of her love.

Why was this woman weeping? Her tears were those of repentance over the sins of the past, and of joy because of Christ's redeeming love. Out of her, Jesus had cast "seven devils" or seven "evil spirits" (Goodspeed), and seven is the symbol of fullness, representing complete possession. Some contend that this means that she had been healed of one or more diseases, but Luke says she "was a sinner." "She was

a notorious sinner," "She was leading a sinful life," are other translations. The word is that used to describe a harlot. But she had heard Jesus preach and had accepted Him as her Redeemer. She may have heard the gracious invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Seven times He had rebuked the demon that possessed her, and she became free at last. The change had filled her with unspeakable joy.

The perfume called the attention of the disciples to the woman, and they were indignant "within themselves." Mark 14:5. In fact, "they were exceedingly angry with her" (Weymouth), and "they reproached her" (R.S.V.), and "upbraided her" (Moffatt). De Witte says "they scolded her." John indicates that Judas was the moving spirit and spokesman in the complaint. Since he was a trusted official and treasurer of the group, what he said had weight with the others; and the simple Galileans were not accustomed to such luxury.

The criticism was based on a pretended sympathy for the poor. Judas considered the perfume a total loss, a mere sentimental aroma. He knew that Jesus was sympathetic with the poor, and his question, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" was cleverly worded to embarrass Jesus. The fact is, that those who are the most devoted to Christ are the most liberal givers for all purposes.

There are those who complain of extravagance in church buildings, furnishings, and various projects because they profess concern for the poor or the needs of the mission fields. Yet it has been often demonstrated that those who

give liberally to keep up the home base are also the best supporters of the world-wide missions program. The selfish and covetous spirit of Judas was in contrast to Mary's beautiful sacrifice of love. The perfume that was sweet to Jesus was almost a stench to Judas. The "poor" he was so anxious about was himself, as with most persons who thus complain. Judas said the ointment might have been sold instead of wasted. Some think every sacrifice of love is a waste, including that of Christ on the cross of Calvary. Of course His spilled blood is wasted on the great majority of sinners.

The motive of Judas was wrong because it was inspired by selfishness. "The reason he said this was not that he cared for the poor, but that he was a thief, and that being in charge of the money box, he used to steal what was put into it." John 12:6, Weymouth. Pretended charity sometimes serves as a cloak for covetousness. "Sinful motive often hides itself under the mask of reverence for another virtue."—*The Pulpit Commentary*. Sometimes generous acts are criticized because they condemn the critic's own selfishness. Some people excuse themselves for failure to meet their church obligations by expressing concern for the poor or some far-off project. How different the avaricious market-minded and greedy earth-bound reasoning of Judas, and the spontaneity of love shown by Mary! He weighed her act on the basis of money value only.

Mary was doubtless shocked and deeply hurt by the attitude of the disciples. But she was surprised and heartened by the reaction of Jesus, who up to this time had paid no attention to her whatever. "Let her alone," He said to

her critics, "against the day of My burying hath she kept this." But wisely she decided to give it before He died, and in this she set a good example for all. The usual spices were furnished by Joseph and Nicodemus after His death.

Mary gave evidence of greater knowledge and vision than did the disciples. It seems that she alone believed His statements concerning His approaching death, and her deed was not only beautiful, but also meaningful, symbolic, and sacramental. She could not possibly have understood the full significance of the act for which she was so highly commended. One has said, "The Holy Spirit had planned for her, and she had obeyed His promptings."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 560.

Jesus said, "She has done what she could." Mark 14:8, R.S.V. There wasn't much anyone could do under the circumstances. Many people do not do what they can for the Master; because they cannot do the impossible they do nothing. Because they cannot contribute \$500 they do not give the \$100 they could spare, and because they cannot preach like Apollos they do no missionary work whatever. "She has done a beautiful thing to me." Matthew 26:10, R.S.V. To Jesus her act was a thing of beauty which would remain as a memorial forever. It was love rising above the height of mere duty and going the second mile. She was pouring out on Him the affections of her heart, a silent but dramatic evidence of her gratitude. It was the implied rebuke of this experience which drove Judas to his final decision to betray his Lord.

The perfume not only attracted the attention and complaint of the disciples, but also of Simon, the Pharisee and

former leper. He, too, was indignant over the interruption and was amazed that Jesus would permit it. It confirmed his suspicions that Jesus was not what He pretended to be. Simon reasoned that if Jesus had the prophetic gift or were the Messiah, He "would know that she is an immoral woman." Luke 7:39, Weymouth. How did Simon know the character of this woman? This is answered in the following statement: "Simon had led into sin the woman he now despised. She had been deeply wronged by him."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 566. He knew her character because he had contributed to her fall.

Simon did not speak aloud, but "within himself." Jesus spoke to him "in answer to his thoughts." Luke 7:40, Weymouth. "He heard the Pharisee thinking," said Augustine. Jesus virtually said, "Simon, you have been thinking evil of Me; I have something to say to you." He then gave him the parable of the two debtors, one owing the creditor five hundred pence and the other fifty. Both were insolvent, and the creditor forgave them both. Jesus then asked which would love his benefactor most. Simon answered that he supposed it would be the one forgiven most, and Jesus said, "Thou hast rightly judged."

Jesus then looks at the woman for the first time, for she was "behind Him." Then He speaks to Simon, reminding him of his lack of courtesy in performing the customary salutations and services to a guest, and of how the woman had more than made up for his failure. As a rabbi He was entitled to a kiss of welcome and to have His feet washed and His head anointed. The cold reception may have been due to Simon's sharing the prejudice of his class.

Then Jesus makes the application of His parable: "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." Previous to this occasion her sins had been forgiven, and this was the reason for her act of love and gratitude. She was assured that they would remain forgiven.

Simon had loved little because he was unaware that he needed forgiveness. He had no conception of the nature and malignity of sin. The two debtors of the parable were Mary and Simon, one having been forgiven ten times the sins of the other, not because she was ten times more guilty, but because she was ten times more conscious of her sins. Pardon is based on the knowledge of sin and on the love and gratitude which follow forgiveness. Jesus declared that Mary was saved by faith; but it was the "faith which worketh by love." Faith was the ground, and love the result, of her pardon and acceptance.

The great need of the modern world is to become conscious that sin is "exceeding sinful," and that pardon and complete justification are available through faith. These will produce "much love" for the Redeemer, a love embracing all the affections of the heart, the reasoning of the mind, the devotions of the soul, and the strength of the physical powers. This is the love that is unexplainable, immeasurable, unspeakable, and full of glory. Its height and depth and breadth can be measured only by the cross of Calvary. Because Christ loved us much and demonstrated it by His death on the cross, surely we should demonstrate our love by lives fragrant with "the beauty of holiness."

P ♦ E ♦ T ♦ E ♦ R

The Impetuous

We shall now study one of the most interesting and important characters of the New Testament history, one whom we admire for his sincerity and basic honesty. Though he often stumbled and fell, he always rose again and pressed on toward the goal of perfection in Christ. His experiences bring more hope and courage to those who have failed than perhaps any other character in all history, inspiring them to try again, regardless of their mistakes and failures. Without him the New Testament record would be incomplete.

His name was Simon, whom Jesus surnamed Cephas, or Peter. Simon had a Greek name, and he was a native of Bethsaida, known as the fisherman's city, and believed to have been located at the place where the river Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee on its northern shore. His brother, Andrew, and Philip, who lived at Bethsaida, also had Greek names. These men doubtless spoke and understood the Greek language, which was to their advantage in their later gospel ministry. Jesus addressed Simon as "Simon Bar-Jona," and on another occasion, "Simon, the son of Jona," or John. "Bar" means "son," and so Barnabas means "the

son of consolation," and Barabbas, the "son of Abba," or the father.

Simon later moved to the city of Capernaum, where he and his wife owned a home; and it seems that Andrew lived with them. Mark 1:29, 30. Jesus seems to have been a guest in their home when He visited Capernaum. It was here that the sick man was let down through the roof to be healed by Jesus while He was preaching. The tile roof, and the fact that this home was used as a place of public services, indicate an unusually well built and spacious house. Evidently Simon had done well in the fishing business.

Like Andrew his brother, Simon was doubtless one of the disciples of John the Baptist. At least he had accepted the message of the forerunner of the Messiah. The story of Andrew's bringing his brother Simon to Jesus constitutes an example in individual missionary endeavor worthy of imitation by all Christians. If all who accept the gospel would bring a relative or friend to Christ, how quickly the great commission would be fulfilled!

Simon had learned from the preaching of the Baptist that the coming of the Messiah was at hand, and when Andrew came hurriedly and probably excitedly to him and said, "We have found the Messiah!" Simon with joy accompanied him to the place where Jesus abode. When Jesus saw Simon, His eyes seemed to penetrate his character and the history of his life. He read his impulsive nature, his sympathetic heart, his deep affection, his self-confidence, his tragic fall, his bitter repentance, and his successful ministry after being soundly converted and becoming a tower of strength and stability. The record is: "When

Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." John 1:42.

The more formal call of Simon and Andrew, and their partners in the fishing business, James and John, to become disciples of Jesus, is recorded in Matthew 4:18-22, and Mark 1:16-20. It is evident that they had met Jesus on previous occasions. Some believe that James and John were the cousins of Jesus through Mary. Whether they were related or not, it has been suggested that the families may have visited back and forth through the years. We are told that when Jesus said to the four fishermen, "Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men," they obeyed the call "at once." (Weymouth.) "They immediately abandoned their nets and followed Him." (Goodspeed.) The statement that Simon and Andrew were "casting a net into the sea" indicates that they were using the casting net rather than the dragnet spoken of in Matthew 13:47. The casting net was thrown over the shoulder and spread out in a circle as it struck the water. In this manner the two men were fishing, while James and John were in another boat mending their nets as Jesus came walking along the shore near Bethsaida and called them to a more important task.

The Sea of Galilee is seven miles wide and fourteen in length, and is more properly called a lake, as it is in some texts. In fact, it was sometimes called "The Lake of Gennesaret." It was famous for its many fisheries.

As preachers are made of laymen who are willing to forsake even flattering business prospects and enterprises to do special service for Christ by making new uses of old

skills and talents, so Jesus called these four men to become "fishers of men" by making a new use of the experiences learned in tact and skill and patience as fishermen. Thus, in organizing and leading the hosts of Israel through the wilderness, Moses made use of the lessons he learned as the commander in chief of the armies of Egypt and as the shepherd of Midian. And David's experiences as a shepherd qualified him to become the greatest leader, defender, and ruler of the Hebrew nation. The fishermen among the disciples of Jesus became the most successful soul winners. In fact, three of the four became His most intimate disciples, known as the inner circle, with special privileges because of special qualifications and dedication.

According to Luke 5:1-10 it was a miracle that made the response of these fishermen to the call of Jesus so immediate and spontaneous. Because of the press of the multitude who were anxious to hear Jesus preach, He stepped into the boat of Simon and Andrew and asked Simon to push out from the shore so that He could speak to the people more effectively. Naturally Simon was depressed and discouraged over the night's failure, for they had fished all night with no results. Also he was sleepy and very tired, and doubtless he heard but little or none of the sermon.

Aware of the feelings of Simon, Jesus seems to have stopped preaching abruptly, and turning to the downcast fisherman, said, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draft." Because of the clear waters of the lake, night was the most favorable time for fishing, especially with nets. In fact, few fish are thus caught in the daytime.

Simon answered, "Master, we have toiled all the night,

and have taken nothing," and then wisely added, "nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." He virtually intimated that Jesus was ignorant of the habits of fish and the skill of fishing or He would not give such instruction, but faith concludes that it always pays to obey the word of Christ even when it seems unreasonable and in fact impossible, for "faith is the substance of things hoped for" and "the evidence of things not seen." Faith is evidence with no evidence in sight except the word of God, for all His commands are enablings. Even though some of the instructions divinely given may at first seem unreasonable, genuine Christians will wisely come to the same conclusion as did Simon, and their faith will also be richly rewarded.

The results of Simon's faith were immediate and amazing. The net enclosed "a great multitude of fish," or "shoal of fish" (Goodspeed), so that "the net was breaking" (Moffatt) and there was danger of losing the catch. Excited, Simon beckoned to his fishing partners, James and John, for help, and they came to the rescue. When the fish were placed in the two boats, "they almost sank." (Weymouth.)

This miracle made such a mighty impression on Simon that he was overwhelmed with both the results and a sense of his own unworthiness. He fell on his knees and cried out, "Master, leave my boat, for I am a sinful man." (Weymouth.) This indicates that Jesus had remained in the boat as the brothers launched out into the deep in obedience to His command. Jesus could have answered the humbled fisherman, "Simon, what will your reaction be when I fill your gospel net with three thousand souls on the Day of Pentecost, when you become a fisher of men?" The unprece-

dented catch of fish on that occasion was doubtless a type and prophecy of that greatest single catch of souls in the gospel net through all history. It will be matched only in the repetition of Pentecostal power during the latter rain as the gospel work is brought to a glorious conclusion.

This experience gave Simon a new vision of Christ and brought the proud fisherman to his knees in submission and surrender. When he saw himself in the light of the beautiful character of Christ, his ego was punctured and his inflated pride collapsed. The great contrast between his character and that of Christ shocked him, as a similar experience will shock us. Humility is the only road to recovery and Christian normalcy.

In this connection the following statements are to the point: "One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. It makes apparent the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips. The sinner's acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God, are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 33.

"The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. . . . No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own

sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ."—*Ibid.*, p. 70.

The impetuous and self-confident disposition of Simon was demonstrated on a number of different occasions before he learned the needed lessons of meekness and humility. Let us notice the one recorded in Matthew 14:25-31, describing Simon's experience in walking on the water. After feeding the more than five thousand, Jesus sent His disciples across the Sea of Galilee by ship, dismissed the multitude, and went into the mountain to pray. "In the fourth watch of the night," which was between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus came to the discouraged and storm-tossed disciples "walking on the sea."

The fear of apparitions or ghosts frightened people then as now. The disciples were terrified, and "they screamed with fear." (Goodspeed.) Their fears were immediately dispelled by a voice they recognized, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Jesus must have been quite close to the boat, or they could not have heard Him above the roar of the wind and the waves. Simon was "almost beside himself with joy" (*The Desire of Ages*, page 381), and he cried out, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water."

Why did Simon ask for an invitation to go to Jesus on the water? He knew that Jesus must speak before he could exercise faith, for faith is depending on the word of God. Otherwise it would have been presumption to jump out of

the boat and attempt to walk to Jesus. The request was answered by only one word, "Come," but it was enough to hold Simon up. In fact, he may have considered the word "Come" a safer foundation than the little boat which had been tossing about helplessly through the night. We cannot help but admire Simon for his response to the invitation without a moment's hesitation. What would we have done under the same circumstances? It took great courage and faith on the part of Simon, and doubtless the other disciples attempted to restrain him from such a rash act.

What was the secret of both his success and his failure? He was so proud of his accomplishment that he turned his head and looked at the other disciples, as much as to say, "See what I have done." Then down he went. He walked securely as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus; but when he looked back in pride and self-satisfaction, his triumph came to a sudden end. Here is the chief cause of all our failures and defeats. The apostle declared that Christians must run the race for eternal life, "looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:2. Jesus Himself said: "For this is My Father's will, that everyone who fixes his gaze on the Son of God and believes in Him should have the life of the ages, and I will raise him to life on the last day." John 6:40, Weymouth.

Simon was also afraid because he began to look at his difficulties and counsel with his fears. "When he felt the wind he was frightened." (Goodspeed.) Simon was both courageous and cowardly. He began well and then petered, an expression still used to describe those who fail as did Peter. It is one thing to see a storm from the deck of a

stout ship, another to see it from the midst of the waves. Before being too critical of Simon Peter, let us try to place ourselves in his position. Many of us have seen a storm from the deck of a great ship, but it would be far different if we were in the water among the waves. Place yourself there in imagination before pointing an accusing finger at Simon.

Peter set us a good example, because when he began to sink, he had sense enough to recognize the situation and apply the only remedy. He looked again to Jesus and prayed one of the shortest but most effectual prayers of all time, "Lord, save me." The prayer contained but three words, but it was sincere and fervent and effectual, and therefore it had more merit than many long prayers, even those continuing through the night. Jesus declared that the Pharisees and heathen offered long prayers to be seen and heard of men and to gain merit with God. It seems that some Christians have the same idea, and even some public prayers are so long and tedious that they weary God and the angels and the humans who must listen to them. Many of the greatest prayers of the Bible were very short.

Jesus gently rebuked him: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Then Simon, humble and speechless, walked on the water with Jesus back to the boat. In describing this scene, one writer said: "Walking side by side, Peter's hand in that of his Master, they stepped into the boat together. But Peter was now subdued and silent. He had no reason to boast over his fellows, for through unbelief and self-exaltation he had very nearly lost his life. When he turned his eyes from Jesus, his footing was lost,

and he sank amid the waves. When trouble comes upon us, how often we are like Peter! We look upon the waves, instead of keeping our eyes fixed upon the Saviour. . . . Only through realizing our own weakness and looking steadfastly unto Jesus can we walk securely."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 381, 382. Let us not forget that Simon recovered his faith and walked the second time on the water, an experience usually overlooked.

Another exhibition of the impetuous disposition of Simon Peter was his attitude when Jesus washed his feet in the upper room in connection with the last Passover supper, recorded in John 13:1-17. The situation was very embarrassing because the disciples had been wrangling over who was the greatest and who would occupy the highest positions in the kingdom of the Messiah. Therefore none of them were willing to act the part of a servant in performing the customary service of foot washing. The pitcher of water, the basin, and the towels had been provided for the service.

Suddenly Jesus, recognizing the situation, arose and laid aside His outer garment and proceeded to perform the service; and the disciples felt the rebuke very keenly. While they were greatly shocked, pride prevented any of them from trying to stop Jesus and from doing the serving for Him. The disciples probably motioned to each other to do the serving; but none of them was willing to make the move, and there was a tense and painful silence until Jesus reached impulsive Simon. He was never tongue-tied, but was accustomed to blurt out whatever came into his mind—in season and out of season.

At first we can imagine Simon staring at Jesus in stunned amazement, and he probably jerked back his feet as he said, "Do *You* wash *my* feet?" "When He came to Peter, Peter objected. 'Master,' he said, 'are *You* going to wash my feet?'" (Weymouth.) Then with characteristic emphasis he said: "Never, while the world lasts, . . . shall *You* wash my feet." (Weymouth.) The reply of Jesus was even more shocking than His act of humble ministry, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." Panic-stricken with the thought of being disowned and disfellowshipped by the Master, Simon swung to the opposite extreme and asked for a complete washing. He virtually said, "If my association with *You* is involved, then plunge me in all over." We can but admire such an evidence of love, even from an extremist.

"The first condition of discipleship is surrender," said Wescott; and Dodds said of Simon's conduct: "A moment ago he told Jesus He was doing too much; now he tells Him He is doing too little." His impetuosity carried him from one extreme to the other, and there are many like that in the church who are consumed by a fiery zeal which they mistake for religion. They go to an extreme in one direction; when corrected, they go to an extreme in the opposite direction. Such are usually critical and exacting and endeavor to enforce rigorous rules, placing great emphasis on matters of minor importance and neglecting the weightier matters of the law. Thus they bring a reproach on the cause of genuine Christianity and bring the gospel into disrepute.

Jesus told Simon that Satan desired to have and control him, and the enemy worked chiefly through his erratic and

impulsive disposition. It is as dangerous to go to one extreme as to the other, to run ahead of the Lord as to follow "afar off." Running ahead of the church, or beyond the instruction given, is always evidence of pride and ego, of a superiority complex, and a lack of the humility which characterizes genuine Christians. Obedience to all the divine instructions will produce well-balanced Christians and keep them in the middle of the road. Extremes always give evidence of imperfect knowledge.

Jesus told Simon that the partial baptism represented by foot washing would make him "clean every whit," or "clean all over" (Weymouth), indicating that it was an outward sign of an inward cleansing from sin, as is baptism itself. Jesus told him that he would later understand the significance of the act and know that He was establishing another ordinance or memorial to be celebrated in connection with the Lord's Supper, which He instituted a few minutes later. This is also indicated by the further statements of Jesus recorded in verses 13-17.

The instability of the character of Peter before his conversion is set forth by one writer in the following statements: "Hidden in his heart were elements of evil that circumstances would fan into life. Unless he was made conscious of his danger, these would prove his eternal ruin. The Saviour saw in him a self-love and assurance that would overbear even his love for Christ. Much of infirmity, of unmortified sin, carelessness of spirit, unsanctified temper, heedlessness in entering into temptation, had been revealed in his experience." "Peter was naturally forward and impulsive, and Satan had taken advantage of these characteristics

to overthrow him. . . . Before his fall, Peter was always speaking unadvisedly, from the impulse of the moment. He was always ready to correct others, and to express his mind." —*The Desire of Ages*, pages 673, 812.

Alexander Whyte said of Simon Peter: He was "hasty, headlong, speaking impertinently and unadvisedly, ready to repent, ever wading into deep waters too deep for him, and ever turning to his Master again like a little child."—*Bible Characters, Joseph and Mary to James*, ch. "Peter," p. 47.

These are also good descriptions of many in this generation who are vacillating, varying with every change of circumstances and surroundings, thinking one thing today, and another tomorrow. They are by nature rash, erratic, impulsive, and overconfident. These may find comfort in the experiences of Simon Peter. We all, like him, learn our most valuable and permanent lessons in the school of experience, but the tuition is high. Someday we will learn that "all things" have worked together for our good, that even the attacks of the enemy to bring about our downfall will, if we take the proper attitude, result in his defeat, our good, and God's glory, and that what now appears as broken promises and thwarted plans will then be seen to be a victorious purpose, a divine harmony.

P • E • T • E • R

A Pillar of Strength

When Jesus first met Simon after He began His ministry, He said to him: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone." On another occasion Jesus declared that his surname would be Peter, meaning a stone or rock. Cephas is the Aramaic and Peter the Greek name for stone or rock. If the new name was a hint of what Simon might become after his complete conversion, it certainly did not describe him at that time, for he was weak, wavering, uncertain, and impetuous, and anything but a rock, unless it be a rolling stone.

But Simon's road to strength and success in the ministry was not easy, for "the way of the transgressor is hard." Many difficulties, disappointments, failures, and embarrassing experiences were necessary before he would be a leader in the church with the Holy Spirit's power activating his life. When he faced his last and most bitter and humiliating lesson, the one that led to an entirely new spiritual experience, Jesus said to him by way of warning: "Simon, Simon, behold,

Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death. And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." Luke 22:31-34.

It is comforting to know that the enemy of our souls can attack us only to the extent of divine permission, for "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13. "He will not let you be tempted beyond your strength" (R.S.V.) is one of "the exceeding great and precious promises" of God's word. The language of Jesus to Simon indicates that Satan had demanded and obtained permission to attack, not only Simon, but all of the disciples, even as he persecuted Job with the permission of God because it would work out for Job's good in the end. Satan had already accomplished the downfall of Judas, but he was especially anxious to control Simon because he recognized his future worth to the cause of Christ.

While Jesus Christ could not refuse permission for Satan to make the attempt, He could and did pray for Simon that he would be strengthened for the ordeal, and He predicted that Simon would win out in the end and become a strength to others. Christ had Himself been attacked repeatedly by the wily and relentless foe and in every contest He had triumphed gloriously. The experiences would prove a blessing to Simon, as they would separate the chaff from his

character and leave nothing but the pure wheat. This will also be true of God's remnant people who will come "out of great tribulation" which will "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14.

The failures of Simon would be temporary, for the sifting sand in his character would through the process be congealed into a firm support in the apostolic church. He who so often slipped and fell, and then scrambled to his feet again only to stagger in his walk, or to run ahead of his Lord and then to retreat to the rear and follow "afar off," would eventually become stable and dependable, though certainly never the Rock of Scripture.

Simon's response that he would not only stand the severest test, but was ready to accompany his Master to prison and even martyrdom, and the answer of Jesus that before the crowing cock would herald the dawn of another day he would basely deny Him, not only once but three different times, indicated that the goal of firmness was still future.

On another occasion Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" They answered, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Matthew 16:13, 14. At that time all people were in expectation of the appearance of the Messiah. The disciples told Jesus of the four most popular and prevailing opinions as to His role as one of the expected forerunners of the Messiah.

Then Jesus made the question more personal: "But whom say ye that I am?" This was what Jesus was most anxious to know from Peter, and it is the question that is addressed

to each of us. It has called forth many different answers through the centuries, causing endless debate and conjecture. The skeptic gives one answer, the Mohammedan another, the modernistic philosopher another, and the genuine Christian still another. The answer is so important that on it depends the eternal destiny of all men, for "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

While the question was addressed to the Twelve, Simon Peter as usual was the spokesman. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This was not a new confession for Peter, for he had made it on a previous occasion. He had said to Jesus, "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." John 6:68, 69. To Simon, Jesus was not only the Christ, or the Messiah, but also "the Son of the living God."

The response of Jesus has been the basis of endless controversy and misunderstanding: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:17-19.

