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## **Behold the Lamb of God**

It is good for us to pause a while, from time to time, consider how great a price has been paid for the blessings of our salvation and the calling of God in which we rejoice; to recall how our loving Father has so graciously led us thus far, to review what privileges and responsibilities are ours as we press on in the narrow way. All these are centred in Him who is *the Lamb of God and our Saviour*.

The scriptures tell of more than one “acceptable time” or day of salvation. But for all those who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and are seeking to live out lives consecrated to His service, now is the “acceptable time” for making our calling and election sure, as the apostle Peter urges us in 2 Peter 1:10,11. “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you shall never fall; but so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” What prospect, indeed!

The writer to the Hebrews issues us a warning as we may read in Heb. 2:1-3. Here the call of the gospel age is spoken of as an invitation to participate in a “so great salvation”, and in the previous chapter, he refers to the Lord’s people of this age as “heirs of salvation”. The apostle Paul writes, in Eph. 1:6,7 that God has made these privileged ones “accepted in the Beloved”, that is in Christ.

The price at which this salvation has been purchased for us is expressed in 1 Peter 1:18,19 - “You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God”. Right here, we touch on the only sure foundation, not only for God’s “so great salvation” but for the ultimate salvation of all our race from the curse of sin and death.

In John 1:29, we read the momentous announcement of John the Baptist as Jesus came before him - “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”. John had already openly declared that he himself was not the Christ but was merely a voice, one sent to announce the long-awaited Messiah. So we read again in verses 35-37 - “the next day, John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said “Behold the Lamb of God”. And the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus.”

This surely is the essence of all good preaching and witness - to point others to the Lamb of God, to the Saviour. This we should, of course, be doing in our daily lives also so that others may see something of the beauty and character of Jesus in us. The deeper truths of God’s word, the details of His plan, are most important for us to learn, but if we are to be victorious and fruitful in His service, we must first and always be looking unto Jesus and seeking to exalt Him. “Let my eyes see Jesus only, let my lips speak forth His praise.”

What a strange impact the pronouncement of John the Baptist must have had on his Jewish hearers! “Behold, the Lamb of God!” What they saw was a man - Jesus - walking among them, but John refers to Him as a lamb, in fact, THE lamb. We might expect this to take the mind of any devout Jews back to their regular sacrifices and especially to the passover lamb. The suffering servant of Isaiah 53 was also likened to a lamb. And here, this one who stood among them was declared to be THE lamb, a particularly chosen lamb. This was God’s lamb, specially provided by Him.

That the passover lamb prefigures our Saviour is clearly shown by the apostle Paul, when he writes to the church at Corinth - “For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Cor. 5:7,8) How aptly in every respect the passover prefigures Jesus we shall see later.

Even before the institution of the passover, however, we see the Lamb of God foreshadowed, albeit dimly, in Abel's offering. No doubt, the heart of Abel was right with God and so God was pleased to receive the offering of the "firstlings of his flock"; but the offering of a life, a living sacrifice, was also significant. The apostle, many centuries later, assures us that Abel's offering to God was a "more excellent sacrifice". He also explains that, under the later Mosaic arrangements, "almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb 11:4, 9:22) So the nature of the sacrifice was important.

Then again in the offering up of Isaac by his father Abraham we can see a foreshadowing of the giving by our Heavenly Father of His beloved Son for us, and for all mankind in due time. In the first place, the account in Genesis 22 deals with God's testing of Abraham's faith and it concludes with the re-affirmation of God's promise to Abraham to bless him and through him and his seed all the families of the earth. But before this re-affirmation, Abraham was called upon to offer up his son of promise, the son miraculously born to him and Sarah in their old age.

What wonderful lessons of faithfulness and submissive obedience there are in the words and actions of both Abraham and Isaac! Surely, these two give us a preview, as it were, of the faithfulness of God Himself and the perfect submission of our Lord, of whom it is written - "though He were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which He suffered." (Heb. 5:8) Jesus was always obedient but we learn from the epistle to the Hebrews that His experiences at His first advent, when He was "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death", have equipped Him to be a merciful and faithful High Priest - "for in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." (Heb 2:9,18) Have we not each indeed found it so?

Returning to Genesis 22, we read - "and Isaac spoke unto Abraham his father and said - My father -and he said - Here I am, my son. And he said -Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said - My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." (Gen. 22:7,8) So in faith Abraham continued with his preparations to offer up his son, the centre of all his hopes and joy, until at the last moment the angel of the Lord stayed his hand. What marvellous faith is displayed here! Abraham trusted God even though he could not have seen how God would over-rule. We learn from Heb. 11:19 that he believed that God, if necessary, "was able to raise him (Isaac) up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." What a lesson of trust there is for us here! Can we sing from our hearts - "God holds the key of all unknown, and I am glad."?

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." (Gen. 22:13) Here we are reminded of the substitutionary character of our Lord's great sacrifice. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter 3:18) "God hath made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5:21)

But it is when we come to consider the selection and qualifications of the passover lamb that we see our Saviour pictured even more clearly. The lamb was to be without blemish, a male of the first year, taken out from the sheep or the goats and then kept from the tenth to the fourteenth day. It was then to be slain in the evening, or between the evenings. Only a perfect animal was acceptable for the sacrifice, nor was it to be immediately slain but, after selection, set apart for a few days. How unmistakably this speaks to us of Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God - and our passover lamb.

John, the beloved apostle, who had journeyed with the Master for over three years, had much time to observe Him and has left us his inspired testimonial - "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) All the disciples, indeed, had listened to His gracious words, spoken as never man spoke, had marvelled at His wondrous acts of mercy and compassion, had felt His love and strength, had seen his perfect witness before the high priests and Pilate, and observed His complete obedience to His Father's will. The writer to the Hebrews also testifies to Jesus as the one who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" and who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 7:26 & 4:15)

In the account of Abraham's offering up of Isaac, the submissiveness of the son and his willing acceptance of the father's will are very clear. This aspect of our Saviour's submission to the Heavenly Father's will is again foreshadowed in the remarkably prophetic Chapter 53 of Isaiah. "The Lord (Jehovah) hath laid on him (the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief of verse 3) the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

The apostle Peter referring to these experiences of our Lord points the lesson for us of patient endurance and, if need be, of suffering for righteousness sake. "Even hereunto were you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile

found in His mouth, who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously; who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree...by whose stripes we were healed.” (1 Peter 2: 21-24).

How beautifully the lamb-like character is exemplified in our dear Saviour. He who left the glory He had with the Father took on Himself the form of a servant, humbling Himself even unto death, the death of the cross. And His invitation to all those of broken heart at His first advent and ever since comes down to us - “Come unto me ... and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest unto your souls.” (Matt. 11: 28-30) Is this our character-likeness also? Meekness is one of the Spirit’s fruits and one way in which we should be growing more like our Master.

Such a spirit is essential for harmony among the Lord’s people. Ours is the privilege to present our bodies daily as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, our reasonable service. The apostle John tells us further that as our Saviour laid down His life for us, so we should be ready to lay down our lives for the brethren. The spirit of deference and service to others cannot co-exist with pride or self-interest but requires that we learn what Paul refers to as the “meekness and gentleness of Christ.” (2 Cor. 10:1) “Christ gave His life for me, what have I given for Thee?”

Truly, our salvation has been bought for us at the highest price, even the precious blood of Christ. It was our sins, and the sins of all mankind, that He bore in His body on the cross, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The “so great” salvation offered to the Lord’s people in this gospel age is so wonderful, we are assured, that the prophets enquired and searched into it when they prophesied of the grace that should come unto us. It was such that even the holy angels desire to look into it. Dare we neglect so great salvation? Surely not, rather we need to give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard and learned of our Lord - to be working out our salvation with fear and trembling, as God Himself works in us. On the foundation of faith, let us build not ephemeral things but the enduring traits of character, typified in gold, silver and precious stones.

The theme of the Lamb of God is one of the golden threads of scripture - it is foreshadowed in the first living sacrifice offered by Abel, carried forward in the sacrifices of Israel and reaches its pinnacle in our dear Saviour Himself, the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish, the gift of God for our salvation, and not ours only, for His life was given as a Ransom for all mankind, to be manifest in due time. Nothing less than the perfect, sinless Lamb of God could meet the strict requirements of divine justice. The theme continues right through to the last book of our Bible where in Rev. 13:8 we read of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

God in his infinite wisdom and mercy had already provided for a lamb, even before our first parents’ transgression. In Revelation chapter 5 and 14, we see the risen, glorified Jesus as a Lamb, to whom the four living creatures, the twenty four elders and the heavenly angels sing praises, saying - “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” No longer is He the suffering, sacrificial Lamb, but now the enthroned Lamb in glory.