The revelation and confession of Simon Peter did not come through human wisdom, or through "mere human

nature." (Weymouth.) "Flesh and blood" has always been the symbol of the merely human. Simon's divinely inspired confession is the central and basic truth of the Christian religion. "The Godhead of Christ is the keystone of the church."—*Cambridge Bible*. In fact, Christ is Christianity, and without Him there is none worthy of the name. He is the "Alpha and Omega" of all truth, the "Author and the Finisher" of all faith, and the "all and in all" of all Christian experience.

"Christ is the song, the music, and the vibrations that make the music," says *The Interpreter's Bible*. "He framed no statecraft, pronounced no philosophy, led no army, wrote no music. The historians of His time thought Him unworthy of mention. His cradle was a borrowed manger, His death-bed a felon's cross. Now, whatever men believe about Him, His name is the inescapable name."—*Ibid*.

In regard to Christ's statement to Peter, one writer said: "The emphasis is not on 'Thou art Peter,' over against 'Thou art the Christ,' but on 'The Father hath revealed to thee one Truth, and I also tell you another.' . . . The church is built upon the Messiahship of her Master, and death and the gates of hades will not prevail against her by keeping Him imprisoned."—McNeile. The church would stand unmoved because He would break the bands of death and come in triumph from the tomb, and thus His church and work would endure through all eternity.

The psalmist sang of the Messiah as "the Rock of my strength," and Isaiah pictured Him as "a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation," which would be laid in Zion as the base on which the work of redemption

would be built. Isaiah 28:16. The psalmist wrote of the Messiah: "The Stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner," or "the Chief Cornerstone." (R.S.V.) Psalm 18:22. Peter himself quoted this prophecy and applied it, not to himself, but to Christ as the Stone on which the Jews would stumble and on which the church would be founded. 1 Peter 2:4-8. Paul likened the church to a temple "built upon the foundation" of the inspired writings of "the apostles and prophets," or the New and Old Testaments, "Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone." Ephesians 2:20. He also wrote: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:11. These plain declarations of Scripture should forever settle the long controversy between Protestants and Catholics and silence the latter in regard to the primacy of Peter and of the popes as his pretended successors.

Jesus declared that He not only holds the "keys of hell and of death," but also "the key of David," so that He alone can open and close the door of "the house of David," or of the kingdom of heaven. Revelation 1:18; 3:7; Isaiah 22:22. Jesus, however, had the authority to delegate to His apostles the use of these keys to open and close, and bind and loose. That He did not give this power and authority to Peter alone, but rather to all His apostles and their successors in leadership, is evident from the statements of Jesus recorded in Matthew 18:18; John 20:21-23.

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter used the keys of Scriptural truth to open the door of the kingdom of heaven to the multitude, and three thousand responded to the appeal

and entered through repentance and baptism. "The keys of the kingdom of heaven are the words of Christ."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 413. This of course includes all of the Scriptures which contain the words of Him who is "the Word," "the truth," and "the Word of God," who was "made flesh, and dwelt among us."

The statements of Christ under consideration cannot be fully understood without studying what immediately follows: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offense unto Me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matthew 16:21-23.

This proves that Peter was not a safe foundation for a church. The announcement of Jesus concerning His approaching sufferings and death was contrary to the Jewish Messianic expectations, in which the disciples shared. Peter, the impetuous, was therefore determined to set Him straight on His theology. "Then Peter took Him aside and began taking Him to task." (Weymouth.) According to Goodspeed, Peter said: "God bless You, Master! that can never happen to You." The Syriac version declares that Peter said this "as though pitying Him."

To Peter's rebuke, Jesus said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," or, "Get out of My sight, you Satan." (Goodspeed.) Jesus then revealed the reason for Peter's failure, "Your out-

look is not God's, but man's." (Moffatt.) It is evident that the words, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," were spoken, not directly to Peter, but to the one who controlled him. This was not the first time Jesus had thus addressed Satan. He used the same words in the wilderness of temptation following His baptism. Satan was now speaking through Peter as his agent. "In Peter the banished Satan had once more returned."—Plummer. "Peter here appears in a new character: a minute ago speaking under inspiration from heaven, now under inspiration from the opposite quarter."—Bruce. The same writer also said: "None are more formidable instruments of temptation than well-meaning friends, who care more for our comfort than for our character." The misplaced sympathy of friends is sometimes dangerous.

Peter certainly was not the Rock on which the church was founded. Christ would never use such unstable material for such an enduring structure, for a building is no stronger than its foundation. This false conception of the meaning of the words of Jesus accounts for the foundation of sinking sand on which the whole papal system has been erected, and therefore in the final crisis it will go down in a terrific crash in fulfillment of a number of Bible prophecies, and great will be the fall thereof.

Neither Peter nor any of the other apostles believed that he had been appointed by Christ as the head and foundation of the Christian church. The true church was founded on Christ, "the Son of the living God," the eternal Rock of Ages.

Through Christ, Peter did become a leader with strength and steadfastness. In fact, when Christ ascended to pre-

pare the "many mansions" for the redeemed in the New Jerusalem, with its twelve solid foundations of precious stones, He had the name of Peter inscribed on one of them as the symbol of solidarity to the entire universe. This does not indicate any priority over the other apostles, but rather an equality, for their names are likewise inscribed on the other foundations.

Jesus declared that Peter in the redeemed state would be one of the twelve kings ruling over the twelve nations or tribes of the redeemed, indicating that a whole nation with the natural characteristics of Peter will reach the kingdom of glory. Do you belong to the tribe of petering Peter? Are you naturally outspoken and impulsive? Then take courage, for through surrender and association with Christ you, too, may experience complete and permanent victory and with Peter be numbered among the immortals.

P ♦ E ♦ T ♦ E ♦ R

Spokesman of Pentecost

The last and greatest lesson in humility learned by Simon Peter in the school of Christ came at the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and during His trials before Annas and Caiaphas, when he basely denied the One he had boastingly promised to defend even at the cost of his life. As a result of this experience Peter's ego was completely deflated and his character changed, qualifying him to become a rock of strength in the early church and a blessing to Christians to the end of time.

Jesus told His disciples that they would all be offended because of Him and would forsake Him that very night. Peter boastingly declared that the Master could depend on his loyalty even if the others failed, and that he would, if necessary, suffer persecution and martyrdom for His sake. In fact, "he persisted vehemently" (Goodspeed) that he would not fail. Embarrassed by his emphatic declarations of faithfulness, the other disciples expressed themselves likewise. Judas had already miserably failed and become a

traitor, and Jesus told Peter that he would be guilty of denying Him thrice "before the cock crows," or before morning.

That tragic night would bring more than one exhibition of Peter's impetuosity and disloyalty. Entering the Garden of Gethsemane, following the celebrations of the Passover in the upper room, Jesus left eight of His disciples near the entrance and took Peter, James, and John with Him farther into the garden to be near Him in the hour of His agony. He then left them with the admonition to tarry there and watch with Him. Going a little distance from them, He fell on His face and pleaded with His Father to deliver Him from the terrible ordeal. When He returned He found the three disciples sound asleep. Addressing Peter, He said: "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Jesus doubtless addressed Peter because he was the one who had done the boasting a few hours before, and he must have felt the rebuke keenly.

When the mob, under the leadership of Judas and the chief priests, appeared, Peter, anxious to atone for his failure to watch and pray with Jesus, and to make good his boasting, unsheathed his sword and, singlehanded, attacked the enemies of Jesus, including the armed temple guards and perhaps a detachment of Roman soldiers. Being a fisherman instead of a swordsman, he attempted to cleave one man's skull, but merely sliced off his right ear. We must admire Peter's physical courage while we deplore his rashness. Jesus restored the ear of Malchus, then rebuked the impetuous disciple: "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

This principle is corroborated by the records of history and is a warning to all aggressor nations.

When Jesus submitted to arrest, "all the disciples forsook Him and fled," including brave and boastful Peter. John soon recovered his courage and accompanied Jesus to the palace of the high priest, and Peter checked his headlong flight and followed Him "afar off," or "at a distance." (Weymouth.) Through the intervention of John, who seems to have been well and favorably known to the high priest and his household, Peter was admitted into the courtyard, where he mingled with the milling crowd as though he were one of them.

It was a cold night, and fires were kindled in the court, which was open to the sky and surrounded by various chambers. A maid, probably the one who had admitted him at the gate, recognized Peter in the light of the fire and said to the others, "This man was also with Him." As all eyes were fastened on him, embarrassed Peter pretended innocence and said, "I do not know what you mean" (Moffatt), or, "I don't know—I don't understand—what you mean" (Weymouth).

Then, to escape, Peter "went out into the gateway." (Goodspeed.) This was a sort of vestibule leading out into the street. There another maid pointed at him and said with a voice heard by all who were near, "Thou art also of them;" and Peter bluntly and indignantly answered, "I am not."

The trial dragged on and almost an hour later a man seeing Peter said with emphasis, "Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilean," or, "Your accent shows

it." (Goodspeed.) "Thy speech betrayeth thee," said the accuser as he recognized the Galilean brogue. It is a fact that all of us are betrayed by our speech. It indicates whether or not we are Christians, for our words constitute an index to our characters.

Then, feeling that his only recourse was to demonstrate that he had no connection with Jesus, the impulsive disciple used language wholly unbecoming to one of His followers. "He began to swear with the strongest oaths" (Goodspeed), using language he hadn't employed since he accepted the message of John the Baptist. He then added, "Man, I know not what thou sayest." While the blasphemous words were falling from his lips, the shrill crowing of the cock or the blast of the bugle brought him to his senses in remembrance of the prophecy of Jesus. At the same time, we are told, "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice."

This could happen only as Jesus was being led through the court from the palace of Annas, where the first stage of the trial was held, to the court of Caiaphas, where it was continued before the Sanhedrin. This is the conclusion in the *Cambridge Bible*, which says: "At the moment when the trial was over and He was being led across the courtyard amid the coarse insults of the servants," He looked at Peter. It was a moment of "awful pathos to the unhappy apostle." The penetrating gaze of Jesus indicating deep sorrow and tender pity, broke the heart of the boaster who had so miserably failed Jesus in the hour of His greatest need of friends.

The record is that Peter "burst into tears" (Moffatt); he "went out, and wept bitterly." He hurried out of the courtyard and back to the Garden of Gethsemane where his failure had begun, and, finding the place where Jesus had wept and prayed and perspired blood, he fell on his face in deep and bitter repentance. It was then that the spirit of pride, superiority, and self-assurance disappeared and were supplanted by shame, remorse, and humility. "On the very spot where Jesus had poured out His soul in agony to His Father, Peter fell on his face, and wished that he might die. It was in sleeping when Jesus bade him watch and pray that Peter had prepared the way for his great sin."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 713.

Neglect of prayer is always dangerous and is the chief cause of failure in the Christian life. It results in following Christ "afar off." Remote discipleship will eventually lead to spiritual ruin. How different the story of Peter would have been if he had kept awake and prayed with Jesus in the garden! Yet how different was his attitude from that of Judas, who hanged himself rather than humble himself and repent and ask the pardon of Jesus, whom he had betrayed! He, too, would have been forgiven and restored to divine favor.

Peter came out of the garden a new man with a new vision. He experienced a genuine conversion and became the predicted rock man, a bulwark of strength and steadfastness. He was now prepared to be recommissioned as an apostle, and this Jesus does with consummate skill after His resurrection, as recorded in John 21:15-17. On this occasion Jesus probed the very depth of Peter's heart to make

sure that he was a changed man, and the once unstable disciple measured up to the test with commendable nobility.

"Are you more devoted to Me than these others?" (Goodspeed), was the searching question of Jesus to remind him of his former boasting of a love superior to that of the other disciples. Jesus kept "pressing home that pointed question, like a barbed arrow to his wounded heart. Before the assembled disciples Jesus revealed the depth of Peter's repentance, and showed how thoroughly humbled was the once boasting disciple." "He was no longer impetuous, self-confident, and self-exalted, but calm, self-possessed, and teachable."—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 812, 815.

The thrice-repeated question of Jesus was therefore chiefly for the benefit of the other disciples rather than for Peter. Jesus was anxious to show them that Peter had completely changed and could now be trusted to the limit. In fact, the change was so great that Peter refused to trust to his own judgment. He asked Jesus, who knew his heart, to make the decision as to the extent of his love and ability to feed the lambs and shepherd the sheep of His flock. Peter had no record of dependable devotion and loyalty in the past to point to as evidence that his love would not fail in the future. Therefore his only defense was, "Lord, . . . Thou knowest that I love Thee."

The triple confession of Peter in answer to the triple question of Jesus reminding him of his triple denial was a severe challenge on the very point where he had most signally failed, but he met it gloriously. "We have once more an exquisite touch of psychology. It is Peter's modesty that speaks, and his sense of shame at his own shortcomings.

. . . He has nothing to appeal to, and yet he is conscious that his affection is not unreal or insincere, and he trusts to Him who searches the hearts.'"—*Cambridge Bible*.

Jesus then foretold the death of Peter through martyrdom. John 21:18, 19. In his old age he would die by crucifixion, a privilege denied Paul because he was a Roman citizen. Eusebius stated on the authority of Origen that Peter by request was crucified with his head downward because he felt unworthy to die as did his Master, whom he had thrice denied. According to tradition he asked his executioners to place the cross in the earth upside down "lest I who am all unworthy, should die as my Lord died."

It was doubtless because Peter needed the encouragement that the women at the tomb on the morning of the resurrection of Jesus were told by the angel to return to the upper room and "tell His disciples and Peter" that He had come in triumph from the tomb and would go before them into Galilee. When the two men returned from their journey to Emmaus and told their story to the assembled believers, they were cheered by the statement, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." When and where this meeting took place we are not told, but Jesus was evidently anxious to assure Peter that he was fully restored to divine favor.

In the light of Peter's many failures, the love of Christ is amazing in view of His choice of Peter to preach the Pentecost sermon, resulting in the surrender of three thousand souls. The other apostles were doubtless surprised that, so soon after his tragic failure, Peter was given such an important responsibility as the preaching of this first gospel

sermon under the new power of the Holy Spirit. It is certain that modern church leaders would, under similar circumstances, counsel caution and advise a longer probationary period before restoring credentials.

The Lord read Peter's heart and knew that his conversion was complete and permanent. The unparalleled results of that one sermon must have removed all questions from the minds of his fellow apostles and made it possible for them to erase his mistakes from their memories forever. He was now deserving of the name Peter, the rock, and what a stabilizing influence he had on the early church as the believers went forth in the power of the Spirit "conquering, and to conquer," heralding the gospel in a single generation to "every creature which is under heaven"!

When the gospel will have completed its divine mission and Christ sits on the throne of His glory, reigning over "the righteous nation" of the redeemed as the "King of kings, and Lord of lords," Peter will be honored as one of those twelve kings. His name will be emblazoned in glittering jewels on one of the twelve foundations of the celestial city, the capital of the restored kingdom of Adam and of David. He will be known through all creation as the apostle of unyielding strength, adamant courage, unconquerable will, unquestioned loyalty, unquenchable devotion, and unchangeable character.

S ♦ A ♦ U ♦ L

A Citizen From Tarsus

We shall now begin the study of one of the most notable characters of history, who became the greatest apostle and most successful missionary of all time. He first comes to our notice in connection with the martyrdom of Stephen, the first Christian to seal his faith with his blood. As this saintly and gifted preacher of righteousness was being stoned, the witnesses who executed the sentence of death "laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul," who, "was consenting unto his death." Acts 7:58; 8:1.

According to Hebrew law, sentences of punishment must be executed by the witnesses who established the guilt of the accused. Saul not only took an active part in the discussions which led to the decision of the council, but he gave his full approval to the sentence with pleasure, and if the dignity of his position and the legal regulations would have permitted, he would gladly have taken part in the killing. Yet the uncertainty aroused by this tragic event helped prepare the zealous Pharisee for conversion.

All that we know of Saul previous to this event we learn from his own testimony. He said to the captain of the Roman guard who rescued him from the fury of the Jewish leaders and people, and who had thought that he was a certain Egyptian revolutionary: "I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city," or "of no unimportant city." (Weymouth.) On two occasions Saul identified himself as "Saul of Tarsus," and thus did the Lord describe him to Ananias of Damascus. This was because Saul was a popular name among the Jews, and therefore the one named had to be identified by the place of residence.

Saul had every reason to be proud of his birthplace and citizenship in such an important city and country. Tarsus was located some three hundred miles north of Jerusalem on the western borders of the Cilician plains, and was the capital and metropolis of the Roman province of Cilicia in Asia Minor. Dean F. W. Farrar spoke of Tarsus as "the famous capital of a Roman province," which was watered and divided by the cool "swift stream of the Cydnus," and was "a center of commercial enterprise and political power." —*Life of St. Paul*, vol. 1, ch. 2. Looking down upon the beautiful city of Tarsus was majestic snow-capped Mount Taurus, which was probably named after the famous Roman general under Octavius, Statilius Taurus.

Tarsus was an educational center and boasted of one of the most celebrated schools of the time. Strabo declared that the city was even more illustrious in philosophy and general education than Athens and Alexandria. Coins found in the ruins emphasize its greatness through a long period

of time, one of them containing the inscription, "The Metropolis of the East," a claim undisputed unless by Antioch. Tarsus was the residence of governors, provincial officials, and Roman soldiers. It is believed that the right of Roman citizenship was bestowed on its residents by Augustus Caesar as a reward for loyalty during a crisis. When the Roman captain told Saul that "with a great sum" he had purchased his Roman citizenship, Saul answered, "But I was born free." The language and literature of this rich and prosperous city was chiefly Greek. Saul's command of the Greek language was so cultured and accurate that it amazed Captain Claudius Lysias. This background of culture and experience in this cosmopolitan city was a vitally important factor in Saul's future work as "the apostle of the Gentiles," most of whom spoke or understood the Greek language.

It is impossible to ascertain the exact date of Saul's birth, but conjecture places it between the second and fourth year of the Christian Era. Chrysostom believed it to have been A.D. 2. Of his family lineage, Saul said: "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee." Philippians 3:5. The time of his circumcision was according to Hebrew law, and shows that he was born of parents who were not proselytes, but were of the genuine "stock of Israel." He was "a Hebrew born of Hebrews." (R.S.V.)

Even though tribal distinctions were at that time virtually impossible, Saul's parents had preserved their genealogy back to the tribe of Benjamin, one of the best and most

important of the twelve—the one that had produced not only the first king, but a number of Israel's greatest rulers. Benjamin, the second son of the beloved Rachel, was one of Jacob's two favorite sons. This tribe was one of the two that refused to join in the rebellion of Jeroboam and the idolatrous practices of Israel. After the captivity, the tribe of Benjamin joined that of Judah in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem. Ezra 1:5. The Holy City was located in the territory assigned to the tribe of Benjamin. His was therefore a noble heritage, and Saul was justly proud of his ancestral background.

Saul was not only "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," but he had spoken the Hebrew language from childhood. During his later ministry he often demonstrated his unusual knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the Greek translation from them, known as the Septuagint.

The only mention of Saul's mother is in his statement that he had been "separated" to his God-given work from his "mother's womb." Galatians 1:15. She was evidently a godly woman with a noble character. She deserves much credit for the life and accomplishments of her illustrious son. Saul mentions his sister and her son, the latter having saved his life by informing the Roman captain of the plot to kill him. He also wrote of his "kinsmen," several of whom bore Roman names such as Junia and Lucius. Romans 16:7, 11, 21. He spoke of kinsmen "who also were in Christ before me," indicating that some of his relatives had become Christians before he was converted. This may have contributed to his prejudice and persecuting zeal. There is only a probability that his parents became Christians.

Saul received his early education first in his own home, and then in the synagogue school. "At five years of age, let children begin the Scriptures; at ten, the Mishna; at thirteen, let them be subject to the law," is a Hebrew maxim. At thirteen a Jewish boy is called "A child of the law," with a ceremony something like a confirmation service in some churches. It was probably at this age that Saul went to Jerusalem to continue his training in the school of Gamaliel, where he said he had been "brought up" from his "youth."

During his childhood, Saul had often seen the Jewish pilgrims of Cilicia gather at Tarsus for the journey to Palestine and the Holy City to attend the Passover and other annual religious festivals, and it was a great event when he was permitted to accompany his parents to the great mecca of Judaism. The first sight of the City of David, and especially of the splendor of the beautiful temple on Mount Zion, gave the travelers a never-to-be-forgotten thrill, expressed in the joyful singing of Psalm 122.

In harmony with the universal custom among the ancient Jews, Saul was taught a trade. "What is commanded of a father toward his son?" asks a Talmudic writer, and then answers: "To circumcise him, to teach him the law, and to teach him a trade." Rabbi Juda said: "He that teacheth not his son a trade, doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief." Gamaliel is credited as saying: "He that hath a trade in his hand, to what is he like? He is like a vineyard that is fenced."

At that time many of the Cilicians lived in tents made of haircloth from goats raised in the region, and many can still be seen, especially during the harvest season. The same

cloth is available in the markets of Asia Minor, under the name of *cilicium*. This is doubtless the reason that Saul's parents chose for him the tentmaking trade, which proved so useful to him in later years in the mission fields. It was by this means that he supported himself during the eighteen months he was establishing the gospel work in the important city of Corinth. Acts 18:1-4, 11.

Saul reminded the Jewish leaders that he had been brought up from youth in their city "at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day." Acts 22:3. Gamaliel was trained in the school of his illustrious grandfather, the noted Hillel, a school so influential that its decisions in religious matters were considered final. He was a Pharisee, as was his grandson, whose school was a worthy successor in influence and authority in rabbinical traditions.

Gamaliel was one of the great lights of Judaism, and was the first of seven Hebrew doctors of the law who were honored with the title Rabban or Rabboni, the name by which Mary Magdalene addressed Jesus on the morning of His resurrection. Gamaliel was known as "The beauty of the law," and in the Talmud it is declared that "since Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the law has ceased." He served for some time as the president of the Sanhedrin, an honor seldom bestowed upon anyone other than the high priest.

Gamaliel was one of the very few members of the Sanhedrin in his day who possessed a noble character, comparable to that of Nicodemus and Joseph. He was not

narrow and bigoted and prejudiced as were so many of his fellow Pharisees. He believed in justice and fair play, and when the chief priests threatened the apostles for preaching the gospel and sought to slay them, he spoke in their behalf: "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people," and warned them to take heed and refrain from molesting these men because "if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." His counsel prevailed. Acts 5:34-39. It is possible that Gamaliel was one of the doctors of the law who asked questions of the twelve-year-old Jesus and were astonished at His answers. There is no evidence for the belief of some that he later became a Christian.

To sit at the feet of a teacher was then, and still is, a proverbial expression which doubtless had its origin with the custom of the teacher sitting on a platform with the pupils in a semicircle at his feet on a lower level, or seated on mats on the floor. "Place thyself in the dust at the feet of the wise," is a Hebrew maxim. There is every reason to believe that Saul was a brilliant student. Later he declared that "in devotion to Judaism I outstripped many men of my own age among my people, being far more zealous than they on behalf of the traditions of my forefathers." Galatians 1:14, Weymouth. This would indicate that he outdistanced them in his knowledge of the Scriptures, in rabbinical lore, and in the history and customs and religion of the Hebrew race. Like Timothy, he had "known the Holy Scriptures" from childhood.

The statement, "But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles" (Galatians 1:15, 16, R.S.V.), indicates that the writer considered his early training, family background, and educational privileges as providential in preparing him for his future work. Conybeare and Howson, in *The Life and Epistles of Saint Paul*, declare that these earlier experiences account for his "sagacity, his cheerfulness, his forethought, his impartial and clear judging reason," and "all the natural elements of his strong character."

No person can read and study the writings of Paul without concluding that he was an inveterate reader and a profound student. In his last letter to Timothy, his son in the ministry, written on the eve of his martyrdom, he urged him to "come before winter" and bring with him the cloak he had left at Troas, and "also the books," and "especially the parchments." Calvin said: "Paul has not lost his delight in books, even when he is near death." Wilbur Smith, in his *Chats From a Minister's Library*, said of Paul's request to Timothy: "He is inspired, and yet he wants books! He has been preaching at least thirty years, and yet he wants books! He has seen the Lord, and yet he wants books! He had had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants books! He had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was not lawful for a man to utter, and yet he wants books! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants books!"

Dean F. W. Farrar declared: "Paul knew his Old Testa-

ment so well that his sentences are constantly molded by its rhythm, and his thoughts are incessantly colored by its experiences;" and Alexander Whyte said, "The law of God and the cross of Christ would have remained to this day but half-revealed mysteries, had it not been for God's revelation of His Son in Paul; and had it not been for Paul's intellectual and spiritual capacity to receive that revelation, and to expound it and preach it."—*Bible Characters, Stephen to Timothy*, ch. "Paul as a Student," p. 101.