Down through past ages, many and varied sacrifices and offerings would have been made to God under the old law arrangements, but none of these could finally take away sin. All had to be repeated and renewed until in due time, God Himself would provide a lamb for a once-for-all offering. “For such a High Priest became us...who needeth not daily, as those high priests (of Israel), to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s, for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.” (Heb. 7:26,27)

How beautifully God’s justice and love meet in Jesus, the Lamb of God. Divine justice could accept no less than a perfect sacrifice to redeem what was lost in Adam, but God, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, in His infinite love and mercy provided the means by which He might be just and at the same time the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. Truly God has indeed provided Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

The so great salvation offered to the Lord’s people in this age, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, are riches beyond comparison. They constitute a prize never before offered, and not to be repeated. They demand our full attention; they require that we so run the race set before us as to obtain that prize; that we ever look unto Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, who purchased for us that so precious gift, the author and finisher of our faith.

## Searching the Heart

*“The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom*

*we have to do.” - Hebrews 4:12,13*

Every true servant of the Lord desires to keep his or her heart pure and in harmony with the principles of righteousness set forth in the Word of God. It is not enough that we search our own hearts. We must also search the Word of God, with the view of being instructed by the Lord. David, a man after God’s own heart, realized that he needed the Lord’s help in searching his heart, so prayed, “Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.”-Ps. 19: 12-14

The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that God is able to read our hearts and to know all the secret intents of our thoughts. As for us, we can judge another only by his or her outward appearance, but God is not thus limited. To the Prophet Samuel the Lord said, “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” (1 Sam 16:7) That our thoughts are naked before the Lord should make us very alert in controlling them. On the other hand, to know that God is able to read our hearts should also be an encouragement, for He knows our weakness, and remembers that we are dust, and deals with us, not according to what we are able to accomplish, but according to what we would like to do and be.

Our High Priest, Christ Jesus, is also sympathetic; and we are invited to go to Him at the throne of grace, there to obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in our every time of need. We are admonished to approach the throne of grace “boldly,” that is, with confidence. (Heb. 4:16 RSV) We know we can do this, for we are assured that the blood of our High Priest cleanses us from all sin, and if we are sincere in searching and controlling the intents of our hearts, we can boldly claim the blood of Christ to make us acceptable to the Lord.

## **SINCERITY**

Sincerity before the Lord is of supreme importance in searching our hearts. The Psalmist wrote, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts.” (Ps. 139:23) None but the sincere would presume to ask God to search his or her heart. Are we willing, at the close of each day, to ask God to search our hearts because of our knowledge that we have not wilfully transgressed his laws?

Jesus is our great Exemplar. He rejoiced to realize that His Heavenly Father knew every intent of His heart, and whether or not He had been faithful under all circumstances. The Psalmist speaks prophetically for our Lord to His Heavenly Father, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest.” (Psalm 40:9) “Thou knowest” -how heart-searching this information should be to all of us who are endeavouring to follow in the footsteps of our Master! Our own brethren in Christ may not know just how faithful we are from day to day, but the Lord does.

## **JESUS ALSO**

Jesus also was, and is, able to read our thoughts and to search out the true intents of our hearts. An interesting incident in this regard is recorded in connection with Jesus’ association with the Apostle Peter. We recall Jesus’ prophecy that Peter would deny him; and at the time this was apparently far from Peter’s thoughts and intentions, but the prophecy came true, and Peter learned a most valuable lesson from it.

Following Jesus’ resurrection, when He appeared to His apostles on the shore of Galilee He entered into conversation with Peter asking him a very pertinent question: “Lovest thou me?” Was there any resentment in Peter’s heart over what had happened in connection with the trial and crucifixion of Jesus? Jesus knew the answer, but He wanted to hear it from Peter’s own lips. And perhaps Jesus may also have reasoned that such a confession from Peter would be of value to the other disciples.

Peter assured Jesus that he did love him. And then the Master repeated the question, and Peter again confirmed his love. Then the master asked essentially the same question for the third time, and Peter, perhaps wondering why he was being asked the same question so many times, replied, “Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee.” - John 21:15-17

It seems not unreasonable that here Peter had in mind-the fact that Jesus, knowing the inner workings of his mind and heart so well that he could foretell his denial, certainly did know all things, and therefore now knew that his love for the Master was sincere and genuine; that there really was no need for the Master even to raise the question. But in the divine arrangement it seemed well for Peter, even as it does for us, to tell the Lord that we love him.

## **THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

Jesus’ knowledge of the thoughts and works of His people is revealed in His messages to the seven churches, the account of which is recorded in the second and third chapters of Revelation. In His message to each

of these churches Jesus said, "I know thy works." He knew their outward works and their secret works, and he also possesses this same knowledge concerning us. We cannot relax our faithfulness even for a day with the thought that it will not be noticed by our Lord. If this is done through the weakness of the flesh, the Lord understands, and will forgive, and give strength for the future. To whatever extent unfaithfulness is wilful, we will suffer chastisement, but even this will be an evidence of divine love, for "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

Every follower of the Master strives constantly to be worthy of his love and care now, and cherishes the wonderful hope of being worthy to enter into that glorious inheritance which He has prepared for all who are faithful even unto death. In our earnest, heart-searching desire to please our Lord let us remember that He knows all things. If we find traces of sin or of disobedience in our own hearts, let us remember that the Lord knows about these even better than we do.

May we therefore seek the Lord's forgiveness, and also His help to overcome any selfish spirit we may have; to help us detect the smallest beginnings of defiling sin in our hearts. Surely we want to walk with the Lord in the white robe of righteousness provided through the blood of Christ. What a comfort it is to realize that the Lord does know the true condition of our hearts, and has provided the necessary help for our every time of need.

This help comes largely through the instructions and warnings contained in his Word. May we make greater use of these as day by day we endeavour more earnestly to know and do the Lord's will. The works of nature reveal some of the glorious characteristics of God, and inspire us to worship and serve Him, but it is only through His Word that we are instructed in the true knowledge of God and guided in the manner in which we should serve Him.

*"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." - Ps. 19:7-11*

As we continue to search our hearts, let us continue in prayer, asking the Lord to help us know and obey His will. May we be able at all times to go to the Lord, and like Peter, say to Him, "Thou knowest that I love Thee."  
(from the Dawn)

## **ALL, ALL FOR THEE!**

### **(A New Year Prayer)**

All, all for Thee! Dear Saviour, may this watchword  
Be Thine own Keynote for my life this year;  
So sweetly harmonising thought and action,  
That none who listen may a discord hear.

All, all for Thee! O take me now entirely!  
Return each note with Thine own gentle hand;  
I give myself afresh into Thy keeping,  
To do or suffer, as Thou shalt command.

I give my heart - I long to love Thee better  
Than ever I have done in years before:  
That all I do may be a joy, not duty,  
Lord Jesus, grant it, may I love Thee more.

I give my will, O Master do receive it;  
It must rebel in any care but Thine;  
I cannot keep it, it is so self-pleasing:  
What rest to think it is no longer mine.

O Master, by Thine own most Holy Spirit,  
Send heavenly music o'er the earth through me!  
So true, so beautiful, so soul refreshing.  
That those who hear it may learn more of Thee.

(Charlotte Murray)

### SEARCH ME, O LORD

*-Psa 139:23*

Search me, O Lord and try this heart of mine,  
Search me, and prove if I indeed am Thine,  
Test by Thy Word, that never changed can be,  
My strength of hope and living faith in Thee.

Search me. O Lord, subdue each vain desire,  
And in my soul a deeper love inspire;  
Hide Thou my life, that I supremely blest,  
Beneath Thy wings in perfect peace may rest.

Search me, O Lord, let faith through grace divine  
Thyself reflect in every act of mine;  
Search Thou my thoughts, whose springs Thine eyes can see  
From secret faults, O Saviour, cleanse Thou me!  
(Grace J Francis)

*“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”*

*The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1)*

## Created for God’s Glory

In the Scriptures there are many texts which tell us that all created things are for God’s glory. All things, indeed were intended to reflect the glory of God in some way pleasing to Him.

In the Old Testament, there are passages which speak of this prophetically and one such is Isaiah 43:7, which reads - “Every one that is called by my name;...I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.” In the New Testament, similarly, Rev. 4:11 reads - “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” The passage in Isaiah 43:7 has reference to natural Israel as the people of God and will ultimately apply to all who become His people. But first let us see how it can be applied to Spiritual Israel.

It does us good to think over what that glory must be that requires all creation to reflect it, for as stated all things were intended to show forth God’s glory in some way to please Him. We can think of the wisdom and power of God as revealed in creation - no two things are exactly alike - no two human beings are exactly the same. We see the beauty in the inanimate creation, we look into the delicate forming and colouring of the smallest flower. In the forest, we see a multitude of trees and shrubs and ferns delicately perfumed, a multitude of flowers each with its own beauty, but each in some degree displaying the glory of God.