Dr. John Lord said of Paul's intellectual capacity and attainments: "He was a man of native genius, with profound insight into spiritual truth. Trained in philosophy and disputation, his gentleness and tact in dealing with those who opposed him are a lesson to all controversialists." "Paul is the most prominent figure of all the great men who have adorned, or advanced the interest of, the Christian church. Great pulpit orators, renowned theologians, profound philosophers, immortal poets, successful reformers, and enlightened monarchs have never disputed his intellectual ascendancy; to all alike he has been a model and a marvel. The grand old missionary stands out in history as a matchless example of Christian living, a sure guide to Christian doctrine. No more favored mortal is ever likely to appear; he is the counterpart of Moses as a divine teacher to all generations."—*Beacon Lights of History*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 451, 450. Much of this success was due to his ancestral background and early training.

One of the most admirable traits of Saul's character was his basic honesty and integrity. When on trial before the Sanhedrin he said: "Brethren, it is with a perfectly clear

conscience that I have discharged my duties before God up to this day." Acts 23:1, Weymouth. He told King Agrippa that even his persecutions of the Christians had been carried on through a sense of duty. He said that he had "thought it a duty to do many things in hostility to the name of Jesus, the Nazarene." Acts 26:9, Weymouth. He then described to the king his conduct in Jerusalem in persecuting unto death many Christians, whom he followed to foreign cities.

There is always hope for sincere and honest people, even when they are in the wrong, for when light comes they repent and change their course. Saul made an immediate change when he was convinced that he had been in the wrong. He did not even stop to consider the cost to his personal career. To him right was right and therefore paramount. This attitude was one of the most admirable characteristics of the man of Tarsus. It is certain that every truly honest-hearted soul will be saved, and this should give us hope and courage in expectation for the ingathering of a mighty harvest of souls during the refreshing showers of the latter rain.

S ♦ A ♦ U ♦ L

A Pharisee

Saul of Tarsus declared that he was "a Pharisee," and "the son of a Pharisee." He was reared in a home where the most rigid and fanatical form of Judaism was carefully practiced, and then educated in the most famous school of Pharisaism in Hebrew history, organized by the noted Hillel and carried on by his illustrious grandson, Gamaliel. Saul told King Agrippa that all the Jews who had known him from the beginning could testify that "after the most straitest sect" of their religion, he had "lived a Pharisee." Acts 26:4, 5. "I lived by the principles of the strictest party of our religion," is the Moffatt translation.

To the Jewish leaders and people in the temple court Saul declared that he had been brought up from youth in the school of Gamaliel, and was therefore "educated according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers." Acts 22:3, R.S.V. He also said: "I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers." Galatians 1:14, R.S.V. His religion was therefore of the most rigid, austere, extreme, and uncompromising variety.

The distance between Pharisaism and Christianity is very

great and the road difficult, and therefore the travelers are few. This is because of the deceptive nature of Pharisaism, which makes its devotees believe themselves to be what they are not. "The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat one's self; all sins are easy after that," declared Porcius Festus. For this reason the pharisaic form of religion is a spiritual disease that is well-nigh incurable. It has been truthfully said that "there is nothing so offensive to God, or so dangerous to the human soul, as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 154. This is what made the conversion of Saul so miraculous.

Why should pharisaism concern us, for did it not end in the days of Christ and the apostles? This seems to be the prevailing belief, but it is contrary to fact. Man in his fallen state is pharisaic by nature. The previously mentioned author said: "The principles cherished by the Pharisees are such as are characteristic of humanity in all ages. The spirit of Pharisaism is the spirit of human nature."—Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pages 119, 120.

Characteristics of pharisaism are trust in self and dependence on human wisdom and effort, without any realization of existing spiritual poverty. If self cannot be woven into the work, the divinely provided means of salvation is rejected. The belief that man can save himself by his own works has been the foundation of every heathen and false religion. When the enemy of man succeeded in implanting this principle in Judaism, it became a species of paganism and therefore of idolatry, making man his own savior and

thus exalting the creature to the place of the Creator. All who become fixed in a rut of ceremonies and traditions and become satisfied with a legal religion naturally feel that their own righteousness is all-sufficient. Therefore they have no desire that a new element be brought into their religion. Legalism, wherever and whenever it exists, is a loveless, Christless, and useless religion.

It was this sort of religion that proved the ruin of the Jews, and it is as dangerous and devastating when it manifests itself in the Christian church. As it was in the days of Christ, so it is today. Modern Pharisees do not know their spiritual destitution, and to them comes the message of the great Searcher of hearts: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. . . . So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:15-20.

What a terrible indictment of modern Christendom! But it comes from Him who is "the Amen" of all truth, "the faithful and true Witness" who never lies or exaggerates,

the Author and Source "of the creation of God." His testimony is absolutely dependable, even though it is shocking. This heart-searching appeal is the last of the seven epistles of Christ which together embrace the Christian Era. This is therefore Christ's love message to His church in the last generation. Pharisaism is the spiritual disease which has reached epidemic proportions in the church today and constitutes its greatest danger.

However, the situation is not hopeless, for the same Great Physician who diagnoses the disease, also provides a complete remedy. Because of its importance to our eternal welfare, the promise of acceptance in the Laodicean message is the divine testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs. While it has thus far been lightly esteemed if not entirely disregarded by modern Christendom, it is transforming the characters of the thousands who take it seriously. Those who open the door of the heart temple and permit Christ by His Spirit to occupy every chamber, including the inner sanctuary, will enjoy "the times of refreshing" in the showers of the latter rain, when Pentecost and its mighty results will be repeated.

Pharisaism is a religion of legalism, of law instead of grace, of rigid rules and multiplied regulations. It measures holiness in terms of minute and burdensome injunctions and outward ceremonies, resulting in pride and hypocrisy. The worthlessness of this type of religion was thus stated by Christ: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20. The language indicates no exceptions.

The apostle Paul, who was well acquainted through experience with both Pharisaism and Christianity, thus contrasts them: "To what conclusion does this bring us? Why, that the Gentiles, who were not in pursuit of righteousness, have overtaken it—a righteousness, however, which arises from faith; while the descendants of Israel, who were in pursuit of a law that could give righteousness, have not arrived at one. And why? Because they were pursuing a righteousness which should arise not from faith, but from what they regarded as merit." Romans 9:30-32, Weymouth.

To the Galatians, who were being troubled by the legalistic Judaizers, Paul wrote: "You and I, though we are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, know that it is not through obedience to law that a man can be declared free from guilt, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. We have therefore believed in Christ Jesus, for the purpose of being declared free from guilt, through faith in Christ and not through obedience to law. For through obedience to law no human being shall be declared free from guilt." "Christ has become nothing to any of you who are seeking acceptance with God through the law: you have fallen away from grace." Galatians 2:15, 16; 5:4, Weymouth.

The expression "free from guilt" is translated "justified" in the King James Version. It is the provision made to take care of the sins of the past and is through faith the work of a moment. The law here mentioned is any law, moral or ceremonial; for the attempt to obtain justification or freedom from guilt through obedience to law is legalism. "He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in

keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 172.

The uselessness of a legalistic religion is again stated by the same author: "There are those who profess to serve God, while they rely upon their own efforts to obey His law, to form a right character, and secure salvation. Their hearts are not moved by any deep sense of the love of Christ, but they seek to perform the duties of the Christian life as that which God requires of them in order to gain heaven. *Such religion is worth nothing.* When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action. Those who feel the constraining love of God, do not ask how little may be given to meet the requirements of God; they do not ask for the lowest standard, but aim at perfect conformity to the will of their Redeemer. With earnest desire they yield all, and manifest an interest proportionate to the value of the object which they seek. A profession of Christ without this deep love, *is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery.*"—*Steps to Christ*, page 49. Italics added.

Legalism is often manifested by persons who love ritualism and outward display as an attempt to atone for their lack of spiritual experience. Ritualistic and ceremonial pageantry are often emphasized to supply the conscious lack of the personal presence of the indwelling Spirit. Such religion does not give victory over sin or satisfy the longings of the soul or sanctify and transform the character.

Pharisaism is also manifested by persons who show zeal without knowledge. Saul the Pharisee was "extremely zealous" for the traditions and ceremonies of his religion. After his conversion he said of his former coreligionists: "For I bear witness that they possess an enthusiasm for God, but it is an unenlightened enthusiasm. Ignorant of the righteousness which God provides and building their hopes upon a righteousness of their own, they have refused submission to God's righteousness." Romans 10:2, 3, Weymouth.

The greatest and most fervent zeal is often found among the devotees of false religions, philosophies, and ideologies, but zeal in itself is no evidence of right or truth. "It is not unnatural to find unconsecrated men very zealous for ancestral traditions, more concerned, in fact, that they should be found to come from the Fathers than from God."—*The Pulpit Commentary*. It is vitally important that Christians be able to discern between fanatical zeal and Christian enthusiasm. One is based on human emotions and is therefore weak. The other is inspired by the Holy Spirit and is strong, deep, silent, calm, and intense. Jesus Christ was an enthusiast, but He was no fanatic. Where can be found a more fervent zeal and enlightened enthusiasm than that of Paul in his new-found religion?

The Pharisees were extremists and fanatics. Jesus called them "hypocrites" because they tithed "mint and anise and cummin" and "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." He added: "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Matthew 23:23. Pharisaism, and, in fact, all forms of fanaticism,

majors on minors, and minors on majors. It emphasizes the little things to the neglect of the greater. Peter H. Plune in his book, *Some to Be Pastors*, said: "We know that the crank, the legalist, and the Pharisee are in every company of religious folk. They are usually evading some major ethical requirement and compensating therefore by excessive concern about some small matter."—Page 99.

Pharisaism is proud and boastful. This is strikingly illustrated by the attitude of the Pharisee in the temple whose prayer was characterized by boasting and self-com-mendation. He sought credit with God by enumerating his good works, and expressed his gratitude because he was superior to and therefore unlike other men. He was satisfied with his spiritual state and therefore felt in need of nothing spiritual. On the other hand, the cry of the penitent publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," brought instant justification, which is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is impossible for him to do for himself. It is only when we recognize our own spiritual poverty that we can be clothed with the beautiful robe of the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ. Genuine Christianity is always meek and humble and contrite, and the reward was stated by Christ in one of His Beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Pharisaism is also dogmatic, cruel, critical, and intolerant, and does not hesitate to condemn and even persecute those who dare to differ in religious matters. Increasing rigidity in religious requirements is always characterized by decreasing love for both God and man. This type of religion

is thus described in *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*: "The effort to earn salvation by one's own works, inevitably leads men to pile up human exactions as a barrier against sin. For, seeing that they fail to keep the law, they will devise rules and regulations of their own to force themselves to obey. All this turns the mind away from God to self. His love dies out of the heart, and with it perishes love for their fellow men. A system of human invention, with its multitudinous exactions, will lead its advocates to judge all who come short of the prescribed human standard. The atmosphere of selfish and narrow criticism stifles the noble and generous emotions, and causes men to become self-centered judges and petty spies. The Pharisees were of this class."—Pages 177, 178.

This was the spirit of Saul of Tarsus, who became the No. 1 persecutor of the early Christians. He said: "I furiously persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it." Galatians 1:13, Weymouth. He believed that if Judaism did not destroy Christianity, it would eventually be destroyed by the new religion. Luke, after describing the martyrdom of Stephen, said: "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." Acts 8:3. The taste of Stephen's blood seemed to make him delight in further bloodshed. He was angry because he was not able to meet the Scriptural arguments of his antagonist. "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous," and therefore does strange things, difficult to understand, except in the light of pharisaism.

Luke, the early church historian, again wrote: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against

the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." Acts 9:1, 2. His persecuting zeal increased with success. Later in his defense before the Sanhedrin, Paul said: "And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished." Acts 22:4, 5. See also Acts 26:9-12. The language indicates that Saul's authority and commission came from the whole Sanhedrin and not from the high priest only.

Such is the spirit of pharisaism in all ages. This self-righteous zeal has been responsible for all the persecutions throughout the history of Christianity, and it will again raise its ugly head just before the end. The prophet Daniel predicted that during the Middle Ages many saints would "fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days, . . . even to the time of the end." Daniel 11:33-35. The apostle John declared that God's remnant commandment-keeping people would experience the wrath of the dragon and come "out of great tribulation" and would enter the kingdom with their character robes washed and made "white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 12:7; 7:14. As with Saul of Tarsus, only a vision of the crucified One and the application of His cleansing blood can deliver us from the spirit of pharisaism.

P ♦ A ♦ U ♦ L

An Apostle

The story of how Saul the Pharisee became Paul the apostle is one of the most fascinating narratives of conversion in all the history of God's dealings with sinful men. His change from Pharisaism to Christianity was sudden, dramatic, and as far-reaching in its consequences as were the calls of Abraham and Moses. Through the transforming power of the grace of Christ the proud and intolerant, though conscientious, zealot of the law, became as meek and humble as a child, and as broad-minded and charitable as the greatest of saints. He was changed from a bitter persecutor and cruel menace into a zealous champion of Christianity and an ardent preacher of righteousness. His preaching and writing produced a spiritual revolution on two continents, and doubtless no other human agency has so influenced for good the family of man.

Saul is a Hebrew name which was quite popular among the Jews. Our Saul may have been named after his father, or possibly after the first king of Israel, also of the tribe of Benjamin. The name means "asked for," indicating that he may have been a long-wanted and prayed-for son, and probably the first-born. In Acts 13:9 we are told that Saul

was also called Paul. Paul, or Paulus, is a Roman name. Origen declares that both names were given him at birth, one to be used among the Jews, and the other among the Gentiles, since he was born in a foreign city. Bede says that he probably took the name of Paul to commemorate his conversion, and Augustine believed that he assumed the name of Paul when he began his work among the Gentiles because of the advantage it gave him. None of these ideas are contrary to the probability of his having been given both names at birth. He is first called Paul in the Biblical record in connection with his early mission enterprises as "the apostle of the Gentiles."

Saul's conversion had its inception in the condemnation and martyrdom of Stephen when he and his fellow persecutors "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel," and heard his testimony concerning a vision of the glory of God and of the Son of man "standing on the right hand of God," and his final prayers, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and "Lay not this sin to their charge." Saul could not forget this experience, and the Holy Spirit pricked his conscience with ever-increasing thrusts of the mighty two-edged sword until he surrendered at the gate of Damascus.

When Stephen was martyred, "Saul was consenting unto his death," and later when other Christians were condemned by the council, Saul said, "I cast my vote against them," indicating that in the meantime he had become a member of the Sanhedrin. In the book *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, page 20, Ellen G. White said: "Saul was greatly esteemed by the Jews for his zeal in persecuting the believers. After the death of Stephen, he was elected a member

of the Sanhedrin council, in consideration of the part he had acted on that occasion," and this is also the conclusion of many other Bible students.

In Stephen, Saul had met more than his equal in Scriptural knowledge, and it irritated him. Jerusalem had several synagogues to accommodate the many Jews who spoke other languages, and, according to Acts 6:9, the disputes with Stephen took place in those of the Hellenists, where the Greek language was spoken, which indicates that both Stephen and Saul were fluent in that tongue. It is likely that they worshiped together in the same synagogue and had been friends. In fact, there is some evidence that they had been classmates in the school of Gamaliel. The record is that Saul and his fellow disputers "were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which" Stephen spoke. Dr. John Lord declares that Stephen "was no ignorant Galilean, but a learned Hellenist;" and in *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, page 17, we are told that Saul "met in Stephen one as highly educated as himself," who was able to rehearse "the history of the chosen people of God, in words that held the assembly spellbound."

The question arises as to how sentences of death could be executed by the Jews when this authority had been taken from the Sanhedrin by the Romans. This is well answered in the following statement: "There had been no legal sentence passed upon Stephen; but the Roman authorities were bribed by large sums of money to make no investigation of the case."—*Ibid.*, p. 20. Having set this precedent, it was easy to repeat the process in the many later martyrdoms of Christians. The Romans were easily bribed.

Christianity was then spoken of as "that way," a term used until the word "Christian" was applied to believers at Antioch, from whence it has spread to the ends of the earth. Christ declared Himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life." The Scriptures speak of "the way of life," "the way of truth," "the way of salvation," "the way of righteousness," and "the way of the Lord." An ancient prophet spoke of the plan of salvation as "an highway," and indeed it is "The way of holiness." Some of the North American Indians spoke of the gospel as "the Jesus road." In fact, there is no other road to eternal life, for "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." All of these various descriptive terms are appropriate.

But these early persecutions proved to be blessings in disguise, for the attempt to destroy Christianity resulted rather in "the furtherance of the gospel." The believers "were all scattered abroad" and "went everywhere preaching the word." The statement that they were all scattered abroad "except the apostles" is difficult to explain because it would naturally seem that the enmity and persecution would have centered on the leaders. Anyway, it required great faith and courage for the apostles to remain on duty at headquarters under the circumstances. The believers in general followed the counsel of their Master, that when they were persecuted in one place they should flee to another.

The statement, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," was strikingly fulfilled in this experience. In this case "the wrath of man" praised the Lord, and the remainder of wrath He restrained. The early Christians were inclined to

remain in Jerusalem long after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, when they were supposed to go into all the world and preach the gospel to "all nations," including "every creature." It took persecution to do the scattering which marked the beginning of a world-embracing movement that multiplied gospel witnessing a thousandfold. The blood of martyrs was indeed the seed of the church, and bountiful was the harvest of souls.

Saul defended "the tradition from your fathers" with a zeal and enthusiasm worthy of a better cause. "Tradition" is spoken of twelve times in the New Testament, and always in a disparaging sense. One of the authors of *The Pulpit Commentary* declares that tradition "is strong in the letter, and weak in the spirit, strict in trifles, lax in weighty matters," and that "zeal can never make the false true, or justify any in persecuting the truth." He then states that "Christians ought to imitate the zeal of false teachers, and manifest its perseverance by jealousy for God's honor, by abundance of labors, and by ardent love for Christ." Christians should be put to shame by the greater zeal of the devotees of false religions.

It is evident, however, that the zeal and enthusiasm of Saul for Pharisaism was equally as great for his new-found religion. One cannot read his writings without coming to the conclusion that his phenomenal success in propagating the Christian religion was due to his unparalleled zeal and enthusiasm. His conduct in Pharisaism was "sin through ignorance," which is divinely winked at until light comes. When the truth is known, disobedience becomes the sin of presumption. After the gospel light blazed upon Saul at the

gate of Damascus, he said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Saul of Tarsus was on an errand of persecution when he met his Lord. He said, "I persecuted them even unto strange cities," one of which was Damascus, where he went to bring back to Jerusalem those "who had fled there." (Weymouth.) Damascus is one hundred and fifty miles northeast of Jerusalem, and had become a place of refuge for the persecuted believers. There are three accounts of Saul's conversion in the book of Acts, one by Luke and the other two by Saul himself. See Acts 9; 22; 26. He and his attendants were approaching Damascus at "midday" when suddenly there shined about him "a light from heaven" which was "above the brightness of the sun" in the meridian of its noontide glory, and all in the company fell helpless to the ground.

The persecutor then heard a voice from heaven, speaking in the Hebrew language, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Acts 26:14. "You are finding it painful to kick against the oxgoad." (Weymouth.) This is believed to have been a proverbial saying based on the fact that the more the ox kicked against the pricks of the driver's goad, the more he was goaded and therefore the more he suffered. When Saul replied, "Who art Thou, Lord?" the answer was, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." Acts 22:8.

The introduction of the speaker as Jesus of Nazareth must have come as a great shock to Saul of Tarsus. His prejudice against Jesus and his religion had been great. He was sure, he told himself, that Jesus was an impostor and

His teachings dangerous heresy. Since the stoning of Stephen, the prickings of Saul's conscience by the sword of the Spirit produced an ever-increasing sense of guilt, which he had found it difficult to resist, and even his increased zeal in persecuting Christians failed to drown his convictions. He was shocked to learn that in persecuting Christians he had been actually persecuting the Messiah Himself, but without a moment's hesitation he replied, "What shall I do, Lord?" The use of the term "Lord" indicates immediate and complete capitulation. The honest-hearted Pharisee had surrendered. He did not ask for a period of time in which to adjust his thinking to harmonize with a completely new theology.

The humbled champion of Pharisaism was told what to do, and further instruction would be given him through human agencies in the city of Damascus. As he arose to obey, he discovered that the brilliant light from heaven had blinded him so that he had to be led. His helpless plight was evidence to him and to those with him that something unusual had actually happened which could not be denied. It was no mere hallucination. On the basis of Galatians 4:15 some believe that he went through life with weak eyes as a reminder of his conversion, and that this was "the thorn" in his flesh from which he was denied healing.

In the crisis his appetite left him, and during the three days he groped in darkness he experienced deep repentance and searching of heart. He was "turned into another man" and became "a new creature" so that old things passed away and "all things" became new.

A disciple named Ananias, "a pious man who obeyed the

law and bore a good character with all the Jews of the city" (Weymouth), was divinely instructed to go to the home of one Judas on the street called Straight, and inquire for Saul of Tarsus, who was praying. At the same time Saul in vision saw a man named Ananias come to the house and heal him of his blindness and give him a commission from the Lord. When Ananias protested because of Saul's reputation as a persecutor of Christians, the command was given: "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 9:15, 16. Years later when he related this experience to King Agrippa, Paul quoted the commission given him by Christ more in detail. Acts 26:16-19.

It seemed to Saul that scales had fallen from his eyes, and he began to see everything in a new light. He was immediately baptized, and after spending a few days with the disciples in Damascus "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." Because of opposition he went into Arabia, where he remained in seclusion the greater part of three years. Galatians 1:15-18. It is believed that this desert sojourn was at Sinai, "the mount of God," an appropriate place for a postgraduate course. Alexander Whyte speaks of Saul's stay in Arabia as "three reading, meditating, praying, law-discovering, self-discovering years," and that "it was under the mount of God that Paul's apostolic inkhorn was first filled with the ink of God" by which he later wrote his truth-laden epistles. The man of Tarsus told of his retirement in Arabia to convince his readers that

when he became a Christian and received his commission, he "conferred not with flesh and blood," but received his call directly from the Lord.

Ellen G. White has said: "Here, in the solitude of the desert, Paul had ample opportunity for quiet study and meditation. He calmly reviewed his past experience, and made sure work of repentance. He sought God with all his heart, resting not until he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted and his sin pardoned. He longed for the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. He emptied his soul of the prejudices and traditions that had hitherto shaped his life, and received instruction from the Source of truth. Jesus communed with him, and established him in the faith, bestowing upon him a rich measure of wisdom and grace."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 125, 126.

It was in the desert of Sinai that Moses received his final qualifications to lead Israel to the Promised Land. Of this experience we read: "Wisdom to govern an ignorant and undisciplined multitude must be gained through self-mastery. . . . Amidst the solemn majesty of the mountain solitudes, Moses was alone with God. Everywhere the Creator's name was written. Moses seemed to stand in His presence, and to be overshadowed by His power. Here his self-sufficiency was swept away. In the presence of the Infinite One he realized how weak, how inefficient, how shortsighted, is man. . . . He felt his need of help, asked for it, by faith grasped it, and in the assurance of sustaining strength went forward. Such was the experience that Moses gained by his forty years of training in the desert. To

impart such an experience, Infinite Wisdom counted not the period too long or the price too great."—*Education*, pages 62-64.

Such was the divine purpose of Saul's more than two years of schooling in the Arabian desert. Then he returned to Damascus to face once more the opposition of the Jews, this time so intense that they "took counsel to kill him." They guarded the gates of the city day and night in an effort to apprehend him, but the disciples let him down over the wall in a basket, doubtless through a window in a house built in the wall, so that he escaped from his would-be murderers.

Saul now went to Jerusalem for the purpose of meeting the apostles. Luke says: "So he came to Jerusalem and made several attempts to associate with the disciples, but they were all afraid of him." (Weymouth.) They doubted his conversion and were afraid that he was a spy. It was Barnabas who came to his rescue and persuaded the apostles that his conversion was genuine, so that henceforth "Saul was one of them." Saul and Barnabas may have been acquainted in the past, since Tarsus and Cyprus are not far apart, and there is some evidence that Barnabas had also attended the school of Gamaliel. Saul was especially anxious to visit Peter, and they spent fifteen days together. One can easily imagine what they talked about.

Saul also attempted to reach his former Jewish friends among the leaders of Israel hoping to win them to his new-found faith. He showed a special interest in the "Grecians" or Greek-speaking Jews, but they "went about to slay him." To save his life the brethren took him to Caesarea and sent him to Tarsus, his childhood home. More than twenty years

later, on a visit to Jerusalem, he followed unwise counsel and went into the temple to perform a useless Jewish ceremony in an attempt to break down prejudice. The act, however, resulted in a riot so great that "all Jerusalem was in an uproar." He would have been torn to pieces by the angry mob had it not been for the captain and soldiers of the fortress of Antonia, who rescued him. On this occasion he had the privilege of addressing the Jewish leaders and people from the stairway to the tower, and the next day of witnessing before the members of the Sanhedrin council. Again the Roman soldiers rescued him from being "pulled to pieces," and, on learning of the plot to murder him, Claudius Lysias sent him by night under guard to Governor Felix at Caesarea, from whence he was later sent to Rome to be judged by the emperor.