The hymn so beautifully expresses this:-  
*All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.  
Each little flower that opens,  
Each little bird that sings,  
He made their glowing colours,  
He made their tiny wings.  
He gave us eyes to see them  
And lips that we might tell,  
How great is God Almighty,  
Who hath made all things well.*

The Psalmist said—”The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words;

their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” (Psalm 19: 1-4 AV & RSV) We could say more of all these wonders but let us turn to God’s animate creation.

The first such creation to truly manifest God’s glory was Jesus, who is referred to in the scriptures as the firstborn of every creature. “The image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” (Col. 1:15) In Rev 3:14, His title is the “Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” John, in Chapter 1:1-3 of his gospel, refers to Jesus as the “Word” or “Logos” and states - “all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made.”

Jesus the Son of God, in His pre-human life manifested God more fully than any other creation; He was the only direct creation of the Father, all others were of the Father but by the Son. In Proverbs 8, Jesus is portrayed as the personification of “Wisdom” (verses 22-31). Verses 22 and 30 read - “The Lord (Jehovah) formed me in the beginning of His ways, before His works or the first of His works of old Then I was by Him as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.” This portion is a vivid description of Jesus before He became the man Christ Jesus, even as John describes Him as the “Word” in His pre-existence.

While Jesus was on earth as the perfect man, He reflected the character of the Father. In John 14:7-14 Jesus indicated that those who would know Him as Messiah would know the Father also. “Phillip saith unto Him, Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Phillip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.” What Jesus meant was that during His ministry He fully reflected His Father’s character.

He had previously been always at God’s right hand and His honoured agent and after His death, resurrection and exaltation, He is spoken of as the “express image” of the Father’s person, the most complete mirror of God’s glory. So we can see then that our Lord Jesus has always been a delight to His Father and was indeed created for God’s glory.

Returning to Rev. 4:11, we note that *all things* were created for God’s pleasure. Adam, created in the image and likeness of God, was capable of reflecting God’s glory more fully than any other of the earthy creation, but when he disobeyed the command of God, sin prevented him from reflecting the true likeness of His creator as intended by God. God foreknew what would occur before He created Adam, but He went ahead with His plan, knowing that, if mankind had experience with evil, it would eventually work out for good and the welfare of all His intelligent creation.

There have been few of the posterity of Adam and Eve who have shown any likeness to their creator as God intended. The “ancient worthies” as we have come to name them, some of whom are referred to in Hebrews 11, however received a good report through their faith and their endeavour to please God. But during this present Gospel Age God is selecting from among all nations men and women who are willing to co-operate with Him in the transforming of their characters to be copies of His dear Son. In 2 Cor. 3:18, Paul says - “We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord.”

The Amplified Version of that verse is helpful - “All of us with unveiled face, (because we) continue to behold *and* to reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transformed into (His very own) image in ever increasing splendour *and* from one degree of glory to another; (for this comes) from the Lord (who is the) Spirit.” What the apostle is saying is explained in 2 Cor. 4: 4&6 - “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them....For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” The veil of darkness which clouded our minds has been removed and so we can reflect more and more the glory of God as we see revealed in His word.

The Amplified Version again helps to explain this - “For the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers (that they should not discern the truth) preventing them from seeing the illuminating light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image and likeness of God....For God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts so as (to beam forth) the light for the illuminating light of the knowledge of the majesty and glory of God (as it is manifest in the person and is revealed) in the face of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.” Jesus was a perfect manifestation of God in the flesh. If the light of the gospel bears fruit in us, the fruit of the Spirit, as is intended, then we shall reflect God also, though at the present time we can only imperfectly reflect the perfect pattern of our Master.

It will not be until the resurrection that we shall reflect the glory of the Lord perfectly. The apostle Paul explains this in 1 Cor. 13:12 - “For now we see through a glass darkly (dimly) but then face to face; now I know

in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.” It seems reasonable to suppose that Paul had in mind that the glass in use in his day was an imperfect and obscure medium for reflecting a true image of a person. The earthly body through which we endeavour to reflect God’s glory is likewise very tarnished, so to speak, and so reflects imperfectly. But when we are resurrected with perfect spirit bodies, we shall see and know face to face, that is, with full clear light.

The scriptures indicate that God has had the new creation in His mind from the beginning of His creative work. He did not however see fit to create them like He did the angels and other spirit beings but chose to take out a people for His name from among the imperfect human race, the lowest order of beings formed originally in His image, and to make or conform them into the image of His dear Son.