Thus the tables had turned, and the persecutor had become the persecuted. How fully the words of Christ to Ananias were being fulfilled! But a divine blessing is pronounced upon those who "are persecuted for righteousness' sake," and of such treatment Saul, afterward called Paul, received a full measure and therefore must have been richly blessed. God's remnant people will also pass through a period of persecution which will be a blessing in disguise, for it is in the furnace of affliction that the dross of sin is removed and they become like "gold tried in the fire." Of them it will be said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14.

P ♦ A ♦ U ♦ L

A Man of Love

John is the disciple of Jesus who is usually spoken of as "the apostle of love," and several times he designates himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." But these titles are fully as applicable to Paul, for no saint through all the ages loved his Lord more fervently and devotedly, or in turn enjoyed a greater degree of the love of Christ. Also in what person can be found a greater demonstration of affection for his fellow men? Paul is an outstanding example of obedience to the second table of the Decalogue, which is summed up in the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It was Paul who wrote: "Owe nothing to anyone except mutual love; for he who loves his fellow man has satisfied the demands of law. . . . Love avoids doing any wrong to one's fellow man, and is therefore complete obedience to law." Romans 13:8-10, Weymouth.

To this man who so passionately loved the souls of both friend and foe, Dr. John Lord gave the following tribute: "He enjoined filial piety, obedience to rulers, and kindness to servants as among the highest duties of life. He was frugal, but independent and hospitable; he had but few wants, and submitted patiently to every inconvenience. He

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was the impersonation of gentleness, sympathy, and love, although a man of iron will and indomitable resolution."—*Beacon Lights of History*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 452.

Alexander Whyte wrote: "It is our self-idolatry and our self-aggrandizement; it is our greed, and our pride, and our intolerance, and our contempt and scorn of all other men, that is the one and only cause of all our contentions and controversies. Now, look at Paul. You cannot read Paul's Epistles without being constantly captivated with the extraordinary geniality, courtesy, humility, simplicity, and loving-kindness, of Paul. The apostle Paul, it has been said, . . . was the finest gentleman that ever lived." "Paul's adoration flames up to heaven like the ascending incense of a great altar fire."—*Bible Characters, Stephen to Timothy*, chs. "Paul as a Controversialist," "Paul as a Man of Prayer," pp. 159, 168, 169.

Martin Luther, one of the most Paullike of men, said of this phase of Paul's character: "Paul was gentle, and tractable, and makable, in his whole life. Paul was sweet, and mild, and courteous, and soft-spoken. Paul could wink at another man's faults and failings, or else expound them to the best. Paul could be well contented to yield up his own way, and to give place and honor to all other men; even to the froward and the intractable. In short, Paul's unflinching gentlemanliness is his constant character in all the emergencies of his extraordinary life."—Quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 160.

Alexander Whyte quoted an English preacher as saying of Paul: "There is not one of any of those refinements and delicacies of feeling, that are the result of advanced civiliza-

tion, nor any one of those properties and embellishments of conduct in which the cultivated intellect delights, but Paul is a pattern of it. And that in the midst of an assemblage of other supernatural excellencies which is the characteristic endowment of apostles and saints." These are samples of scores of tributes to this hero of the cross.

That love was the motivating principle and mainspring of action in Paul's remarkable life is evident from his own statement, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." The word *constrain* has in it the meaning of both compulsion and repression, of compelling to and restraining from. It impels us to do what is right, and restrains us from doing what is wrong. It holds us in check, and keeps us within the bonds of Christian rectitude and the restricted limits of holiness and self-discipline. On the other hand, the love of Christ and love for our fellow men holds a person to his appointed task and presses him on in service. In fact, it is not only the most powerful but also the most gentle force in the universe. The irresistible power of love was the secret of Paul's unparalleled energy and enthusiasm in the service of Christ.

There seemed to be not one thread of selfishness in Paul's character garment. He was not influenced by the desire for credit, for his was the "labor of love." Pharisaism had disappeared from his life. Toward others he was "as gentle as a mother is when she tenderly nurses her own children," and he told his converts that he was "drawn affectionately" toward them, and that they were "very dear" to him and that he had them in his heart. 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8; Philip-
pians 1:7, Weymouth. To his son in the faith he wrote:

"The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith." 1 Timothy 1:5, R.S.V.

When Dr. Albert Schweitzer was asked by the natives of Africa why he had come to minister to their needs, he replied, "Jesus sent me," and when Judson was asked why he became a missionary, he replied that it was because he felt that it would please his Lord for him to help carry the gospel to the heathen. He was glad to do this because of his love for the Master who had given the great commission. This, too, was the secret of Paul's untiring zeal even in the face of persecution and eventual martyrdom. He met Christ and fell in love with Him, and love knows no sacrifice or burden. The service of love is never grievous or too difficult to undertake.

Only on the basis of love can we comprehend the following statement of the apostle: "Yet all that was gain to me—for Christ's sake I have reckoned it loss. Nay, I even reckon all things as pure loss because of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. And for His sake I have suffered the loss of everything, and reckon it all as mere refuse, in order that I may win Christ and be found in union with Him, not having a righteousness of my own, derived from the law, but that which arises from faith in Christ—the righteousness which comes from God through faith. I long to know Christ and the power which is in His resurrection, and to share in His sufferings and die even as He died; in the hope that I may attain to the resurrection from among the dead." Philip-
pians 3:7-11, Weymouth.

It is impossible for us to imagine fully a love so strong

and deep and unselfish that a person would long to share in the terrible sufferings which Christ endured in Gethsemane and on Calvary, and to die even as He died, which was the most shameful and agonizing of all deaths. Roman law forbade that a Roman citizen be crucified, and for this reason Paul was beheaded instead. Cicero said: "To bind a Roman citizen is an outrage; to scourge him a crime; it almost amounts to parricide to put him to death; how shall I describe crucifixion? No adequate word can be found to represent so execrable an enormity." Paul's language indicates that he was actually disappointed in being deprived of what to him would have been esteemed a privilege. In all history, where can we find a greater exhibition of human love, or was it human? It is the nature of love to want to either spare or share the pain and sufferings of those we love. Paul speaks in the language of love which only the lover can comprehend. To all others it is an incomprehensible mystery.

The writings of Paul are literally saturated with love. To him his divine Lord was "the God of love," and all His dealings with the human race are evidences of "the love of God." Believers are urged to be "rooted and grounded in love," and to "abound in love one toward another," and to put on "the breastplate of faith and love." Only those who "love His appearing" will be ready to meet Christ when He returns. The apostle declared that love is the first fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is followed by a beautiful harvest of the fruits of righteousness. He said that only love gifts are acceptable to God, and that "God loveth a cheerful giver," rather than those who give under pressure "of

necessity" and therefore "grudgingly." Only love gifts can be a delight to both the giver and receiver, and they are always liberal.

Paul urged that husbands and wives love each other on an equality with self-love, and this is the secret of a happy Christian home in which the golden rule is the controlling principle. He urged that children obey the fifth commandment and show the proper honor and respect to parents on the basis of love rather than duty, and that servants and masters be guided in their relationships on the same principle. How quickly and effectively all labor disputes would be settled by the application of the love remedy. Only through love can the demands of both tables of the Decalogue be fully satisfied so that we can perform "the whole duty of man."

To Paul, the love of God was incomprehensible, and its height and depth and breadth cannot be measured except by the cross of Christ. Here is his incomparable description of that unfailing love: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35-39.

This statement is so condensed that we shall paraphrase it: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall the tribulations of the world, or distress over material things,

or the persecutions of the enemies of the truth, or the expectation of famine, or the prospect of nakedness, or the peril of temptations, or the sword of the destroyer? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death with its haunting fears, nor life with its many cares, nor evil angels seeking to deceive us, nor wicked principalities arrayed against us, nor powers of darkness under satanic control, nor things present with their pressing claims, nor things to come with their unknown trials, nor height of joy, nor depth of sorrow, nor any other creature, influence, or circumstance, shall be able, for a single moment, to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The apostle Paul reached the greatest height of eloquence and inspiration in his classic treatise on love recorded in 1 Corinthians 13. Nothing has ever surpassed or even equaled this "hymn of love" in all literature, sacred or secular. In the introduction he declared that to live under the dominion of love is "a way of life which transcends all others" (Weymouth), or is "a more excellent way" than to covet and possess any or all of the gifts of the Spirit set forth in the preceding chapter. His description of the surpassing beauty and excellent character of love is the very Magna Charta of Christianity.

The man who knew love at its best declared that fluency in the use of the thousands of languages and dialects of earth, including the speech of celestial beings, would be inharmonious and as disagreeable as "a loud-sounding trumpet or a clanging cymbal," if it is not motivated by love. Or if through the prophetic gift a person might see visions

of things to come, possess the wisdom and understanding of the sages, exercise the miracle-working and mountain-moving power of the Son of God, and yet live without love, he would be reckoned as "nothing" in the estimation of heaven. Or, he might be the most liberal of all philanthropists, giving all his wealth to feed and clothe the unfortunate, or even be possessed by the sacrificial spirit of the martyr, and at the same time receive no merit or credit whatever unless his giving and dying issued from the fountain of love.

The apostle then takes love into the laboratory, as it were, and spiritually analyzes it: "Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent. She is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance. Love never fails." 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Weymouth.

Here is one of the best word pictures, if not the best, of the character of Him who is love incarnate, and therefore of the character of those who, through the gospel, become like Him. They, too, will drink much of the milk of human kindness and will manifest patience and tolerance in all their dealings with others. They will be strangers to those twin evils of envy and jealousy which are "as cruel as the grave" and as ruthless as the worst of tyrants. In them are the seeds of persecution and murder, and they do not hesitate to enter the most happy home or holy sanctuary to

strike down their victims. Those controlled by love are never forward, pompous, or pretentious, but are meek and humble. They are "not puffed up" with pride and conceit. Paul had previously said, "'Knowledge' puffs up, but love builds up." 1 Corinthians 8:1, R.S.V. Lucifer fell because he was puffed up with conceit over his beauty, wisdom, and brightness, as millions have been since. The Lord declares that He hates pride and that only "the meek shall inherit the earth."

Those controlled by love never act unbecomingly and are never rude, ill-bred, or discourteous. They are reasonable, approachable, and considerate. They do not insist on having their own way regardless of the rights of others. To them "it is more blessed to give than to receive." They do not become easily offended or provoked to anger. They are not irritable, sensitive, or resentful. They do not brood over their own mistakes or the wrongs of others. They are neither pessimistic nor suspicious by nature, and they do not impute evil on the ground of mere rumor or idle gossip.

Love of this variety does not celebrate when even an enemy suffers injustice or defeat, but rejoices when right prevails over wrong. It knows how to hold its peace and be silent when silence is golden, and to speak boldly when the occasion demands it. It is characterized by trust, confidence, hope, and endurance. It is ever ready to believe the best of all men without being gullible, giving them the benefit of the doubt. It is trustworthy and dependable, and never fails those under its sovereignty. It is eternal and will continue when prophecies have accomplished their mission and are no more needed, and when tongues give

place to a universal language, and when partial knowledge is supplanted by that which is perfect, and when childish reasoning and conduct are superseded by the ripened judgment of maturity, and when the many puzzling mysteries of this life disappear in the blazing light of eternal day.

When time is replaced by eternity, and only those things of first importance remain, among them will be "faith, hope, love—these three; and of these the greatest is love." The ruling principle of love will again be the supreme law of the universe. It is the Decalogue condensed to one word, which was expanded into the Ten Commandment form to meet the conditions of sin. "God is love," and only those who continue in love can continue in union with God. His law, His word, and every act in His dealings with His creatures are evidences of His love and demonstrations of His character, and are therefore as enduring as the Eternal Himself.

P ♦ A ♦ U ♦ L

A Man of Faith

Paul was pre-eminently the apostle of Faith, and in this respect he had few rivals. He probably said more on the subject of faith than did all the other Bible writers combined. This is chiefly because, as the apostle to the Gentiles, he had to deal with the legalistic Judaizers who made human works and credit the basis of righteousness and salvation. He wrote the books of Romans and Galatians to counteract their false theories and to emphasize the importance of faith as the only means of victory and redemption.

Of this intrepid soldier of the cross Dr. John Lord said: "His faith was unshaken in every crisis and in every danger. It was this which especially fitted him, as well as his ceaseless energies and superb intellect, to be the leader of mankind."—*Beacon Lights of History*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 453. Alexander Whyte wrote of Paul's "instantaneous and full faith, his childlike trust, his full assurance, and his prompt and unquestioning obedience." He further said: "The extraordinary concentration of Paul's faith upon the cross of Christ is by far the most arresting and impressive thing about Paul. . . . What splendid visions of Christ there are in Paul's magnificent Christology!"—*Bible Characters*, Ste-

phen to Timothy, chs. "Paul Apprehended of Christ Jesus," "Paul as a Believing Man," pp. 116, 180.

Three different times the apostle quoted the statement of the prophet Habakkuk, "The just shall live by his faith," and he made it the keynote of all his teachings. In fact, his unbounded activity in missionary service was the work of faith and the "labor of love." The Scriptures speak of two kinds of faith, one living and the other dead. The former is always recognized by what it does, by its works, for those who possess it are always moved to obedience. Good works constitute the fruit of living and abiding faith.

On the other hand, "faith without works is dead." Dead faith is merely to give assent to the truth without walking in its light, and it is therefore worthless because it is lifeless. It is the kind possessed by devils or evil angels who "believe, and tremble" but do not obey. Dead faith is far more plentiful than living faith, for the majority of the human race fail to perform what they know to be their duty in religious matters. To them the Bible is a dead book because they do not obey its instructions. Jesus declared that a tree is known by its fruits, and the tree of faith always produces the fruits of righteousness. In Revelation 14:12 we are told that those who possess "the faith of Jesus" also "keep the commandments of God," and this has been true of the saints of God through all the ages.

In his epistle to the Hebrews the apostle Paul declares that the loss of faith in the last days will cause many to cast away their confidence, so that they lose both the promised reward and the favor of heaven. Only the just who "live by faith," and who "believe to the saving of the soul,"

will be able to pass safely through the final crisis. Hebrews 10:38, 39. The apostle then gives his well-known definition of faith, followed by many examples to show how it has operated in the lives of the saints of God back to the gates of Eden, demonstrating the fact that "without faith it is impossible to please Him."

He wrote: "Now faith is a well-grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see." Hebrews 11:1, Weymouth. Most of the things Christians hope for are invisible, and their existence and reality can be known only by faith in the word and promises of God. Faith is trust and confidence in God and His word, even when there is no other evidence in sight. Taking God at His word without question is all the evidence needed by the trustful Christian. "Faith is the title deed of things hoped for," is the rendering by Moulton and Milligan in their *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*. One who holds the title deed does not question the existence and reality of the property described, even though he has never seen it. Thus faith is the title deed to an inheritance in the new earth and a mansion in the New Jerusalem.

The Roman centurion told Jesus that it was not necessary for Him to visit his home in order to heal his servant. He said, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Matthew 8:8. Jesus spoke the healing word, and the centurion went home rejoicing, with no visible evidence of the miracle. His faith in the word of Christ was the only evidence he needed; and he found what he expected, that the healing took place at the very moment Jesus had spoken. Jesus was amazed at such faith and said to His followers:

"Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Verse 10. Two things amazed Jesus during His earthly sojourn—the unbelief of His own people, and the faith of this Gentile.

Peter manifested real faith when he obeyed the seemingly unreasonable command of Jesus to launch out into the deep and let down his net. Peter answered: "Master, we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net." Luke 5:5. He virtually said: I am an experienced fisherman, and on this lake we catch fish at night rather than in the daytime, and especially near the shore. But even though Your command seems unreasonable, nevertheless at Thy word I will obey.

By taking Christ at His word when there was not the least evidence of success in sight, Peter caught the largest netful of fish in all his fishing experience. Peter's conclusion before the apparently impossible is the attitude of all genuine Christians. Faith obeys even when the divine instruction seems unreasonable. There can be no faith until God has spoken, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17.

To illustrate the meaning of faith, the epistle to the Hebrews in the eleventh chapter gives a number of examples from history. Paul first makes it clear that only on the basis of faith can the creation and existence of all things be understood. Since no person living on earth today was an eyewitness to the events of creation, faith believes the Genesis record with no other evidence in sight than the word of the Creator. His testimony should be more valuable and authentic than all human conjectures combined. Here faith

is indeed "the evidence of things not seen," for no human being has ever seen anything created.

By offering in sacrifice a lamb as the type of "things not seen," Abel demonstrated his faith in the atoning death of Christ. Thus he "obtained witness that he was righteous," even though his act of faith cost him his life in martyrdom. By faith Enoch was translated without seeing death, and was a type of those who will develop similar characters under similar conditions in the last days and will escape death because they also please God and bear the seal of divine approval. The law, which is the transcript of the character of God, will be found written in their hearts and minds. Noah also manifested great faith in God's declaration that a deluge of waters would destroy the earth and man. This event seemed impossible to the wise men of that day because it had never rained on the earth. He was "moved with fear" and demonstrated his faith by sounding a warning and building an ark of refuge for those who accepted his message.

Abraham exhibited genuine faith when he unhesitatingly obeyed the divine call to leave his home and kindred and country, and journey to an unknown and unseen land with the promise that it would eventually belong to him and his descendants. The record is that he "obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." It is not always necessary to know the end from the beginning when we walk by faith. Confidence in the word of God gives the needed assurance. Abraham saw by faith not only an earthly inheritance, but also a home in the celestial city with its twelve foundations, whose architect and builder is the Eternal,

although it was at that time invisible to his natural sight.

By faith the "friend of God" offered in sacrifice the child of promise, who was the center of his hopes of a coming Messiah, but in this terrible test of faith he got a vision of Christ and the plan of redemption that made him glad. He knew that the divine promise would be fulfilled even if it required a resurrection of the sacrificed son of promise. Is it any wonder that he is spoken of in Scripture as "faithful Abraham," and the father of the faithful? The assurance is given that all who are of faith are blessed with him, and the apostle said: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29. The family of Christ is called "the household of faith."

It was because of their faith in the promise of deliverance from Egyptian bondage and return to the land of Canaan that Jochebed and Amram defied the decree of Pharaoh. They hid Moses in their home for three months and later among the rushes of the Nile, where he was providentially discovered by the princess and adopted into the royal family. It was faith that inspired Moses to refuse to occupy the throne of Egypt, but to choose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He would rather be a member of a persecuted and despised race of slaves, who were chosen of God, than to enjoy the pleasure and privileges of royalty. By faith he knew that someday the tables would turn and God's people would inherit and rule the earth as members of the royal family of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. To this man of faith and vision "the reproach of Christ" was "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" because he

knew that the final reward of the faithful would be incomparably greater than anything a world empire could offer.

Paul refers to the faith by which the Israelites passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, thus escaping the pursuing Egyptian army, and the faith by which Israel captured and destroyed Jericho. Then he states that time and space will not permit him to finish the recital of the exploits of faith and deeds of valor on the part of an innumerable company of heroes in the army of the Lord, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." The roll of the faithful is still incomplete and will yet include a multitude of modern saints who will demonstrate their faith in the word of God during the final crisis. Will your name be among theirs?

The apostle Paul taught that faith is the only means of victory over sin and Satan. He told Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith," and in his last letter, written to Timothy just before his martyrdom, he said: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He then expressed his faith that there was laid up for him "a crown of righteousness" which he would receive at the return of Christ, as would "all them also that love His appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8. To Paul the Christian warfare was a "good fight" because it was not really his, but the fight of faith. "I have gone through the glorious contest," is the Weymouth translation. Like John, he believed that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our

faith." Faith is a world conqueror and has never known defeat, nor will those who experience its power.

While we are a defeated race and therefore helpless in ourselves against the attacks of Satan, he is a defeated foe and is no match for Christ, who has defeated him on every battlefield on which Christians have ever fought, and who makes His victory available as a gift on the basis of faith. Paul wrote: "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57. He also said that Christ "delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver." As if this were not enough, he further said: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place." 2 Corinthians 1:10; 2:14. For what more could we ask than to be delivered "always" and "in every place"?

This victory is the victory of faith. "The battle is not yours, but God's," is still the divine plan. The apostle declared that "the shield of faith" is the means by which we may "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." The ancient warrior who was expert in the use of the shield was able to protect himself from all the darts and arrows, and sword and spear thrusts of the enemy. In the battle in the wilderness Jesus defeated Satan and drove him from the battlefield by successfully wielding the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith. His defense was, "It is written." He unsheathed the mighty sword of the Spirit and so manipulated the shield of faith that He put to flight the prince of devils.

Faith is also the only means of obtaining righteousness and salvation. In all history, Paul has been the chief advocate and champion of this glorious truth. By it he defeated the legalistic Judaizers and saved the early church from becoming again engulfed in the snares of attempted righteousness by works, which had turned Judaism into a species of idolatry akin to heathenism. It again became the battle cry of the great Reformation when Christianity was rescued from a semipagan religious system. The writings of Paul, especially in the books of Romans and Galatians, became the basis of the message that shook to its foundation the most monumental institution of righteousness by works ever known.

Let us notice a few of the apostle's clear-cut statements on this subject, which give all credit and glory to Christ and forever exclude human boastings. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8, 9. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Romans 3:24-28.

Again we read: "To what conclusion does this bring us? Why, that the Gentiles, who were not in pursuit of right-

eousness, have overtaken it—a righteousness, however, which arises from faith; while the descendants of Israel, who were in pursuit of a law that could give righteousness, have not arrived at one. And why? Because they were pursuing a righteousness which should arise not from faith, but from what they regarded as merit." "For I bear witness that they possess an enthusiasm for God, but it is an unenlightened enthusiasm. Ignorant of the righteousness which God provides and building their hopes upon a righteousness of their own, they have refused submission to God's righteousness." Romans 9:30-32; 10:2, 3, Weymouth.

One more quotation will be sufficient: "You and I, though we are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, know that it is not through obedience to law that a man can be declared free from guilt, but only through faith in Jesus Christ. We have therefore believed in Christ Jesus, for the purpose of being declared free from guilt, through faith in Christ and not through obedience to law. For through obedience to law no human being shall be declared free from guilt." Galatians 2:15, 16, Weymouth.

Law as used here means any law, moral or ceremonial. Any attempt to obtain righteousness and salvation on the basis of obedience to law is legalism. In the texts quoted the apostle sets forth the very heart of the everlasting gospel, the center and core of the plan of salvation. It is the message that silenced the Judaizers of apostolic days, broke the papal yoke in the sixteenth century, and will bring a speedy end to the gospel work in the last generation during the latter rain of Pentecostal power.

P ♦ A ♦ U ♦ L

A Man of Certainty

Paul was in a special sense the apostle of confidence, assurance, and certainty, which are the natural fruits of faith and love. These basic principles always produce confidence, and confidence assurance, and assurance certainty; and never were these qualities more greatly needed than in the present age of doubt and uncertainty. Only men of faith, knowledge, conviction, and experience can speak with the voice of authority, and in this respect Paul was an outstanding example.

Of Jesus we read: "For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Matthew 7:29. His message was given with a ring of certainty far different from the questioning and hair-splitting theological disputations of His day that left the hearers in a state of confusion and uncertainty. This was because Jesus knew who He was and knew that His divinely appointed mission would eventually triumph. He found Himself and His work and message in scores of Bible prophecies, and nothing else gives so great

an assurance of delegated authority and certainty of success.

When a delegation from the chief priests in Jerusalem visited John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judea and demanded that he tell them who he was and by what authority he proclaimed his message, his answers to their questions showed that he knew who he was. Without a moment's hesitation he declared that he was not the Messiah, or the Elijah in person, or that prophet whose coming had been promised and expected, but that he was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." John 1:23. He found himself and his message foretold in the prophetic word, and this gave his preaching a ring of certainty and authority which brought thousands of eager seekers for truth out of the cities and villages into the wilderness to hear him preach. Those who heard him did not doubt his sincerity or question the source of his authority.

The church and the world today need the voice of authority in a prophetic message proclaimed by a prophetically appointed people. Such preaching will be characterized by the ring of authority based on the assurance of faith, the certainty of knowledge, the conviction of reality, and the credibility of experience. It was Paul who declared that faith is "well-grounded assurance" of all that Christians hope for, and "a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see." Heb. 11:1 (Weymouth). This language is characteristic of all the writings of the apostle whose authoritative preaching and writing shook both Judaism and paganism to their foundations and changed the history of the world.

The last recorded statement of the physician-historian

Luke is concerning Paul's "preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence." Acts 28:31. With Paul, Christ was the chief object of his fervent love, the basis of his unbounded confidence, and the motivating power of his unparalleled missionary zeal. Christ was to him the "all, and in all" of faith and experience, "in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." Ephesians 3:12. Martin Luther said: "Jesus Christ is never out of Paul's mouth. Indeed, there is nobody and nothing now and always in Paul's mouth but Jesus Christ and His cross," and for this reason "his words are not dead words; they are living creatures with hands and feet."

The apostle told his converts that he always made mention of them in his prayers, "remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," because they knew of a certainty their "election of God," for, he said, "our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." 1 Thessalonians 1:3-5. "And with much certainty," is the Weymouth translation. In another epistle Paul said that he had been divinely "appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles," for which he had suffered martyrdom. He then adds: "Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." 2 Timothy 1:11, 12.

Only a man of unusual faith and confidence could say: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and

will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever." 2 Timothy 4:18. This was written as Paul was facing trial before Emperor Nero, which resulted in his martyrdom. Nothing daunted him or dimmed his faith and assurance of the divine presence, blessing, and approval. He was the embodiment of hope and optimism under all circumstances. His was a faith such as we sing about:

O for a faith that will not shrink, though pressed by many a foe;
That will not tremble on the brink of poverty or woe;
That will not murmur or complain beneath the chastening rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain can lean upon its God.

A faith that shines more bright and clear when tempests rage
without;
That when in danger knows no fear, in darkness feels no doubt;
That bears unmoved the world's dread frown, nor heeds its
scornful smile;
That sin's wild ocean cannot drown, nor its soft arts beguile.

The apostle obeyed his own instruction recorded in Hebrews 3:14: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." As he faced the headsman's ax, he could with assurance say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7, 8. In Paul's mind there was not the shadow of a doubt as to his ultimate triumph and salvation. After meeting his

Master at the gate of Damascus, he never wavered in his course or questioned his eternal destiny.

Using the striking illustration of the athlete who "practices abstemiousness in all directions" during the years of training in order to gain the prize of "a perishable wreath," Paul says to the Christian: "You must run like him, in order to win with certainty." He then adds: "That is how I run, not being in any doubt as to my goal. I am a boxer who does not inflict blows on the air, but I hit hard and straight at my own body and lead it off into slavery, lest possibly, after I have been a herald to others, I should myself be rejected." 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Weymouth.

While Paul freely confessed that he had not yet reached the goal of character perfection, he said: "But I am pressing on, striving to lay hold of the prize for which also Christ has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not imagine that I have yet laid hold of it. But this one thing I do—forgetting everything which is past and stretching forward to what lies in front of me, with my eyes fixed on the goal I push on to secure the prize of God's heavenward call in Christ Jesus." See Philippians 3:12-14, Weymouth. Here is again the voice of assurance and certainty so much needed in this generation of hesitancy, vacillation, timidity, and untrustworthiness.

Paul frequently makes use of the words "know," "known," and "knew," and the expressions "I know" and "we know." In fact, he uses them no less than one hundred and forty times. He said: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. How much we all

need the assurance of divine providences in all the puzzling and apparently unexplainable experiences of life!

In this connection the following quotation is to the point: "By faith we may look to the hereafter, and grasp the pledge of God for a growth of intellect, the human faculties uniting with the divine, and every power of the soul being brought into direct contact with the Source of light. We may rejoice that all which has perplexed us in the providences of God will then be made plain; things hard to be understood will then find an explanation; and where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken purposes, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 118.

Again Paul wrote: "And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." Philippians 1:25. The words "confidence," "assurance," and "certainty" are prominent in his writings. He said: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Verse 6. We also need the assurance that Christ will complete the transforming work of grace in our hearts and lives in preparation for His return. Since He has promised to "finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness," we may be assured that no task is too great or the time too short for the possessor of creative power to accomplish it on time for the close of probation.

The apostle spoke especially of our own generation when he wrote: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye

might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Hebrews 10:35-38. How could a heaven-sent message be more appropriate and up-to-date than this for the remnant people of God? Many today are losing confidence in everything which once constituted the basis of their faith and certainty. They began to question His word, His promises, His message, and His divine leadership through human instrumentalities; and eventually they cast away all confidence and return to "the weak and beggarly elements" of the world. The present membership losses of the church constitute one of the chief concerns of every pastor and church leader. Many today are like the Reubenites of old, who were "unstable as water."

Is it any wonder that so many who accept the gospel are like the seed in the parable which fell on stony ground? Because they have "no root in themselves" or depth of experience, they "endure but for a time" and then wither and die. The hope of the church in this age of doubt and uncertainty is in those who dig deep and build on solid bed-rock so that their character buildings will stand. The coming storm will wrench and test the spiritual foundations of everyone to the utmost. All need to be "rooted and grounded" in the truth so that they are pillars in the church. The porch of Solomon's temple was upheld by two thirty-foot pillars of brass, called Jachin and Boaz, meaning stability and strength.

One of Christ's most precious promises to last-day Christians is recorded in Revelation 3:10-12. Only those who

patiently hold fast to God's word even under the pressure of religious enactments will be divinely guarded during the "hour of trial which is soon coming upon the whole world, to put to the test the inhabitants of the earth." (Weymouth). After stating that He is coming quickly, Christ urges His people to hold fast to their faith and truth; then He promises to overcomers that He will make them pillars in the temple or church of God so that they "shall go no more out." With a permanent experience they are safe for the kingdom of glory. The promise is that the experiences of His trusting followers will be like His, a series of uninterrupted victories. Such will be the victorious experiences of those who are ready to meet their returning Lord.

All who put on "the armor of righteousness" will be shut in with God and securely shielded so that Satan will have no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. They will be eternally secure from the tempter's devices, nevermore to be corrupted by the defiling influences of the world. Possessed and controlled by the indwelling Christ through the Spirit, they will be impregnable to all the assaults of Satan. "The name of the Lord" will be "a strong tower" into which the righteous can run for safety.

Men and women today are hungering and thirsting for messages of assurance and authority. No other preaching can grip their heart, arrest their attention, and convince them of the surety of the word of truth. The most convincing testimony is that of personal experience. Deficiency in training, skill, education, and culture is not as serious as the lack of assurance and confidence based on the supreme qualifications of personal experience. Wise men will mini-

mize the many uncertainties of life and place their emphasis on those things which have been tested in the laboratory of research and experience. We should pass on to others the things we actually know, and not burden them with the many unsolved and puzzling things of life which will be fully understood only in the world to come. Men and women are longing for something solid on which to build. They therefore need more preaching of the Pauline variety.

The apostle Paul was a positive and emphatic preacher, but he was not dogmatic or fanatical. He avoided doubts and probabilities. With his cultural background dominated by Greek education and culture, he must have been tempted to satisfy his hearers with wisdom, philosophy, rhetoric, and oratory. He yielded to this temptation on Mar's Hill, where he successfully matched the wisdom and logic of the Athenians; but he was not satisfied with the results. Therefore, when he came to Corinth, another center of culture and boasted intellectualism, he declared that he would not use "excellency of speech or of wisdom," in proclaiming "the testimony of God." He said: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Corinthians 2:1, 2.

Dr. John Lord gave to Paul the following beautiful tribute: "He claimed nothing but the right to speak his honest opinions, and the privilege to be judged according to the laws. He magnified his office, but only the more easily to win men to his noble cause. To this great cause he was devoted heart and soul, without ever losing courage, or turning back for a moment in despondency or fear. He was as courageous as he was faithful; as indifferent to reproach

as he was eager for friendship. As a martyr he was peerless, since his life was a protracted martyrdom. He was a hero, always gallantly fighting for the truth whatever may have been the array and howling of his foes; and when wounded and battered by his enemies he returned to the fight for his principles with all the earnestness, but without the wrath, of a knight of chivalry."—*Beacon Lights of History*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 452, 453.

Such was Paul, the man of confidence, assurance, and certainty; and the church today is in need of leaders and members of the same caliber. That the same standard of character attainment will be reached by those who are ready to meet their returning Lord is evident from the many prophetic descriptions of God's remnant people. Paul declared that Christ would present to Himself "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." He prayed that they might be sanctified "wholly" and that their "whole spirit and soul and body" might "be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 5:27; 1 Thesalonians 5:23. What has been divinely predicted will come to pass, for "the Scripture cannot be broken."

P ♦ A ♦ U ♦ L

A Man of Prayer

Another outstanding characteristic of the apostle Paul was his prayer life. He can appropriately be called the man of prayer. It was the source of his power and one of the great secrets of his success as a missionary and soul winner. He lived in the atmosphere of heaven and therefore continually dwelt "in heavenly places" through a prayer communion which never ceased. "Paul's adoration flames up to heaven like the ascending incense of a great altar fire," declared Alexander Whyte. It is said of the patriarch Job that he kept the fires burning on the altar of prayer: "Thus did Job continually" (or "all his days," according to the marginal reading). Job 1:5. The same can be said of Paul.

Paul's first introduction to Christianity was a lesson on the efficacy of prayer. After his discussion in the synagogue of the Libertines, Stephen was placed on trial before the Sanhedrin, when "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Acts 6:15. As these Jewish dignitaries heard Ste-

phen's defense, "they were cut to the heart," and, being unable to silence him with Scriptural argument, they accomplished it with stones as he was kneeling in prayer. They heard his last petitions to his Master, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Saul could never forget this scene of prayer and martyrdom, and his heart was pricked and his conscience troubled until he surrendered at the gate of Damascus.

The Lord silenced the justifiable skepticism of Ananias in regard to the genuineness of the conversion of the persecutor with the statement, "Behold, he prayeth." The humbled Pharisee spent the three days of his physical blindness in fasting and prayer, and this resulted in a marvelous spiritual vision. Thus he illustrated the experience and words of Jesus recorded in John 9:39-41. He came into the world "that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Saul was born again, and he began his new life in the environment of prayer.

It was therefore appropriate that Saul, who was first convicted by witnessing the Christian martyr on his knees, and who at his conversion learned his first lessons in the school of prayer, should also be ordained and commissioned as the apostle to the Gentiles in the atmosphere of fervent intercession. We read: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." Acts 13:2-4. Is it any wonder that these men

who were filled with, and guided by, the Holy Spirit had such phenomenal success in the mission fields?

The gospel work on the continent of Europe had its beginning in the place of prayer. When Paul and his companions reached Philippi, in obedience to the vision of the man from Macedonia who beckoned them to "come over and help us," they searched in vain for a synagogue in which to worship on the Sabbath day. Finally they "went out of the city by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made," "and spake unto the women which resorted thither." The first convert was Lydia, a woman from Thyatira in Asia Minor; but others soon followed from among the Europeans. This resulted in the establishment of the first church, which constituted the "first fruits" of a mighty gospel harvest. Acts 16:9-15.

After being converted, consecrated, ordained, and commissioned by prayer, the apostle was determined never to neglect this, the most holy exercise of the soul, which kept him continually in the presence of God and in fellowship with Christ. His prayer life was not spasmodic, as is that of many professed Christians. He did not resort to prayer only when he was in trouble, and neglect it when all was going well. He prayed "without ceasing" in times of prosperity, so that he did not have to change his prayer habits in adversity.

This constancy of prayer was beautifully illustrated in the experience of Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail. After being beaten with "many stripes," they were thrown into the inner prison and their feet made fast in the stocks. The word is that "at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang

praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed." Acts 16:22-26. As a result, the jailer and his family were converted and baptized. What a striking illustration of the truthfulness of the statement in James 5:16, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," or "exerts a mighty influence"! (Weymouth.)

In the experience of altogether too many professed Christians, habits of prayer are very irregular or have virtually disappeared. Family altars have been broken down, adversely affecting the unity and stability of the home. Spirituality is therefore at a low ebb, and many children are departing from the faith or have become delinquents. A revival of private and family prayer would do much to vitalize the church and protect the state from its present moral decline. We all need to imitate the example of Paul, who never permitted his prayer life to diminish.

The abundance of the gospel harvest garnered by the apostle was largely due to the fact that he sowed the seeds of truth under the influence of prayer and then watered them with his tears. He told the elders of the church of Ephesus that for three years he "ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears," and he wrote to the Thessalonians that he continued "night and day praying exceedingly" that what was lacking in their faith might be perfected. Acts 20:31; 1 Thessalonians 3:10. To Timothy he wrote: "Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day," and to the Romans he said: "With-

out ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." 2 Timothy 1:3; Romans 1:9.

The following are some of Paul's statements to the Colossians: "Praying always for you," and we "do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." He also wrote of "laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Colossians 1:3, 9-11; 4:12. What a catalogue of spiritual attainments for a preacher to pray for in the lives of his parishioners! Is it at all strange that the Colossian believers were characterized by spirituality, faithfulness, and stability?

The apostle not only prayed for his converts, but he also urged them to pray constantly, or "without ceasing," or without intermission. He said: "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." 1 Thessalonians 5:17; 1 Timothy 2:8. He counseled Christians to pray always and in all places. He called for an all-out prayer program to meet the all-out attacks of the forces of darkness. The description of the armor and weapons of the Christian soldier in Ephesians 6:10-19 ends with prayer as the power which makes effective every part of the battle equipment: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me,

that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel."

Because we face a powerful and relentless foe who makes his attacks at the most unexpected moments, we must be on our guard at "all times" and on "all occasions," and with "all perseverance." Another apostle said: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8. We are assured of supernatural help as we contend with supernatural forces. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord's host, has been sent down to direct the battle. Therefore the soul that is in possession of the heavenly agencies becomes a fortress that is impregnable to the assaults of Satan and his angels. Nothing enrages Satan more than does the sound of earnest prayer, for he knows that he faces defeat. An appeal to Christ, his antagonist and conqueror, always alarms the adversary. In fact, at the sound of fervent and earnest prayer Satan's whole host trembles.

A noted church leader, Dr. Samuel Chadwick, thus describes the power of prayer: "Satan dreads nothing but prayer. . . . The church that lost its Christ was full of good works. Activities are multiplied that meditation may be ousted, and organizations are increased that prayer may have no chance. Souls may be lost in good works, as surely as in evil ways. The one concern of the devil is, to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray."

Paul declared that prayer, in order to be effectual, must

be offered "in the Spirit." This is because the Holy Spirit is the Head of the church "in Christ's stead," and therefore furnishes the needed supernatural help in dealing with the hosts of evil. Praying "in the Spirit" does not necessarily mean emotional ecstasy or flight of feeling. Prayer has been called "conversation with God" and "the opening of the heart to God as to a friend," a communion not enhanced by emotional demonstrations or shouting. Under the control of the Holy Spirit we are in no danger of asking amiss, for, according to Romans 8:26, 27, the Spirit knows "the will of God," and therefore "what we should pray for as we ought."

We must pray "without ceasing," or intermission, because the wicked spirits make their attacks without ceasing or intermission. "Pray with unceasing prayer and entreaty on every fitting occasion in the Spirit, and be always on the alert to seize opportunities for doing so, with unwearied persistence and entreaty." Ephesians 6:18, Weymouth.

"Every fitting occasion" doubtless includes public, family, and private prayer, as well as prayers of intercession, confession, and thanksgiving. "Entreaty" indicates a persistent asking and strong pleading, on the order of Elijah's petitions on Mount Carmel and Christ's in the Garden of Gethsemane. Of the latter we read: "For Jesus during His earthly life offered up prayers and entreaties, crying aloud and weeping as He pleaded with Him who was able to bring Him in safety out of death, and He was delivered from the terror from which He shrank." Hebrews 5:7, Weymouth.

"Unwearied persistence" has the meaning of intensity and perseverance until the answer comes. Being "always on the alert" or "watching" (King James Version) is an expres-

sion often used in connection with prayer in the Scriptures. "Watch and pray" was the counsel of Jesus to His disciples in the garden, and also to those who await His return. It indicates being awake and on guard, and it presumes a knowledge of the Scriptures, which is essential to watchfulness. Paul urged believers to make "supplication for all saints," because they are the special objects of Satan's wrath and attacks. He also asked for prayers in his own behalf that he might have courage to preach the gospel with boldness. All of God's spokesmen need and appreciate the prayers of His people, which accomplish far more good than do their criticisms. "Pray for us" is an expression found several times in the epistles of Paul.

What does it mean to "pray without ceasing" and to continue "instant in prayer"? Are these merely paradoxical statements with hidden meanings? They certainly do not mean that Christians should be constantly on their knees in prayer. One thing is certain—they are never to cease praying, that is, never to dispense with their regular prayer appointments with God. To continue to live physically, we must never cease to breathe oxygen-laden air. It becomes a regular habit which is exercised almost automatically. Breathing is set forth in the Scriptures as a symbol or illustration of the necessity of unceasing prayer. The prophet Jeremiah wrote of his prison experience: "I called upon Thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not Thine ear at my breathing, at my cry." Lamentations 3:55, 56.

In another sense, unceasing prayer involves one's consciousness of living in the presence of God and thus in a

heavenly atmosphere, so that one's entire life becomes a continuous prayer based on the knowledge of his ever-existing need. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being;" if He should withdraw His power, life would immediately cease. When one retires to sleep at night and awakens in the morning it should be with the consciousness, "I am still with Thee." This will be so with one whose mind is stayed on Him.

With this experience of the conscious presence of God, even the water basin and bath may be made a sacrament. One can pray, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," and he can rejoice that though his "sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." While dressing, one can appropriately pray, "Clothe me with the robe of Thy righteousness." While partaking of the daily meals, one can say with Job, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." So on through the day, every object and act of life can be a parable of prayer. Thus we may continue "instant in prayer."

Prayer is the very breath of the soul and the secret of spiritual life and power. No other means of grace can be substituted and the health of the soul be preserved. It brings the heart into contact with the Fountain of life and strengthens the sinew of the entire religious experience. Prayer is the source of every needed spiritual blessing. Why should we be so negligent of prayer, when it "is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence"? If we could realize its importance we would join the disciples in their petition to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray."

P ♦ A ♦ U ♦ L

A Man of Obedience

Another prominent characteristic of the apostle Paul was his immediate and unquestioning obedience when he was convinced of his duty. He never questioned the sacredness of his obligation to obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience. This is the natural fruit of basic honesty, which was one of Paul's greatest virtues. Regardless of the personal cost or consequence, he never hesitated to walk in the light as soon as he saw it.

Near the close of his apostolic career he stood before King Agrippa and related the story of his conversion, which had taken place more than twenty years earlier. He concluded his narrative with the statement, "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Seeing that his message was reaching the mark, the apostle closed his appeal by saying, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but

also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Acts 26:19, 27-29. With Paul it was never "almost," but always "altogether," when it came to obedience to principle. He never did anything halfheartedly.

Strict obedience to divine instruction was one of the chief secrets of Paul's success as an apostle and missionary. "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he," is a maxim of basic principles set forth in Proverbs 29:18. Spiritual vision is therefore of paramount importance, and, in fact, a life-and-death matter. But vision is useless without obedience to the light revealed. Light is of no avail unless we walk in it, and knowledge and information are fruitless unless put into practice and made a part of daily living. Only living epistles can be "known and read of all men." Character is always revealed by conduct. Paul was not only a man of character; he was also a man of action. His life was a living example of his character and teachings.

Paul's childhood training was a contributing factor in his unhesitating obedience in later life. Born of Hebrew parents, he was reared under the strictest regulations of parental law. To this day, especially among orthodox Jews, children are taught to obey without question. This doubtless accounts for the unusual honor and respect accorded to Jewish parents in their old age, and is not at all strange in the light of the instruction given to parents in the Old Testament Scriptures. One who obeys parental law will always find it easier to obey both civil and divine law.

Parents who attempt to correct their children by words

alone, without enforcing obedience, instill in these youth a contempt for authority. This lax attitude is a contributing cause of the present rising tide of lawlessness. One of the greatest needs of the hour is a return to family discipline, even though many consider it to be old-fashioned. The family background of Saul of Tarsus had a powerful influence for good on his future career.

Another important factor was his religious training. He was the son of a Pharisee, and was therefore schooled from birth in strict obedience to the minute and multiple rules of the most exact and severely orthodox of religions. To King Agrippa Paul said: "Being an adherent of the strictest sect of our religion, my life was that of a Pharisee." Acts 26:5, Weymouth. The Pharisees were fanatics and extremists, spending much time discussing hairsplitting distinctions in regard to both divine and man-made requirements. At the age of thirteen, Saul became "a child of the law" and was sent to Jerusalem to enter the noted school of Pharisaism under the direction of the great Hebrew scholar, Gamaliel, where he said he had been "brought up" and "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers."

All this had an important bearing on Saul's miraculous conversion and his future lifework as the apostle to the Gentiles. The voice from heaven at the gate of Damascus, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," was the message of Jesus to an honest man who had been fighting against a guilty conscience. Saul's answers, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" indicate an immediate and unconditional surrender to the sovereignty of the

very one he had hated and persecuted. The quickness of the change was indeed amazing. He asked for no period of time to adjust his thinking. He at once began to obey his new Master, to whose service he devoted the remainder of his life with a fervor and zeal unparalleled in history.

How different it is with the great majority, as is illustrated by the parable of the wedding supper, where "they all with one consent began to make excuse" for not accepting the invitation which represented the call of the gospel. However, others accepted the invitation, so "the wedding was furnished with guests." The excuses made were trivial, but no more so than those used to support a refusal to walk in the light of present truth. Today, too, obedience to the commandments of God constitutes the wedding garment, or the robe of Christ's righteousness. Saul sought no excuses. Though blinded by the heavenly vision, he at once obeyed the instructions given to go to a certain house on a certain street in Damascus where he would receive further instructions from a man named Ananias.

The humbled Pharisee was told that he had been divinely selected to know the will of God, and to see "the Just One," who would make him a "witness unto all men," "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." Acts 26:18. See 22:14, 15. After telling King Agrippa of this divinely given commission at the time of his conversion, he declared that he had not been disobedient to the heavenly vision. With what fidelity he kept his pledge!

Saul might have followed the majority in disobedience, which has been characteristic of the human race back to the expulsion from Eden. We live in a rebel world where the vast majority of the inhabitants have been "the children of disobedience." The principles of righteousness set forth in the Decalogue have been largely disregarded and trampled underfoot. Few travel the narrow path of strict obedience which leads to eternal life, while the broad, easy, and liberal road of disobedience is crowded. Not many are anxious, as was Paul, to obtain correct answers to the two most important questions of life: "Who art Thou, Lord?" and "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" To become acquainted with God, and to know and do His will, should be the chief quests of life.

The world is under the dominion of a rebel who is designated "the prince of this world." John wrote: "We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." 1 John 5:19, Weymouth. Paul declared that all are "dead in trespasses and sins" and live "according to the course of this world" and are subjects of the wrath of God, which will come upon "the children of disobedience." He said that the law of God was made, not "for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient." He also declared that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Ephesians 2:1, 2; 1 Timothy 1:9; Romans 5:19.

Satan is primarily the "man of sin," or of lawlessness, described in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. He is "the mystery of iniquity," or the secret of a life of sin. On the other hand,

Christ is pre-eminently the Man of righteousness or of obedience. He is "the mystery of godliness," or the secret of a life of holiness. The record is that He "did no sin," and His testimony was, "I have kept My Father's commandments."

In the terrible Gethsemane struggle, Jesus prayed that He might be delivered from drinking the cup of agony; then He immediately added, "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done." He died rather than disobey, and so did Paul. Paul could have escaped martyrdom if he had been willing to sacrifice principle. But to him the very purpose of the gospel was the "obedience to the faith among all nations." Paul asked the following question, the answer to which is self-evident. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16. Obedience is therefore the test of loyalty, and the evidence of sincerity in service and worship. To obey man rather than God is creature worship and therefore idolatry. "Devil worship" had its origin when Adam and Eve obeyed Satan instead of their Creator. Satan is "the god of this world" because the majority of its citizens obey him.

Paul declared that Christians "do not war after the flesh," because "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. True obedience controls the thoughts

as well as the conduct, and because it comes from the heart, it is possible to be obedient in all things.

Paul made it clear that mere human obedience is legalism and therefore worthless as far as righteousness and salvation are concerned. Under the new covenant the Holy Spirit, acting for Christ, the great Lawgiver, writes the principles of the law in the mind and on "the fleshy tables of the heart," so that we find a natural desire to conform to the law, and obedience becomes a delight. The psalmist made the Messiah say, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. Only faith obedience and love obedience are acceptable to God.

Paul declared that love not only satisfies "the demands of law," but is "complete obedience to law." Romans 13:8, 10, Weymouth. When the early church lost her love and love works, the privilege of holding aloft the torch of truth and being witnesses for God was withdrawn. After commending her for her zeal and good works, Jesus gave the following reproof: "Yet I have this against you—that you no longer love Me as you did at first. Be mindful, therefore, of the height from which you have fallen. Repent at once, and act as you did at first, or else I will surely come and remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent." Revelation 2:4, Weymouth.

The importance of love obedience is emphasized in the following statements of Jesus to His disciples: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . . If a

man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings." John 14:15-24. The apostle John wrote: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:3. Love knows no sacrifice or burden or inconvenience.

Another reason for Paul's habits of strict obedience was his intimate knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, which are filled with examples of the fatal results of disobedience to divine instruction, and the rich rewards of submission to the divine will. God never changes. He is as strict and particular as in days of old. He is not like many modern parents who become more lenient with the younger children. The basis of His rule as seen by the "Preacher" is set forth in Ecclesiastes 8:11-13: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him: but it shall not be well with the wicked."

Delayed sentences and lax law enforcement always result in increased lawlessness in civic and family life. Many have learned disobedience to God through loose family discipline in childhood. Since the days of the theocracy, we no longer see the immediate judgments of God as in the times of Israel, but "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Peter 2:9.

The law of God is a code of eternal principles of right because it is a revelation of the nature of God, a transcript of the character of the Lawgiver. It is therefore "exceeding broad," embracing "the whole duty of man," so that on the two tables of the Decalogue "hang all the law and the prophets." It therefore embraces all the Scriptures, and is the standard of God's righteousness and the rule of the coming judgment. Nothing could be more absurd than to attempt to prove from the writings of Paul that law has been supplanted by grace and is therefore no longer binding on Christians. Romans 3:19, 20; 7:7-12; 8:1-8 are samples of scores of Paul's assertions as to the binding claims of God's law in Christian conduct.

"Sin is the transgression of the law," and "where no law is, there is no transgression;" thus "sin is not imputed when there is no law." 1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15; 5:13. The idea that Christ came to abolish the law originated in the days when He was among men, and was emphatically denied: "Do not for a moment suppose that I have come to abrogate the law or the prophets: I have not come to abrogate them but to give them their completion. Solemnly I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not one iota or smallest detail will pass away from the law until all has taken place. Whoever therefore breaks one of these least commandments and teaches others to break them, will be called the least in the kingdom of the heavens; but whoever practices them and teaches them, he will be acknowledged as great in the kingdom of the heavens." Matthew 5:17-19, Weymouth.

One of the finest statements ever made concerning the relation between the law and the gospel was written by

C. M. Gordon, formerly president of the Victorian Conference of the Church of Christ, and published in *The Australian Christian* of June 4, 1908. He said: "Law is an essential feature of all government, human and divine. The kingdom of our Master is entered by submission to law, and the enjoyment of its privileges is conditioned by obedience to law. . . . The moral law, written on perishable tables of stone and confirmed by the thunders of Sinai, is now written on the imperishable tables of the heart and confirmed by the thunders of Calvary. The grace that came by Jesus Christ does not destroy the moral aspect of the law which was delivered to Israel through Moses, but fulfills it, reconfirms it, and re-enforces it by new motives, sublimer sanctions, and added insistence. Therefore, no subject of the government of Christ dare continue in sin that grace may abound. Grace thunders against sin as loudly, or even more loudly, than does law. The difference between law and grace is this: The law has no mercy, grace has mercy. The law discovers the disease, but has no remedy. The law has no Saviour, grace provides a Saviour. . . . But let it never be forgotten that, while we cannot be saved by law without grace, no more can we be saved by grace without law; while we cannot be saved by morality without Christianity, no more can we be saved by Christianity without morality. In Christianity a wonderful thing has taken place: justice and mercy have celebrated their nuptials, law and grace have kissed each other; Sinai and Calvary have embraced each other."

BARNABAS

Son of Consolation

We shall now discuss a Bible character who has been greatly neglected by students, preachers, and writers. He is spoken of as a teacher, a prophet, and an apostle. He wrote none of the books of the New Testament, and the epistle credited to him is spurious, a clumsy forgery.

The subject of our study was a great preacher, second only to the apostle Paul, his friend and companion in labor. In many respects they were equally great, and both were divinely appointed as apostles to the Gentiles. As we read the sacred record we are inclined to overlook the greatness of some lesser figures or even of some major apostles because Paul so eclipsed his contemporaries that it is difficult to properly estimate their greatness. Beside Paul, others seem to shrink in stature below their normal size.

Mount Hood and Mount Adams are famous only because they are so far separated from 14,408-foot Mount Rainier, and Pikes Peak owes its greatness to the fact that it is one hundred miles removed from Long's Peak which is 14,255

feet high, or 147 feet higher than the former. Mount Whitney is but little higher than a number of surrounding mountains which are virtually unknown. For the same reason Joses, or Joseph, is little known in comparison with Paul.

Our hero is first mentioned in Acts 4:33-37: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."

The apostles changed the name of Joses, or Joseph, to a name that more nearly described his noble character. He was called Barnabas, which means "The son of consolation." "The consoler," "The son of exhortation," and "The son of encouragement" are other translations. This change was made because of his outstanding character and disposition. He was always exhorting to faithfulness, consoling and comforting the afflicted, and encouraging the downhearted. These characteristics must have been very prominent to warrant a change of name. It is therefore evident that he did not engage in vicious gossip or destructive criticism. He was not a supercritic. He ever sought to build up rather than to tear down the work of the church. He was a mighty pillar in the spiritual temple of the Lord.

When Barnabas visited the church in Antioch in the time of crisis, he "exhorted them all." The secret of Barnabas's consoling work is revealed in the statement that he was "filled with the Holy Spirit." In Acts 11:24 we read of him: "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." He was distinguished by his spirituality, his nobility of character, his unwavering faith, his love, kindness, generosity, and gentleness of disposition. He was the Joshua of the early church, dispensing courage and good cheer to all with whom he came in contact. Is it any wonder that the apostles gave him a new name to describe his wonderful character?

Sometimes the question is asked, "What's in a name?" A great deal is in a name that describes character. In fact "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." For this reason the redeemed will be given a new name when they reach the kingdom, a name "which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Revelation 2:17. Since every character will be different, only he who developed the character can fully understand the significance of the name that describes it. The character of Christ is so wonderful that we are told that "His name shall be called Wonderful." In fact the character and work of Christ are described in the Scriptures by about 250 names, titles, and emblems.

Jesus surnamed James and John "The sons of thunder" because of their stormy and tempestuous dispositions; but Joseph, which is a name of renown in Scripture, was surnamed Barnabas, doubtless under inspiration, because of his lovable disposition and his influence for good in the early

church. The church today is in need of less sons of thunder and more sons of consolation and encouragement.

Barnabas was a native of Cyprus, an important island in the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Syria. The island was known for the production of wheat, oil, wine, figs, and honey. The inhabitants were noted for their sensuality, selfishness, and self-indulgence. They were covetous and "greedy of filthy lucre." It was out of this unfavorable environment that generous and noblehearted Barnabas came forth to bless the early church.

He demonstrated his generosity by selling his property and giving all the proceeds to the church. He was doubtless a wealthy man, since his is the only name given which would seem to indicate a special example of liberality. In the next chapter Ananias and Sapphira are named in contrast as examples of selfishness and covetousness. Barnabas was "a Levite" who did not pass by the sick and needy and wounded, as did the other Levite in the parable. He thus demonstrated the spirit of the new Christian priesthood in contrast to that of the old Levitical order.

It is significant that both of the men divinely chosen to be apostles to the Gentiles were natives of countries outside of Judea. This made them far better qualified for their mission work, since they were not cursed with the narrow bigotry and prejudice of the Judean Jews. It required a number of years for the other apostles to broaden their vision to include the Gentiles within the provisions of the gospel of grace.

According to Acts 13:1-4, Barnabas and Saul were ordained and commissioned at the same time. It is interest-

ing to note that Barnabas is named first among "the prophets and teachers," and Saul last. This was doubtless because Barnabas was the older of the two and had been longer in the faith, and at that time was more experienced and prominent. Both were selected and sent forth to their work by the Holy Spirit, who in Christ's stead was the administrator of the church. The first missionary tour took them first to Cyprus, the home of Barnabas, where he was doubtless well and favorably known. According to tradition Barnabas was later martyred there by the Jews from Syria and Salamis, and John Mark, his nephew or cousin, witnessed his death and buried him in a cave.

Let us notice four examples to show that Barnabas was properly surnamed "The son of consolation." When Saul came to Jerusalem after his miraculous conversion at Damascus, it was Barnabas who introduced him to the fearful and prejudiced apostles. We read: "So he came to Jerusalem and made several attempts to associate with the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, being in doubt as to whether he himself was a disciple. Barnabas, however, came to his assistance. He brought Saul to the apostles, and related to them how, on his journey, he had seen the Lord, and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had fearlessly taught in the name of Jesus. Henceforth Saul was one of them, going in and out of the city, and speaking fearlessly in the name of the Lord." Acts 9:26-29, Weymouth.

When Saul was alone and friendless, shunned and hated by his former friends and associates, and feared by the Christians, he was brought into the company of believers

and recruited for the cause of Christianity by bighearted Barnabas, the only one who welcomed and comforted him. Even impetuous and prejudiced Peter finally capitulated and urged Saul to come into his own home, where he spent fifteen days. It is not difficult to imagine what they talked about during that period. Their friendship continued through life.

Again, when the news of the conversion of hundreds of Gentiles in Antioch reached Jerusalem, it caused concern among the apostles. Only recently they had learned, through the experience of Peter, of God's plan to spread the gospel among the Gentiles. Peter had seen the vision of the clean and unclean meats, which prepared him to serve the household of the Gentile Cornelius. Knowing the feeling of the Jews regarding such people, he wisely took six men with him, who were able to add their testimony to his when he was called before the council in Jerusalem. The falling of the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius was convincing evidence to the leaders, and they "glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18. The apostles saw the need of careful guidance in the church at Antioch, where Jew and Gentile were associating in a new and hazardous relationship. They needed a man of great tact to go into a position of leadership in this promising field.

The Holy Spirit directed in the selection of Barnabas for the mission to Antioch. When this unprejudiced man saw what God was doing for the Gentiles in Antioch, "he was glad" and exhorted them to be faithful in spite of the exclusiveness of the Jewish converts. He gave them the

needed comfort and encouragement and rebuked the Jewish brethren for their attitude.

Barnabas had another opportunity to bring Saul into active service in the forefront of the gospel ministry. After Saul's return to Jerusalem as a Christian, he was hated and persecuted by the Jews, and again had to flee for his life. The brethren took him to Caesarea and sent him by ship to Tarsus, his old home. During the following years he labored in "the regions of Syria and Cilicia" and was out of contact with the churches of Judea. Galatians 1:21-23.

In the meantime Barnabas found that the job in Antioch was too big for him and that he needed help. Where could he find the right man to assist him? A Judean convert would not fit into the situation. Then he remembered his old friend Saul. They had been friends and probably schoolmates in youth. John Fleetwood, in his *Life of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, etc., said that the parents of Barnabas "finding him of a promising genius and disposition, placed him at one of the schools of Jerusalem, under the tuition of Gamaliel."—Page 594. If they were not in school at the same time, they had doubtless met on different occasions.

Saul was the man best qualified to help him at Antioch; so Barnabas set out at once on the 150-mile journey to Tarsus to find him. He was successful in his search and persuaded Saul to return with him to Antioch. Then followed a mighty work in that great city where the disciples of Christ were first called Christians. The converts were multiplied by the thousands. Gibbon has declared that there were in the city 100,000 Christians—one fifth of the popula-

tion. It was a year after Saul's arrival that the Holy Spirit instructed the church to commission the two men for their work among the Gentiles. Again, what would have happened to the gifted Saul of Tarsus had it not been for the intervention of Barnabas?

Barnabas also saved John Mark, his nephew or cousin, to the gospel ministry by insisting that he be given another chance after one tragic failure. Acts 13:13; 15:37-40. It cost him the temporary disfavor of Paul, and in fact there was "a contention" over the matter, resulting in their separation. There was no anger or bitterness or broken friendship, but only a decided difference of opinion. The separation resulted in the training of two young men instead of one, and was therefore a blessing in disguise.

Later Paul recognized his mistake, and if Barnabas was still living, doubtless apologized to him. In his final letter to Timothy just before his martyrdom, Paul asked him to come to him before winter and bring Mark because "he is profitable to me for the ministry." If it had not been for the part Barnabas played in seeing that Mark had another opportunity to make good in the ministry, the second of the four Gospels would doubtless be missing.

John Calvin was saved to the cause of the Reformation by William Farel, and it has been said that Ulysses S. Grant might have been the unknown soldier of the Civil War if it had not been for General Sherman. Many discouraged men and women are now reckoned among the heroes and heroines of the world and the church because some comforting Barnabas came to their rescue and saved them from failure and oblivion.

APOLLOS

A Man of Eloquence

"And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." Acts 18:24-28.

Here is another of the great New Testament characters who has been sadly neglected by theologians, writers, and preachers. Like Barnabas, he would shine with a greater brilliance if he were further removed from Paul. The apostle

Paul mentions Apollos five times in his epistles, all of which indicate his high esteem for a friend and colaborer.

Luke's record is an interposed narrative of digression to prepare his readers for what follows in the next chapter. The writer leaves Paul in Phrygia and Galatia doing a work which is not described, and tells what is at the same time taking place in Ephesus. He introduces a new character of great scholarship, skill, ability, and eloquence, and tells of his joining the ranks of the Christian church and ministry. Like a blazing meteor he appears on the horizon for a time and then as suddenly seems to disappear. But for more than a decade he accomplished a mighty work for God.

Apollos was a native of Alexandria, the famous Egyptian city founded by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. This city was designed by the noted architect Dinocrates, who had also planned and built the Temple of Diana in Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Apollos was a Jew with a Roman name, believed to be an abbreviation of Apollonius.

Alexander placed thousands of dispersed Jews in his newly built city and crowded them into the Jewish quarters. By the time of our narrative the Jewish population occupied between a third and a half of the city, and included many of the leading citizens, bankers, merchants, and scholars. Tradition declares that seventy of these translated the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek version known as the Septuagint, or the version of the Seventy.

In the city was a world-renowned library containing the literature of the ancient world, sacred and profane. The city also contained the most celebrated schools of antiquity,

in which Apollos was doubtless an honored student. He was "a man of great learning and well versed in the Scriptures" (Weymouth), educated in both the Hebrew and the Gentile schools of the city. He therefore studied the writings of Homer and Plato as well as the philosophy of Philo, the noted Jewish philosopher, who was probably one of his instructors, or possibly a classmate.

Apollos probably possessed a greater knowledge of Greek thought and culture than Saul had gained in Tarsus, and he had a more ready gift of speech. In fact, he was "an eloquent man," a dynamic speaker, an orator. While Paul's enemies said that his speech was "contemptible," they could not say that of Apollos. He was a good man and a good speaker, a happy combination not always found in orators. He was "mighty in the Scriptures," an ardent reader and diligent student. Oratory without knowledge is like "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." But this man was both an orator and a scholar.

Apollos was not only a learned man, but he knew how to use his knowledge effectively. Here is where many highly educated men and women fail. One of the great shocks of my early life was to meet a tramp who was a graduate of Harvard University. Many who possess knowledge are not wise, but this was not true of Apollos. He was not only mighty in his knowledge of the Scriptures, but he was also "fervent in the spirit," or filled with zeal and enthusiasm. "Being full of burning zeal, he used to speak and teach accurately the facts about Jesus." (Weymouth.) This is an important combination in public speaking, for zeal and fervency should always be under the strict control of

accuracy and be free from extravagant statements and even exaggerations.

When Apollos arrived in Ephesus, he knew and taught only what John the Baptist knew and taught, but John died before the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, and before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Apollos arrived at Ephesus after Paul had departed, and they did not meet at that time. Priscilla and Aquila went to the synagogue each Sabbath and heard Apollos eloquently and zealously proclaim the preaching of John. Realizing that his knowledge was limited, they invited him to their home, doubtless for a Sabbath dinner, and then tactfully explained the gospel "more perfectly." "He spoke very confidently in the synagogue at first, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and explained the way of God to him more correctly," is the Goodspeed translation. After his visit with them he was not so sure of his ground and became more cautious until he got his bearing by a more accurate knowledge.

Instead of criticizing and condemning Apollos because of his ignorance or partial knowledge, as many would do, this noble couple recognized him as an honest and sincere man and determined to give him the needed additional light. It was a delicate task. Here is another of the many evidences that all knowledge is not obtained in the classroom or in halls of learning. Apollos showed his greatness of character by being willing to receive instruction from humble laymen, and even from a woman, who is named first in all modern translations, doubtless because she was the more aggressive and dominant character and led out in the instruction to the

visiting Alexandrian. An old Roman adage reads: "Despise not advice, even of the meanest: the gagging geese preserved the Roman state."

These two humble tentmakers had been practicing the presence of God and were personally acquainted with Jesus and were therefore well qualified to instruct the great scholar from Egypt. Paul had brought them to Ephesus and "left them there," doubtless to carry on the work he had begun, never realizing the important part they would play in teaching the great teacher and in preparing him for his future work.

There was no Christian church in Alexandria, and when Apollos came to Judea he heard of the teachings of John and immediately accepted them and began proclaiming his new-found light. His message was true as far as it went, but he needed to know the gospel "more perfectly." He could have quoted the classic literature and poetry of the Greeks and Romans to show his great scholarship and to gain favor and applause, but he maintained his simplicity and thus manifested the characteristic of true greatness. With the truly great and wise there are no conscious efforts to appear learned for the purpose of making favorable impressions.

After giving his message in Ephesus and receiving the additional light, Apollos "made up his mind to cross over into Greece." There "he rendered valuable help to those who through grace had believed." Acts 18:27, Weymouth.

That Apollos went to Corinth is stated in Acts 19:1. Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia in Greece. Jerome declared that Apollos became the bishop of the

church of Corinth. Of his work in Corinth we read: "For he powerfully confuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus." Acts 18:28, R.S.V. The language indicates public debate with Jewish opponents who were worsted and defeated by his arguments and logic before the whole congregation. His preaching also deepened the spirituality of the believers. He was able to reach some that Paul did not and could not reach, as is usually true of different men. This is the reason for the need of a variety of talents and personalities in the work of God.

It is unfortunate that the eloquence of Apollos caused some to range themselves on his side in a party spirit, thus demonstrating their smallness of character. Paul and Apollos complemented each other, and between them there was no jealousy or rivalry. What can be more despicable than petty jealousies between church leaders with different God-given talents, capabilities, and attainments? Apollos helped those "who through grace had believed," and so did Paul. They were entirely different men with different appeals. "Unity in variety in Christian character is one of the chief beauties in the garden of God."—*Pulpit Commentary*. Twelve types of gospel workers are needed to minister to the twelve tribes of modern Israel.

Through no fault of Apollos his preaching brought a division in the church. We read of it in 1 Corinthians 1:12, 13: "What I mean is that each of you is a partisan. One man says 'I belong to Paul,' another 'I belong to Apollos,' a third 'I belong to Peter,' a fourth 'I belong to Christ.' Is the Christ in fragments? Is it Paul who was crucified on your behalf?" (Weymouth.)

The situation must have been serious, for Paul spoke of it again: "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Corinthians 3:3-6, 21-23.

Paul declared that the division over church leaders was evidence that they were not only babies spiritually, but were still in the flesh. "You are still of the flesh." (R.S.V.) "And even now you are not strong enough: you are still unspiritual. For so long as jealousy and strife continue among you, can it be denied that you are unspiritual and are living and acting like mere men of the world? For when someone says, 'I belong to Paul,' and another says, 'I belong to Apollos,' is not this the way men of the world speak?" (Weymouth.) The apostle set forth a great truth when he said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." This is still true. There is therefore no room for anyone to boast of gospel fruitage. The best we can do is to sow the seeds of truth and leave the results with God, who alone can produce the fruit or increase. Bickering over converts to the gospel is the very height of folly.

Again Paul wrote: "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes;

that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." 1 Corinthians 4:6. "So that you may cease to take sides in boastful rivalry, for one teacher against another." (Weymouth.) This was what was happening in the church of Corinth. Members were exalting one teacher at the expense of another, and thus injuring the influence of all.

People naturally differ in their likes and dislikes of preachers and teachers, for each one is different in personality and style of address from the others; and God intends that it should be so. Nothing is more pathetic than to hear one speaker or teacher attempt to imitate another, for imitations are almost always poor. One of a kind is all that God intended, and it is enough.

The eloquence and learning and culture of Apollos fascinated the fickle and emotional Corinthians. There was also doubtless a division between the Jewish and Gentile converts, the former favoring Peter and the latter Paul and Apollos. The party strife gave evidence that they were little babes instead of mature adults. Paul set forth the only basis of unity in the statement, "Ye are Christ's." All three speakers, Paul, Apollos, and Peter, preached the same gospel and produced the same fruitage. Therefore, the only room for division—over talents and personalities—was absurd, for these were divinely bestowed.

Apollos was grieved over these party jealousies, and he left Corinth and returned to Ephesus. "But disgusted possibly by an attempt on the part of some to set him up as a rival to St. Paul, he left Corinth and returned to Ephesus, and

we know not whether he ever visited Corinth again."—*Cambridge Bible*. Later when the members of the church of Corinth urged Apollos to return, he wisely refused. "As for our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brethren, but it was not at all God's will for him to go now. He will come when he has opportunity." 1 Corinthians 16:12, R.S.V. He was too big a man to run the risk of a repetition of the former rivalry and party spirit. "Apollos had left Corinth in disgust over the strife there which followed him and Paul. He had had enough of partisan strife over preachers."—Robertson, in *Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

Under the circumstances, knowing the possible results, what a noble and magnanimous spirit Paul manifested in urging Apollos to return to Corinth! Paul was doubtless happy when Apollos refused, and declared that it was the will of God. He speaks of him as "brother Apollos." The strife never affected their friendship and love. The above statement was written five years after Apollos first arrived in Ephesus.

Paul's last mention of Apollos, eleven years after the narrative of Luke in the book of Acts, was probably written from Corinth when Paul was on his way to Nicopolis, where he had planned to spend the winter. "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them." Titus 3:12, 13.

Martin Luther believed that Apollos was the author of the book of Hebrews, and that is the belief of many modern

Bible students. He doubtless could have written this important book, as far as learning and Scriptural knowledge are concerned, but it is evident that he did not. A knowledge of the writings of Paul should convince anyone that he was the author. His years of experience in dealing with Judaizers in regard to the typical services of the earthly sanctuary, as a type of the heavenly, qualified him above all others for the task. While he modestly withholds his signature as the author, he is identified by the contents and style of writing.

Apollos, however, deserves an honored place among the heroes of faith who adorned the early church, and, if he was faithful, he will share with the apostles in the rich rewards when the Lord of the harvest returns "to give to every man according as his work shall be." He will be among those who will "shine as the brightness of the firmament" and "as the stars for ever and ever," in the kingdom of glory.

M ♦ A ♦ R ♦ K

The Persistent

We shall now discuss one of the younger members of the family of early Christians, one who failed miserably, but later made such a notable comeback that his name has been placed on the honor role of the New Testament heroes of faith.

This youth is first mentioned in Mark 14:50-52: "And they all forsook Him, and fled. And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." This youth therefore did not flee with the eleven. Either he was braver than these grown men, including boastful Peter and loving John, who later regained their courage and followed Jesus to the palace of the high priest, or the boy was controlled by the recklessness of youth and the love of adventure that is characteristic of many young men.

In the mob were some youths who were also seeking excitement. Recognizing the boy as a follower of Jesus, they made an attack and attempted to seize him, but all they got was his linen cloak, out of which he slipped and escaped into the darkness. It was a sort of light outer cloak

worn in warm weather. It is believed that "naked" as used here means "with only the under robe on," or his underclothes. It would be difficult to believe that he would have gone into the garden so sparsely clothed on a night when others had to build fires in order to keep warm.

Who was this youth whom John Mark alone tells about but doesn't name? Bible students, both ancient and modern, believe that it was none other than Mark himself. To him this was an important event which was not witnessed and recorded by the others, for they had already fled. Mark was either ashamed of his cowardice or did not deem identification important. He loved Jesus, who may have visited his home. There are some who believe that he was the boy with the basket containing five loaves and two small fish with which Jesus fed the multitude. John Mark lived in Jerusalem with his mother, Mary, spoken of in one place as "the other Mary," evidently a close friend of Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is believed that their spacious home was the place of the upper room where Jesus and His disciples celebrated the last Passover supper. It is only natural that Mark should follow Jesus and His disciples into the Garden of Gethsemane.

The home of Mary and Mark was doubtless the upper room where the disciples and other believers prayed for the outpouring of the promised Spirit which came upon them on the Day of Pentecost. It was also the regular place of worship for the early Christians. Here the believers gathered to pray for the release of Peter from prison, as recorded in Acts 12:12. Mary was called the mother of John to distinguish her from the other Marys, and John was surnamed

Mark to distinguish him from the apostle John. John was his original Hebrew name, and Mark or Marcus was added later as a Roman agnomen. The name *Mark* eventually superseded *John*, as *Paul* superseded *Saul* in the Scriptural record.

Marcus means "hammer," such as a kind used to crush flinty rock. It was a popular name among the Romans, and was the first name of the noted Cicero. John Mark was believed to have been of the tribe of Levi. Bede says that he was a priest of the order of Aaron.

Mary was evidently a widow, since no mention is made of her husband. That she was a woman of some means is indicated by the size of her home, the presence of servants, and the fact that she was the sister of Barnabas, who, according to Acts 4:36, 37, was one of the most wealthy of the early Christians, for his is the only name given as an example of liberality and sacrifice. Cyprus was his native country, probably also the birthplace and early home of Mary, and perhaps Mark. Mary possessed a noble character and demonstrated remarkable faith and courage in opening her home to the despised and persecuted disciples and early Christians. One writer says it was "an asylum for the disciples."

When Peter realized that his release from prison was a reality and not a mere dream, he evidently knew where to find his friends, for he went straight to the home of Mary. The group assembled there must have been praying far into the night before their prayers were answered. Peter was evidently much at home there. He was fond of Mark and had much to do with his conversion, for later he called

him "Marcus my son." 1 Peter 5:13. He was therefore his spiritual father, and may have brought the gospel to the family.

It was the unanimous testimony of the early writers that Peter was the source of the book of Mark, the latter acting as his secretary or interpreter. This was the belief of Eusebius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, and others. Eusebius quotes Papias as saying that Mark was "the interpreter of St. Peter," and Jerome wrote: "Saint Mark, the interpreter of the apostle St. Peter, and the first bishop of the church of Alexandria, related what things he heard his master preaching, rather according to the truth of the facts, than according to the order of the things that were done." This is also the conclusion of most of the modern Bible students. It, of course, in no wise denies the divine inspiration of the record.

Mark's is the shortest of the four Gospels, and probably the earliest. Some believe that it was a sourcebook for Matthew and Luke. It bears the mark of an original work. *Speaker's Commentary* declares that the construction of the book "excludes the notion that it is either a mere compendium of some richer, or an expansion of some briefer Gospel." The information came from an eyewitness, and the inspiration from the same dependable source as did that of Matthew, Luke, and John.

One of the many evidences of Peter's part in the writing of the second Gospel is the fact that he is kept in the background and his name is mentioned less frequently than in the other three Gospels. Also the statement in 2 Peter 1:14-16 shows the anxiety of Peter that a record of the life

of Christ be preserved by eyewitnesses; and who would be better qualified to do this than himself? Because he denied his Lord, he may have been reticent about identifying himself as the author of His life's story. There is nothing at either the beginning or the end of the book to indicate the identity of the author. It has been suggested that the book could appropriately be called "The Gospel According to Simon Peter."

"And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark." Acts 12:25. Barnabas and Saul had gone to Jerusalem to deliver the contributions of the believers in Antioch for the relief of the poor in Judea as the result of the terrible famine which had been predicted by the prophet Agabus. Acts 11:28-30. At the request of Mark, and probably at the insistence of Barnabas, his uncle, Paul permitted him to accompany them on their contemplated missionary tour, as a sort of ministerial intern. He had much to learn, for he had been reared in partial luxury and was unaccustomed to hardships and dangers. However, he was sincere and honest and had manifested considerable courage and devotion. He had doubtless been inspired by the thrilling accounts by Barnabas and Paul of the mission work in Antioch and had decided that he wanted to be a missionary. Others since his time have made their decision on the same basis rather than the conviction of a divine call, and have as signally failed.

In Acts 13:1-5 we are told of the selection by the Holy Spirit of Barnabas and Saul as missionaries. After their ordination they were divinely directed to the island of

Cyprus, "and they had John to assist them." (R.S.V.) We are not told what John Mark did, or what he was supposed to do, or whether or not he did any of the preaching. They sailed from Seleucia and landed at Salamis, the Grecian capital at the eastern end of the island and the nearest port from the Asian shore. Cyprus was one of the places to which the persecuted Christians of Jerusalem fled for refuge. It is stated in Acts 11:20 that certain men of Cyprus went to Antioch "preaching the Lord Jesus." The identity of these early missionaries is unknown. Many Jews lived on Cyprus, and the expression "synagogues of the Jews" indicates that there were many living in Salamis.

"Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem." Acts 13:13. Paphos was the seat of the Roman governor of the island of Cyprus and was located at the western extremity. In it was a famous temple of Venus. The statement "Paul and his company" indicates that Paul had become the leader. Up to this time Barnabas is always mentioned first, but from this time on Paul takes first place. They sailed northwest to Perga, the capital and metropolis of Pamphylia, a province in the middle part of the southern coast of Asia Minor, in a rugged region.

Perga was located seven and a half miles inland on the navigable river Cestrus. This was their first visit to the more heathen world where the Jews were very few. It was therefore wholly unlike Cyprus, and the dangers and hardships were much greater. Mark began to question his call to the mission ministry and wished that he were home in Jerusalem with mother. Not all was as glorious as he had

anticipated or as the reports of the work in Antioch had indicated. Some modern missionaries also become disillusioned by experience and wish that they had remained in the homeland. Mark decided to leave the company of missionaries and return home.

The cause of Mark's decision is not revealed in the Scriptural record. Ramsay suggests that the mosquitoes of Perga may have given him malaria. If Luke knew, he didn't tell. He wrote his narrative after Mark was restored to favor and apparently felt it wise and charitable to conceal the matter. But whatever the reason, it was unacceptable to Paul. The following comments provide a logical explanation of the desertion: "Their way was toilsome; they encountered hardships and privations, and were beset with dangers on every side. In the towns and cities through which they passed, and along the lonely highways, they were surrounded by dangers seen and unseen. . . . It was here that Mark, overwhelmed with fear and discouragement, wavered for a time in his purpose to give himself wholeheartedly to the Lord's work. Unused to hardships, he was disheartened by the perils and privations of the way. He had labored with success under favorable circumstances; but now, amidst the opposition and perils that so often beset the pioneer worker, he failed to endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross. He had yet to learn to face danger and persecution and adversity with a brave heart. As the apostles advanced, and still greater difficulties were apprehended, Mark was intimidated, and losing all courage, refused to go farther, and returned to Jerusalem."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 169, 170.

During the next seven or eight years the disagreeable subject of Mark's desertion at Perga was probably not discussed by Paul and Barnabas. In the meantime, Mark had a guilty conscience and did a lot of serious thinking and earnest praying. His repentance was deep and genuine, and he made it clear to Barnabas that he wanted another chance, promising him that he would not fail the second time. Barnabas was determined to see that he was given another opportunity, and on the first favorable occasion communicated his decision to Paul, whose immediate reaction was unfavorable. Acts 15:35-41.

"Barnabas, however, was bent on taking with them John, whose other name was Mark, while Paul deemed it undesirable to have as their companion one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone on with them to the work. So there arose a serious disagreement between them, which resulted in their parting from one another, Barnabas taking Mark and setting sail for Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas as his traveling companion." (Weymouth.) The previously mentioned writer said that "this desertion caused Paul to judge Mark unfavorably, and even severely, for a time," and that "he was not inclined to excuse Mark's weakness in deserting the work for the safety and comforts of home. He urged that one with so little stamina was unfitted for a work requiring patience, self-denial, bravery, devotion, faith, and a willingness to sacrifice, if need be, even life itself."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 170, 202.

Paul may have thought that Barnabas was influenced because Mark was his nephew. He also seems to have forgotten that Barnabas had come to his own rescue on two

previous occasions. But the kind and gentle "son of consolation" stuck firmly to his position that Mark deserved another chance, and time proved that he was right. In the end he was richly rewarded for his patience and tolerance. Robertson, in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, says: "One's judgment may go with Paul, but one's heart goes with Barnabas."

The two good friends and great apostles decided to agree to disagree, and they separated. They were both too big to part with any feelings of bitterness or resentment. It has often been demonstrated in the history of the church that under some circumstances it is better for gospel workers to part and work in separate places, as did Paul and Barnabas. After this experience Barnabas seems to have virtually disappeared. Renan said: "While Paul kept advancing to the height of his glory, Barnabas, separated from the companion who had shed a portion of his own luster upon him, pursued his solitary course into obscurity."—*St. Paul*, page 1,119. The fact that he was the cause of the separation of these friends and co-workers must have been an unpleasant memory to Mark through life.

The faithful record of this incident is one of the many evidences of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. If the characters of the Bible were pictured as being perfect, it would be discouraging to all of us. We can be encouraged by the fact that the greatest of saints were "subject to like passions as we are." They were made of the same brittle clay and had to develop character in the same way.

Barnabas wisely took Mark back to Cyprus, where he had made good under favorable conditions and could start

all over again. When left to himself, Paul selected Silas as his companion in labor. The separation proved to be one of the "all things" which worked out for the good of the men involved as well as the work of the gospel, for two young men were trained instead of one, and the various mission fields received more attention.

Mark did not betray his uncle's confidence, but made good his promise. He not only regained the confidence of Barnabas, but also of Peter and eventually of Paul, who could not harbor resentment against either Barnabas or Mark. In fact, he was so fully reconciled to Mark that the young minister was his close companion during both of his periods of imprisonment at Rome.

Ten or twelve years after the contention over Mark, Paul writes from his Roman prison to the Colossians: "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him.)" Colossians 4:10. Some of the newer versions speak of Mark as the cousin of Barnabas, but at that time "cousin" was used for "nephew." The language indicates only an intended visit of Mark to Asia, and when and how Paul had given the mentioned previous instructions concerning Mark we are not told. Probably it was by letter. This may be the journey on which Mark joined Peter and accompanied him to "Babylon." 1 Peter 5:13.

Wordsworth declared that Paul virtually said to the Colossians: "You may have heard of the separation between Barnabas and myself on account of Mark. You will therefore now rejoice to know that Mark is with me, and a comfort

to me, and that he sends you greetings by my hand. I have already given you directions concerning him: if he comes unto you, receive him."—Quoted in *The Pulpit Commentary*.

The experience of Mark proves that one mistake does not necessarily determine one's course or fix his character. It constitutes a warning to all leaders against rendering a decision before the evidence is all in. It calls for tolerance in dealing with others, especially the youth with their impetuosity and limited experience. Mark became the trusted friend and co-worker, not only of Barnabas, but also of the two most prominent of the apostles, Peter and Paul, who were willing to forgive and forget.

Paul again mentions Mark in his epistle to Philemon and calls him his "fellow laborer." The last mention of Mark is in Paul's last epistle, written to Timothy just before his martyrdom: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry." 2 Timothy 4:9-11.

This second and last prison term of Paul took place about four years after the first. Mark had been with him on that occasion, and was now in Asia Minor near Timothy. Luke also was with Paul during both imprisonments. Luke, or Lucas, was a Gentile, whom Paul had distinguished from those "who are of the circumcision." Colossians 4:11-14. What a change must have taken place in Mark! Like Onesimus to his master, he was aforetime "unprofitable," but "now

profitable" for the ministry. In fact, he was such a comfort to Paul during his first prison term that he longed for his presence as he faced death. On such occasions a person asks only for his dearest friends.

How could a man who had been so unprofitable that he was a positive liability become such an asset? What brought about the change that turned a coward into a hero? Was Paul's sharp rebuke the turning point in the career of the young deserter? Did it start him thinking about his selfishness and help him to see himself in a new light? Was his appreciation for Paul's severity the reason Mark now loved the apostle so dearly? There are times when too much kindness and gentleness do more harm than good, and when severe rebukes and the cutting truth are the greatest evidence of genuine love. This is emphasized by the statement, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." All wise parents learn this lesson by experience.

Peter also doubtless had an important part in the recovery of his son in the faith. Who was better qualified to help a man recover from failure than one who had himself so signally failed his Lord and had been fully forgiven and restored to divine favor? The one who had denied his Lord in the time of crisis could encourage the deserter to try again.

The chief lesson for all of us in the experience of John Mark is beautifully stated in the following verse:

Each day is a new beginning.
 Each morn is the world made new.
 Oh, ye who are weary of sinning,
 There's hope and a chance for you.

TIMOTHY

An Unselfish Youth

We shall now consider another youth of apostolic times, one whom Paul trained for the gospel ministry, and who was as dear to him as if he were his own son. His name was Timothy, which is the English form of Timotheus, meaning, "Honoring God," or "One who honors God." The name was appropriate for the apostle's favorite disciple, who was associated with him longer and more intimately than any other, and who was one of the most devoted and faithful and unselfish Christians of all time.

Timothy is first spoken of in Acts 16:1-3: "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."

At that time the term "Greek" was used to describe all non-Jews. The father was doubtless a pagan, and his name is not given. His wife, Eunice, was a Jewess, as was her mother, Lois, both with Greek names. Timothy was therefore half Jew and half Gentile. He was a native of Lystra, which was near Derbe and a few miles south of Iconium, the capital of Lycaonia in the southeastern part of Asia Minor. The mother and grandmother worked to protect Timothy against the pagan influences of his environment by carefully instructing him in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The apostle Paul thus describes the results of this careful religious training: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15.

Timothy therefore had a noble spiritual heritage "from infancy." (Weymouth.) It is a rabbinical requirement that Jewish children be taught the Scriptures, beginning at the age of five, and at thirteen a boy was called "a son of the law." Philo said: "They are taught, so to speak, from their very swaddling clothes by their parents, masters, and teachers, in the holy laws, and in the universal customs, and the belief in God, the one Father and Creator of the world." If parents today would only use the same diligence in the early training of their children, how different would be the

results! It would help to counteract the influence of the modern trashy literature, the portrayals of lust and crime on the radio and television, and the promotion of juvenile delinquency by the comics.

Paul made it clear that it is not the Scriptures, nor even the knowledge of them, which brings salvation, but rather faith in the One revealed therein. Here is where the Jews failed. Jesus said to them: "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to Me; yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life." John 5:39, 40, R.S.V. Jesus was able to begin at Moses and in "all the prophets" and "in all the Scriptures" to reveal "the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:25-27. The purpose of the Scriptures is to reveal Christ, and only those who find Him in them will be saved.

Timothy's family, with the exception of the Gentile father, became Christians during Paul's previous visit to that region six or seven years before, as described in Acts 14. On that occasion, when Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra, they healed a well-known cripple; whereupon the Gentiles of the city proclaimed them to be gods in the likeness of men, and the priest of Jupiter attempted to offer sacrifices to them. About this time the enemies of Paul arrived from Iconium and stirred up a riot among the Jews, who stoned him and dragged him out of the city, "supposing he had been dead." As Barnabas and the other Christians stood around the prostrate apostle, he suddenly arose and returned with them to the city. Doubtless young Timothy was a witness to these scenes, which had much to do with his con-

version and especially his attachment to Paul. This is indicated in 2 Timothy 3:10-12.

It was on the second visit that Paul called Timothy into the gospel ministry. It was necessary that he be circumcised "because of the Jews." According to the rabbinical code, the child of a Jewish mother was considered a Jew, but a boy could not be circumcised without the consent of the Gentile father. In this case that consent had not been given. This rite brought no spiritual benefit to Timothy, but was wholly an act of expediency because of Jewish prejudice. For him to become a leader without it would have brought a storm of protest, making it impossible for him to speak in a synagogue. There was no principle involved as in the case of Titus whom Paul refused to circumcise at the insistence of the Judaizers. He was a full-blooded Gentile, and the recently held Jerusalem council had exempted Gentiles from the ceremony. Paul was anxious to remove every possible stumbling block to Timothy's success. He was always willing to compromise where principle was not involved in order to advance the cause of Christ. 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

The call was not given to Timothy without the approval of the local church. The record is that he "was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium." Although a youth of around eighteen years of age he had already built up a good reputation among several churches of the area. The apostle seemed always on the lookout for young recruits for the ministry and was instrumental in the training of several, which is one of the greatest sources of satisfaction to older ministers.

Timothy accompanied Paul and others into Macedonia in obedience to the vision of the Macedonian bidding them to "come over, . . . and help us." A great work was accomplished in the new continent, especially at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, but the opposition was bitter. This made it necessary for them to obey the instruction of Jesus that when Christians are persecuted in one city they should flee to another. To save the apostle's life, the brethren quickly sent him away from Thessalonica and later from Berea. He must have been reluctant to leave such a fruitful field of labor after only six months, and doubtless wondered about the vision that brought him there.

Regarding the flight from Berea we read: "And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." Acts 17:14-16.

Silas and Timothy were in no immediate danger in Berea, for they had played a less conspicuous part in the work and were left to carry on, while the brethren conducted Paul to the seacoast, from whence he went to Athens, doubtless by ship. A tour of the great Athenian city, the metropolis of idolatry, with its teeming multitudes of heathen people, convinced the apostle that he needed help, and he sent the brethren home "with instructions for Silas and Timothy to rejoin him as soon as possible." (Goodspeed.)

Athens was one of the most celebrated cities of the world in both antiquity and learning. It was the capital of Attica and had been the center of Grecian culture. It contained some of the most magnificent temples of the ancient world, the ruins of which attract tourists from many lands. The statement that the city was "wholly given to idolatry" is confirmed by the writings of historians and the discoveries of archaeologists.

Paul's writings indicate that Timothy was very dear to him: "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." 1 Corinthians 4:17. Paul said of Timothy, "Spiritually he is my dearly loved and faithful child." (Weymouth.) The statement indicates that Timothy had already left on his mission, and, according to verse 19, Paul intended to follow soon if the Lord willed for him to be released from prison. His statement intimates that the Corinthians were in danger of forgetting him and his teachings, and he was therefore sending his most trusted disciple to help them.

At the close of the letter Paul added: "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren." 1 Corinthians 16:10, 11. The statement, "Put him at ease among you" (R.S.V.), indicates that Paul had reasons to fear that Timothy was in danger of receiving a cold reception, probably because of his nationality, timidity, or youth.

He must have been quite young, because ten years later Paul said to him, "Let no man despise thy youth." Or the fear may have been because of the serious spiritual condition of the Corinthian church. Anyway, a lad from little Lystra could easily be shunned and despised in cultured and learned Corinth. Paul insisted that they treat Timothy with respect, for he had been divinely commissioned and he "worketh the works of God."

The beauty and unselfish nature of the character of Timothy is described in Philippians 2:19-24. Here Paul said that he had no one like Timothy when it came to unselfish service. "For I have no one like him who would take such a real interest in you. For they are all looking out for their own interests, not for those of Jesus Christ. But you know his character, and how like a son helping his father he has worked like a slave with me in preaching the good news." (Goodspeed.)

The apostle here contrasts Timothy with humanity in general: "Everybody is selfish, instead of caring for Jesus Christ; but you know how he has stood the test, how he has served with me in the gospel, like a son helping his father." (Moffatt.) Here is a terrible indictment against selfishness, the sin of all sins, the root of all evil, the universal weakness of the human race. All men are selfish and self-centered by nature, and naturally seek their own ways, interests, and welfare. This should be evident to all. Paul had gone through some sad experiences with selfish men and women, as he did later with Demas, Philetus, and Hymenaeus. There were not many as utterly unselfish as was Timothy.

Paul was not sure but that martyrdom was near, and if

not, he would send Timothy to Philippi, but not until his own fate had been determined by the Roman tribunal. He was anxious to visit them in person soon. He said: "But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly." In the meantime their spiritual needs would be supplied by selfless Timothy.

When Paul was in Athens he was so concerned over the spiritual welfare of the believers in Thessalonica, whom he had known only about three weeks, that he sent Timothy to them at a great personal sacrifice. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-6. It seems that Timothy had just returned with the good news that they had not only endured persecution but that it had worked together for their good. "But now that Timothy has recently come back to us from you, and has brought us the happy tidings of your faith and love, and has told us how you still cherish a constant and affectionate recollection of us, and are longing to see us as we also long to see you." (Weymouth.)

The apostle said that because of his concern for them he was "willing to be left behind at Athens alone." (R.S.V.) He therefore sent Timothy to them. He would be left "alone" in that great wicked city given over to selfishness, indifference, pleasure, and idolatry. "Alone in London" has become an almost proverbial expression of loneliness. To a stranger a great city can be the most lonesome place on earth. The poet declared that it may be a—

crowded wilderness,

Where ever-moving myriads seem to say,

"Go! thou art nought to us, nor we to thee, away."

It would be both interesting and profitable if time and

space would permit a study of the contents of the two epistles of Paul to Timothy. The introductions of the two are almost identical, setting forth the source of the writer's apostolic authority, giving instructions and warnings to Timothy, and authorizing him to select and ordain elders and deacons, especially in the church of Ephesus, where it seems that he was in charge of the work. He asks that the triune blessings of "grace, mercy, and peace" be given him by the divine Trinity, perhaps in contrast to the plea of the Romans for "courage, skill, and force," and the Athenians for "pleasure, beauty, and philosophy."

In both epistles Paul addresses Timothy as "my own son in the faith," and "my dearly beloved son." A Jewish writer said: "He who teaches the law to his neighbor's son is considered by the Scriptures as if he had begotten him." Paul addressed Titus as "mine own son after the common faith," and Peter spoke of "Marcus my son." The apostle told Timothy that he remembered him in prayer "night and day" and "without ceasing," an interest in others that is very rare in these busy days. "I recall the tears you shed when we parted." (Moffatt.) This may refer to the parting at Miletus spoken of in Acts 20:37.

He also told the young preacher to "give attendance to reading," which doubtless first of all applied to his personal study of the Scriptures, but in a secondary sense to public reading and preaching, which in those days were inseparable. Ezra and his assistants "read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Nehemiah 8:8. Calvin gave good advice to preachers when he said: "Read distinctly, and

exhort convincingly in your pulpit. But above and before all else, let the word of God dwell richly in yourself." All, whether preachers or lay members, who read or pray or preach in public, should endeavor to pronounce every word and every syllable of every word distinctly and with a voice loud enough to be heard by all present. This is impossible to anyone who either shouts or mumbles.

Paul also told Timothy to "stir up the gift of God, which is in thee." He was to make use of his own talents and abilities and not to try to imitate those of others, a common fault of young ministers. Each man must fight in his own armor or he will go down in defeat before some Goliath. All must serve with their own voice, illustrate with their own gestures, and use only their own talents, or they will fall short of the divine pattern. The Lord asked Moses, "What is that in thine hands?" As the simple staff became an instrument of power, so we may use what is in our hands to do a work for God.

The apostle also told the young man to avoid "vain jangling," which is good counsel to all Christians, for arguments are invariably a waste of time, and are usually over minor matters. Richard Baxter aptly said of the advice to Timothy, "Shun controversy": "Another fatal hindrance to a heavenly walk and conversation is our too frequent disputes about lesser truths. A disputatious spirit is a sure sign of an unsanctified spirit. They are usually men least acquainted with the heavenly life who are the most violent disputers about the circumstantial of religion. Yea, though you were sure that your opinions were true, yet when the chiefest of your zeal is turned to these things, the life of

grace soon decays within. . . . The least controverted points are usually the most weighty, and of most necessary and frequent use to our souls."—Quoted by Alexander Whyte in *Bible Characters, Stephen to Timothy*, ch. "Timothy as a Young Minister," p. 299. The Pharisees were of this type, "which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

This second letter was the last of Paul's fourteen epistles and was written just before his martyrdom. It has therefore been called his last will and testament. Rome had been partly burned two years earlier, A.D. 64, and Nero had endeavored to turn the blame from himself to the Christians. Paul knew that his fate was sealed and his execution certain. He would not be released the second time. The letter was written A.D. 66 and addressed to Timothy at Ephesus. According to tradition, Timothy remained in Ephesus until the time of his death as the victim of mob violence because of his protest against the unbridled licentiousness of a great festival in honor of Diana.

Perhaps one of the greatest evidences of Timothy's spiritual leadership is in the fact that Paul's epistle to the Ephesian church is considered the most deeply spiritual of all his epistles and indicates that the church was in a splendid state. This would reflect to the credit of Timothy, since he was suppose to be the elder in charge, for the Biblical statement, "Like people, like priest," sets forth a principle which has always been true in fact.

But the greatest compliment of all those given Timothy came from none other than the Lord Jesus Himself in His epistle to the church of Ephesus recorded in Revelation 2:1-7. This was written A.D. 96, and it is believed that Timo-

thy was still in charge. The letter is addressed "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus," or "To the minister of the church in Ephesus." (Weymouth.) As in these days, the letter to the church was sent to the pastor, or minister. He was the angel or messenger of God to the church through whom divine instruction was communicated.

Since the letters to the churches have an immediate and specific significance, as well as a general, prophetic one, we have here a commendation for the pastor of a church which has labored with great patience, not tolerating evildoers. "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil." As was true of all the churches but two, some fault was found with Ephesus: "Thou hast left thy first love." But under the leadership of Timothy the believers at Ephesus had achieved high standing in the eyes of the Lord.

L ♦ U ♦ K ♦ E

The Beloved Physician

In this chapter we shall consider one of the greatest personages of the early church, and, in fact, of all Biblical history—Luke, the physician, the companion and co-worker of the apostle Paul. He was a Greek and therefore a Gentile, the only one among the writers of the Bible. He wrote two of the sixty-six books of the Book of books, constituting about one fourth of the New Testament. It is believed that he also wrote the second epistle to Timothy at the dictation of Paul.

His birthplace is unknown, although the weight of evidence and conjecture favors Antioch. "Luke being by birth of those from Antioch," is a statement of Eusebius, and Jerome wrote of "Luke the physician of Antioch." Plummer declared that this is "confirmed by the Acts." It is believed that Paul and Luke first met in Troas.

Luke was one of Paul's most intimate, faithful, and beloved companions. In Paul's last epistle to Timothy he said: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas

hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me." 2 Timothy 4:9-11. All of his other companions except one were at various posts of duty. Demas had found the world more attractive than companionship with a prisoner and returned to his old life. But Luke stood by to the tragic end, unmoved and unshaken in love and devotion, loyalty and steadfastness.

The death of Paul was now certain. Since the burning of Rome, A.D. 64, the situation of Christians had completely changed, and Christianity was considered a crime against the pagan Roman Empire. During his first imprisonment, Paul had great freedom, being permitted to rent his own house, where his friends could come and go at will. It seems that he even had access to "Caesar's household," some of whom became "obedient to the faith." But now the situation was different. Enfeebled by age, hardships, and infirmities, and confined to a damp and dark Roman prison, he needed the love and sympathy and ministrations of his friends as never before. The services of his faithful friend, Luke, were a great comfort to him.

It is evident that Luke had a very lovable disposition and character. To Paul he was "the beloved physician," or "my beloved physician," according to a suggested translation. Colossians 4:14. And the feelings of friendship and affection were mutual. They were not bound together by blood kinship, by race, or by nationality. In fact, one was a Jew and the other a Gentile, and at that time there was a high wall of partition, an almost impassable gulf between the Jews and all other races. In consideration of this fact,

their mutual love and companionship were remarkable.

Luke was characterized by steadfastness, dependability, courageousness, and humility. In his writings he never mentions himself or gives his own name. The pronoun "we" indicates his association with others whose work and words he describes. He is one author who forgot to autograph his own books. He did not mention the fact that he was a physician or say anything to recommend his scholarship, which is abundantly evident in the books themselves. Such humility is indeed refreshing, especially in a man of such outstanding culture, scholarship, and mentality. No wonder he captivated the heart of Paul, also a man of training and refinement. Percy Gardner, in his *Cambridge Bible Essays*, says of Luke: "One cannot help feeling how delightful and lovable as a man he must have been."

It is also evident that Luke was a preacher of no mean ability. Paul, in his letter to Philemon, spoke of him as one of his "fellow laborers." When Paul and Silas and Luke went to Europe and began work at Philippi, Luke wrote that God "called *us* for to preach the gospel unto them," that is, the Macedonians. When they found no synagogue in the city, in which to begin their work, they went out of the city on the Sabbath "by a riverside, where prayer was wont to be made; and *we* sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." Acts 16:13. It was at this time that Lydia of Thyatira in Asia Minor became a Christian, the first fruits of the gospel in the new continent. Luke therefore shared the preaching responsibility with Paul and Silas, and, judging from his writings, he must have been an excellent speaker.

Luke was a writer of unusual ability. His two books rank high in the realm of sacred literature. He gives the most complete account of the triumphs of the apostolic church under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. He alone tells the story of Pentecost and the sermon of Peter which brought three thousand souls to the foot of the cross. Renan declared that the book of Luke is "the most beautiful ever written." It seems to have been prepared especially for the Gentiles, and Hayes said that it could be called "The Gospel to the Gentiles." It was written to the whole human race. Luke relates many of the sayings and works of Jesus not recorded in the other Gospels, such as the conversion of Zacchaeus, the story of the prodigal son, the rich fool, and the parables of the rich man and Lazarus, and the good Samaritan.

Without the book of Acts we would know but little of the apostolic period. It contains many biographical sketches and gives the names of more than one hundred persons. At the beginning of this book Luke speaks of the Gospel as his "former treatise." That he was the author of both has been almost universally recognized since A.D. 140, and is so stated in the writings of Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement, and others. Moffatt declared that the Lucan authorship of the Gospel and Acts "has now been put practically beyond doubt by the exhaustive researches of Hawkins and Harnack."—*Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, page 295. Dr. A. T. Robertson wrote: "The words peculiar to Luke in both Gospel and Acts are more numerous than those peculiar to any other New Testament writer, except Paul."—*Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*, page 6.

The date of the writing of the book of Luke is uncertain,

but it most likely took place either during Paul's two years of confinement in the prison at Caesarea, when Luke was with him, or during the early part of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. This would place the date between A.D. 59 and 62. Torrey sets 61 as the latest possible date.

In Luke 1:1-4 we read: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

This indicates that Luke had access to both written records and the oral testimony of eyewitnesses. It is evident that the Gospels of Matthew and Mark were available to him, but he speaks of "many" writers and witnesses from whom he obtained information. Some believe that a number of the early disciples wrote concerning the life and teachings of Jesus, but that these writings disappeared after the four Gospels were available, with their more complete accounts. Obtaining information through others does not of course in any way affect divine inspiration, one purpose of which is to ensure the truthfulness of things set forth.

The majority of modern writers believe that the book of Acts was written A.D. 63 or soon after. Since it does not mention so important an event as the death of Paul, it must have been completed before his martyrdom. In fact, it closes with the statement: "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own

hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." The marginal date is A.D. 63.

To Luke, sin was a terrible disease that could be cured only by the great sin Physician. He used the term "sinners" more times than the other three writers combined. He also showed great sympathy for the poor and unfortunate, which should be characteristic of any Christian physician. He manifested special interest and sympathy for women, who were at that time looked down upon and often ill-treated by men among both Jews and Gentiles. Dante called Luke, "The writer of the gentleness of Christ."

It is also evident that Luke was a lover of children and spoke of them more often than did others. He placed special emphasis on praise and prayer, particularly the prayer life of Jesus. Robertson declared that his Gospel "is often called the Gospel of womanhood, of infancy, of prayer, of praise. We have in Luke the first Christian hymns."—Introduction to his *Commentary* on Luke. His was the gospel of joy and gladness, happiness and peace. He also emphasized the ministry of angels. Hayes wrote: "Here and there throughout the Gospel we hear echoes of angel songs and catch glimpses of angel wings."—*The Synoptic Gospels and the Book of Acts*, page 264.

Luke's writings give evidence of unusual literary charm and genius, of education and scholarship. His classical style indicates exhaustive investigation and scrupulous accuracy, a historian's method of research and a physician's carefulness of diagnosis. Harnack in his book *Luke the Physician*

said of him: "This man possessed the higher culture in rich measure" and "a more than ordinary literary talent."—Pages 13, 147.

That Luke was a physician is also evident from his writings. The study of medicine had its origin among the Greeks, who placed the physician on a par with the philosopher; not so with the Romans, who did not rate them very high. Luke could have received the practical part of his medical education in the temple of Aesculapius at Aegae, and the theory at nearby Tarsus, the native city of Saul. Plummer said: "Nowhere else in Asia Minor could he obtain so good an education," and Sir William Ramsay quoted Strabo as saying that the people of Tarsus "surpassed Athens and Alexandria and every other seat of learning."—*The Cities of St. Paul*, page 232.

In 1882 Bishop John Henry Hobart wrote the book *The Medical Language of St. Luke*, in which he compared the medical terms used by Luke with those in the writings of leading Greek physicians, such as Galen, Hippocrates, Dioscorides, Aratus, and others. Of this book Theodor Zahn has said: "W. K. Hobart has proved to the satisfaction of anyone open to conviction, that the author of the Lucan work was familiar with the technical language of Greek medicine, and hence was a Greek physician."—*Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 3, p. 146.

F. H. Chase said: "But, when all deductions have been made, there remains a body of evidence that the author of the Acts naturally and inevitably slipped into the use of medical phraseology, which seems to me irresistible."—*The Credibility of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles*, pages

13, 14. Robertson adds: "Since Hobart's researches concerning the medical language of Luke, it is no longer possible to treat Luke as a 'quack,' a charlatan, or an ignorant practitioner. He was a trained physician like Galen and Hippocrates, and is one of the best products of Greek culture."—*Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*, page 131.

Luke showed special interest in the miracles of healing performed by Christ and His apostles, and described them with the interest and experience of a physician. He tells of at least five of Christ's miracles of healing not mentioned by the other writers. He uses medical rather than ordinary terms for the various diseases, which, says Hobart, are "in strict agreement with those of medical writers."

For example, when he recorded the statement of Jesus that it would be easier for a camel to go through "the eye of a needle," than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, he used the word for a surgeon's needle rather than the sewing needle as used by Matthew and Mark. In the story of the good Samaritan, recorded only by Luke, he uses the expression "half dead," which was also used by the Greek physician Galen, who said that it was not uncommon for a person becoming ill while traveling to find refuge in an inn. Hippocrates recommended for wounds the "anointing with oil and wine," and Hobart in his book *The Medical Language of St. Luke*, page 28, says: "Wine and oil were usual remedies for sores, wounds, etc., and also used as internal medicine." This throws light on Paul's counsel to Timothy to "use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." 1 Timothy 5:23. He had doubtless

learned from Luke that this was considered a medicine for certain physical weaknesses. He was recommending a medicine rather than a drink.

Luke used several different medical terms to describe the various forms of leprosy, as did Hippocrates. He alone recorded Christ's statement, "Physician, heal thyself," which is believed to have been a well-known proverb. A number of medical terms are used in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Hobart said that "full of sores" is "the regular medical term for to be ulcerated," and Harnack said: "The physician thinks of the absence of medical help: the dogs licked his sores."—*Luke the Physician*, page 191.

It is also evident that the book of Acts was written by a physician. In Acts 3:7 it speaks of "anklebones," a technical term used by medical writers. Several times Luke uses the expression "gave up the ghost," which is confined almost entirely to medical writers in describing death. At Paul's conversion we are told by Luke that "there fell from his eyes as it had been scales," which was a term then common to medical writers. There are many such terms: "trance," "impotent in his feet," "deep sleep," "sick of palsy," "fever," etc. Robertson said: "Even if Paul had not told us that Luke was a physician, we could now see it to be true."—Page 102.

This fact is also demonstrated by Luke's record of the birth of Jesus, which is the most detailed and complete of any of the Gospel writers. It would be hard to overestimate the debt of gratitude the church owes to Luke for his account of this important event, which is told "with utter sincerity, sheer simplicity, and transcendent beauty."—Robertson. If one is tempted to question the accuracy of this

great miracle or feel that the account is exaggerated, it must be remembered that it was written by a man of science, a cultured Greek physician, who was noted for his carefulness in research and diagnosis.

Luke was the first scientist to accept the gospel, and he stands at the head of a long list of noble medical missionaries of the Wilfred Grenfell and Albert Schweitzer variety. To a large extent, Paul may have owed his old age and achievements to the care of his beloved physician.

But Luke is equally noted as a historian. His writings were at one time a favorite battleground for skeptics who questioned the accuracy of his historical statements, but they have gradually been silenced. Said Robertson: "It was once a fad with a certain school of critics to deny Luke in the Acts as wholly untrustworthy, not above the legendary stage. But the spade has done well by Luke, for inscriptions and papyri have brought remarkable confirmation for scores of points where Luke once stood alone and was discounted because he stood alone. Ramsay has done most in this restoration of the rank of Luke as a credible historian."—Introduction to *Commentary* on the book of Luke. He then declares that his historical statements have "been triumphantly vindicated."

When Sir William Ramsay left England to do research work in archaeology in Asia Minor, the skeptics expected him to disprove the reliability of the New Testament record, and especially the book of Acts, and he expected the same results from his expedition. But years later he made the confession: "I began with a mind unfavorable to it [the book of Acts]. . . . It was gradually borne in upon me that

in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth."—*St. Paul the Traveler*, page 8. In another book he wrote: "Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect to its trustworthiness."—*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, page 81. Again he said: "You may press the words of Luke to a degree far beyond any other historian's, and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment, provided always that the critic knows the subject and does not go beyond the limits of science and justice."—*Ibid.*, p. 89.

Adolf Harnack, who was at first critical of the authenticity of Luke's writings, completely changed his attitude as the result of reading the writings of Sir William Ramsay, and declared that the Gospel of Luke is "the most beautiful book ever written," as well as one of the most reliable. F. H. Chase in his book, *The Credibility of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles*, page 8, says: "But it may be safely said that the certain results of archaeological research strongly confirm the accuracy and truthfulness of the author of the Acts." Ramsay said that "great historians are the rarest of writers," and then shows that Luke measures up fully to the best of them.

Luke was one of the most versatile of all writers, having used 750 words not found elsewhere in the New Testament. He was a literary artist in painting beautiful word pictures. Carpenter wrote: "His short pen pictures of Zacharias, the Virgin Mother, Martha and Mary, Zacchaeus, and the repentant robber are masterly."—*Christianity According to St. Luke*, page 195.

Luke 2:1-7, describing the journey of Joseph and Mary

to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus at the time of a decree by Caesar Augustus for a census or enrollment when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, was for many years the object of attack by critics over the reliability of the book of Luke. After his years of research, Sir William Ramsay wrote concerning this record: "Luke has already been proved in the process of discovery to be correct in almost every detail of his statement."—*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, page 226. It was found that decrees for enrollment were made at regular intervals, and that Cyrenius was governor of Syria on two different occasions, one of them being at that very time. Records on papyri dug out of the dry sands of Egypt had much to do in corroborating this record. Of these Robertson wrote: "For all these years the record in Luke 2:1-7 has stood all by itself, the butt of ridicule by historians and theologians. Now the rubbish-heaps of Egypt and the stones of Asia Minor cry aloud in support of the narrative. The enemies of Luke are put to rout."—*Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*, page 129.

Let us notice one more narrative showing marvelous historical accuracy, that of the sea voyage of Paul and Luke to Rome, ending in the shipwreck on the island of Malta, as recorded in Acts 27. Speaking of the account of this voyage, Robinson wrote: "It is to Luke that we owe the most vivid as well as the most accurate account of sea voyaging that has come down to us from antiquity. Experts in naval science agree that it is without a parallel."—*Hastings Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, article, "Ship."

Lieutenant Edwin Smith was a naval ship captain during

World War I and was for some time stationed on the island of Malta. He made a careful investigation of the narrative of Luke in the light of ascertainable facts. He found that a ship in a storm would drift about one and a half miles an hour, which would account for the thirteen or fourteen days and nights which it took to drift the 476 miles between Clauda and Malta. He took soundings off the shore of Malta where the ship was wrecked and found that they agree with those given by Luke as to the depth of the sea. In speaking of the "meeting of the two seas," he said that the two seas continue to meet until this day, at what is now call St. Paul's Bay, between Falmouth and Malta Islands.

Edwin Smith wrote his findings in the *Homiletic Review* of August, 1919. He declared that Luke must have traveled extensively at sea because he knew so well the language of seafaring men. In fact, one writer concludes that he must have at one time been a ship physician. Smith said further: "We have seen in our examination that every statement as to the movements of the ship from the time when she left Fair Haven until she was beached at Malta, as set forth by St. Luke, has been verified by external and independent evidence of the most exact and satisfying nature."

Surely we have every reason, like Theophilus, to "know the certainty of those things, wherein" we have been instructed, because they have been confirmed "by many infallible proofs." The same can be said of the entire Biblical record, so that we have every reason to believe that it is the living word of the living God which "abideth forever."

J ♦ O ♦ H ♦ N

The Apostle of Love

The title of this chapter identifies the character under consideration, the apostle John. The name means "Jehovah favored," which is an appropriate name for the one several times spoken of as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

John was the brother of James and the son of fisherman Zebedee. His mother's name was Salome. John was probably born in Bethsaida on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Salome ministered to the needs of Jesus on His last journey to Jerusalem. Zebedee's family may have had a home in Jerusalem and certainly had friends there, for John was well and favorably known to the high priest and his household and used his influence to have Peter admitted to the palace the night of the trial of Jesus. John 18:15, 16. When Jesus from the cross committed His mother to the care of John, we are told that "from that hour" he "took her into his own home."

John had a noble spiritual heritage. His mother was one of the group of godly women who accompanied and

ministered to the needs of Jesus. He was also one of the disciples of John the Baptist, indicating that the family had accepted the teachings of the forerunner of the Messiah, whom they were expecting. That John was one of the first two men to accept and follow Jesus is evident from John 1:35-37. According to verse 40, one of these was Andrew, and the other, unnamed, as is consistent in the book of John, is understood to have been the beloved disciple.

At this time Andrew, Simon, James, and John were still engaged in the fishing business. The formal call to discipleship is recorded in Mark 1:16-20. "And they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him." This is of course speaking of James and John. The immediate and unhesitating response to the call of Jesus reflects great credit on the characters of these men.

Of this experience one writer said: "These were Christ's first disciples. Moved by an irresistible impulse, they followed Jesus,—anxious to speak with Him, yet awed and silent, lost in the overwhelming significance of the thought, 'Is this the Messiah?' . . . They were the first fruits of His ministry, and there was joy in the heart of the divine Teacher as these souls responded to His grace. . . . They had responded to the Holy Spirit's call in the preaching of John the Baptist. . . . The disciple John was a man of earnest and deep affection, ardent, yet contemplative. He had begun to discern the glory of Christ."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 138, 139.

By nature John had a very explosive and tempestuous disposition. In Mark 3:17 we are told that Jesus surnamed James and John, Boanerges, which means "The sons of

thunder" or "The sons of tumult." (Syriac.) This indicates fiery temperaments mixed with intrepid zeal. By nature the two brothers were noisy, disturbing, impetuous, and headstrong.

The following comment is to the point: "Even John, who came into closest association with the meek and lowly One, was not himself naturally meek and yielding. He and his brother were called 'the sons of thunder.' While they were with Jesus, any slight shown to Him aroused their indignation and combativeness. Evil temper, revenge, the spirit of criticism, were all in the beloved disciple. He was proud, and ambitious to be first in the kingdom of God. But day by day, in contrast with his own violent spirit, he beheld the tenderness and forbearance of Jesus, and heard His lessons of humility and patience."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 295.

The same writer further said of John: "John did not naturally possess the loveliness of character that his later experience revealed. By nature he had serious defects. He was not only proud, self-assertive, and ambitious for honor, but impetuous, and resentful under injury. . . . But beneath all this the divine Teacher discerned the ardent, sincere, loving heart. Jesus rebuked his self-seeking, disappointed his ambitions, tested his faith. But He revealed to him that for which his soul longed,—the beauty of holiness, the transforming power of love."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 540.

The tempestuous dispositions of these brothers were demonstrated in the experience recorded in Luke 9:52-56. It was not impetuous Peter, but the fiery "sons of thunder"

who suggested that the insult of the Samaritans in refusing to receive the group of disciples into one of their villages be avenged by calling fire down from heaven to consume them. The experience of Elijah, recorded in 2 Kings 1:10-12, may have come to their minds because of his recent appearance with Moses and Jesus on the mount of transfiguration. "What wonder that the sons of thunder wished to flash lightning," said an old Latin minister. Bengel said: "Christ wrought miracles in every element except fire. Fire is reserved for the consummation of the age." The record is that Jesus "rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Theirs was certainly not the spirit of the Master.

Another evidence of John's impulsiveness and misguided zeal is recorded in Mark 9:38-40. John said to Jesus: "Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth not us." It is possible that John was trying to change the subject because he was embarrassed over the reproof Jesus had just given the disciples for quarreling over who would be the greatest in the Messianic kingdom. He was anxious to demonstrate his zeal and loyalty. Jesus rebuked him for his act and said: "For he that is not against us is on our part." On another occasion Jesus stated the converse, as recorded in Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with Me is against Me." There is no neutral ground. But we must be careful not to be too critical of the thoughts and acts of others on the ground that they differ somewhat from our own.

Still another experience gave evidence of the uncon-

trolled zeal and unholy ambitions of the two brothers, and is recorded in Matthew 20:20-23. Salome came to Jesus and requested that her two sons would be permitted to sit on His right and left in the coming kingdom. In Mark 10:35 we are told that the request was made by James and John; this shows where the idea originated. They persuaded their mother to make the request for them, feeling that it would have more weight. The inspiration for the selfish request may have come from the statement of Jesus recorded in the previous chapter: "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory," the twelve disciples will "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matthew 19:28. Who could better fill the two highest cabinet positions in the Messianic kingdom than they? Then, too, they were probably His cousins.

In the kingdom of Christ only the unselfish are really great. "The Pastors inherit the thrones: the Napoleons find exile."—*The Interpreter's Bible*. In the heavenly kingdom, position is not bestowed on the ground of favoritism; nor is it earned or received through arbitrary appointment. It is the reward of character. The crown and the throne are the results of self-conquest and victory through faith in Christ.

Association with Christ completely transformed these faulty men. By beholding Him they were transformed into the likeness of His character. The change in John was especially great because he pressed into the closest intimacy with Jesus. While the Saviour loved them all, John had the most receptive spirit and childlike confidence. The friendship and affection of Jesus for the beloved disciple was returned with all the strength of John's ardent devotion. His

greatest ambition was to be like Jesus, and he gradually became meek and lowly. His Master's lessons were graven on his soul, and more fully than the others he yielded to the power of His marvelous life.

John was humbled by the revelation of the character of Christ in contrast to his own deficiencies. Beholding the tenderness, forbearance, patience, and humility of Jesus had regenerating power in his own life. He lost sight of self in love for his Master and admiration for His character. Speaking of this transformation, one writer said: "If later he had told his own story, it might have been something like this that he would have said: 'I was a very different sort of person once, hot-tempered, proud, quick to pick up a grudge. Then came Jesus. I saw Him deal with people in a different way. I saw what love could do. One day I wanted to get God to curse a village which rebuffed us and to burn it up with a lightning bolt. But I learned from Jesus that that is not the way God works. He does not come as lightning but as love, love that gets inside a man's heart and melts his stubbornness, shames his pride, and awakens his own love in answer!'"—*The Interpreter's Bible*, comment on Luke 5:4-10, page 101.

Following Pentecost, Peter, James, and John seem to have remained in Jerusalem in charge of the work in that great center, and are spoken of in Galatians 2:9 as "pillars" in the church there. "Who were reputed to be pillars." (R.S.V.) John has been called "the Christian Plato" because of his brilliant mind and lofty thinking. His writings are among the most beautiful ever penned by man. "John's Gospel is the greatest book in all the world, reaching the

highest heights of all," declared Dr. A. T. Robertson in his *Word Pictures in the New Testament*.

A well-known writer said: "John could talk of the Father's love as no other of the disciples could. He revealed to his fellow men that which he felt in his own soul, representing in his character the attributes of God. The glory of the Lord was expressed in his face. The beauty of holiness which had transformed him shone with a Christlike radiance from his countenance. . . . He was a powerful preacher, fervent, and deeply in earnest. In beautiful language and with a musical voice he told of the words and works of Christ, speaking in a way that impressed the hearts of those who heard him. The simplicity of his words, the sublime power of the truths he uttered, and the fervor that characterized his teachings, gave him access to all classes. The apostle's life was in harmony with his teachings."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 545, 546.

With John, love was a favorite theme. His epistles breathe the very spirit of love and devotion. He seems to have done his writing with his pen dipped in the inkwell of love. Tradition tells us that, when John was old and feeble, he insisted on attending the Sabbath services in the church of Ephesus even though others had to carry him to the place of worship. When asked for a message, he would always say: "Little children, love one another." When asked why he always said the same thing, he replied: "Because this is our Lord's sole commandment, and if we all fulfill this, nothing more is needed, for love is the fulfilling of the law."

John was the youngest of the apostles and lived the longest. His age at death has been estimated at between

ninety and one hundred years. He witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and saw the temple laid in ruins in fulfillment of Christ's prediction forty years before. The testimony of the last of the apostles was so powerful that the Jews were determined to silence him. Through their influence he was summoned to Rome to be tried for his faith. False witnesses testified against him, but he answered in a clear and convincing manner, and his hearers were astonished at his wisdom and eloquence. "But the more convincing his testimony, the deeper was the hatred of his opposers. The emperor Domitian was filled with rage. He could neither dispute the reasoning of Christ's faithful advocate, nor match the power that attended his utterance of truth; yet he determined that he would silence his voice. John was cast into a caldron of burning oil; but the Lord preserved the life of His faithful servant, even as He preserved the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace."—*Ibid.*, pp. 569, 570.

John was banished to the Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 1:9. This was A.D. 96. But this period of exile proved a great blessing in disguise. It was on this lonely island that the future was opened to him in vision and he wrote the Apocalypse, the last book of the Bible, which finished and crowned the canon of Scripture. In fact, it is the epilogue and summary of the entire Bible. It is the only book of the sixty-six which begins and ends with a special blessing pronounced upon the readers and hearers, and those who obey the instructions revealed therein.

Out of prisons and places of exile and affliction have

come not only the greatest characters, but also the finest literary productions of all history. In the furnace of affliction and trial, Joseph, Job, David, Daniel, Jeremiah, Paul, John Bunyan, and scores of others had the dross burned out of their characters and became great.

We are told that even Christ "learned obedience by the things which He suffered," and John declared that the remnant of God's people will come to the kingdom of glory "out of great tribulation," but with their character robes washed and made white "in the blood of the Lamb." Suffering prepared the character of John for a place among God's nobility.

John's love for Christ and the Christ-centered nature of his writings are nowhere better illustrated than in "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," the last book of the sacred canon. Here the Saviour is called "Lamb" more times than in all other Scripture, and His second coming is the climax of each great prophetic drama in the book.

John completed the cycle of the Bible, which began with human perfection in Paradise and ended with his picture of Paradise restored. The dominion lost by the first Adam is to be regained by John's own beloved friend, the second Adam. The church militant owes John a lasting debt of gratitude, and the church triumphant will honor him as one of her greatest heroes.