Paul in Romans 12:1,2 urges his hearers - “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye *transformed* by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Jude tells us how this can be done (verses 20,21, 24, 25) - “Ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life...Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

To be made faultless, we must pass through trials and testings. This is why we are encouraged to look forward by faith to the finished work - “the presence of His glory”; if we do not do so, we may well become discouraged. It will indeed be a joyful time when we actually experience that which we look eagerly forward to. The Psalmist puts it - “Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (Psalm 16:11) The apostle James confirms what Jude has said (James 1:2-4 RSV) - “Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness; and let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

We have the opportunity, now, for demonstrating our loyalty to God and to the principles of righteousness. It rests with us as to whether we allow Him to work in us to will and to do His good pleasure. When the union of our Lord Jesus Christ and the church takes place, the new creation will be complete. We read in Rev. 19:7,8 - “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready” - ready to begin the work of the millennial age. This will be God’s new creation, created for His glory.

We noted that Adam was created in the image and likeness of his Creator but did not continue to reflect the character of which a perfect man was capable because of disobedience. But an opportunity for Adam and all his posterity to do so will be made available when the kingdom of God is set up. During the times of restoration of all things, spoken of by the apostle Peter in Acts 3:20,21 and also by all God’s holy prophets since the world began, Adam’s posterity will have the opportunity of becoming God’s earthly family; and at the end of the millennial age all who are willing to drink of the water of life will be rewarded with everlasting life. As we read in Rev. 22:17 - “And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Then will be the time when all mankind will glorify their Creator. It will also be known for all time that mankind’s true peace can only be found in harmony with their creator, and they can truly say - “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.” (Rev. 4:11)

(Convention Address – JBH: 94)

*“Each of us should consider not merely how much time we have spent in talking about the Lord, but also how much we have spent in listening to the Lord’s voice, in searching the Scriptures, in seeking to know the Divine mind.”*

The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord,  
Through all the realms of boundless space  
The soaring mind may roam abroad,  
And there Thy power and wisdom trace.

But not alone do worlds of light,  
And earth, display Thy grand designs;  
‘Tis when our eyes behold Thy Word

We read Thy name in fairer lines.

In Christ, when all things are complete,  
The things in earth and things in heaven,  
The heavens and earth will be replete  
With Thy high praises ever given.

Called, Lord, by Thee, to highest place,  
To presence of Thy glory bright,  
O for such condescending grace  
How can we speak Thy praise aright?

## Choose Ye This Day

*“As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.” -Joshua 24:15.*

The Children of Israel had crossed Jordan. Moses was dead and Joshua was their Leader. They were having no difficulty at that time; but Joshua thought that it was proper for them to make their decision - proper for them to decide whether or not they would be faithful to the Lord, or would allow themselves to be led away by the idolatry of the people who lived in Canaan. Joshua had called them together and had recounted to them the Lord's blessings and favour which they had thus far enjoyed, and then expressed himself in the grand and noble sentiments of our text.

So, we who realise that the Lord has been blessing, guiding and sustaining us in the past, should come to a full, positive decision as respects our course of life. The very fact of coming to a positive decision is a great help in the formation of character, and makes us much more ready for another test - along some other line perhaps.

We well recognise the fact that the entire consecration which the Christian makes, leaves nothing out; but we need to have some touchstone, something which will enable the mind to reach a decision quickly, and this touchstone should be God's will, so that to perceive the Lord's will on any subject would be to settle it without any temporizing. Again, it is highly proper that we should reiterate our consecration, and thus make it prominent before others.

Every day we should renew our covenant with the Lord - renew it and make it fresh in our minds, thus showing that there has been no change on our part; that we are still in the same attitude. We are exhorted to make this review of our lives and renewal of our minds and hearts; to render our sacrifice to the Lord.

If the Lord's consecrated people could be brought to the point where the chief aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of Holiness, the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, what a blessing it would mean! If then they should wrestle with Him until the breaking of day, their hold upon Him would be sure to bring the desired blessing. The Lord reveals Himself for the purpose of giving this blessing; but He withholds it until we learn to appreciate and desire it.

### **We Rest on Thee**

We rest on Thee, our Shield and our Defender!  
We go not forth alone against the foe:  
Strong in Thy strength, safe in Thy keeping tender.  
We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go.

Yes, in Thy name, O Captain of salvation!  
In Thy dear name, all other names above;  
Jesus our Righteousness, our sure foundation,  
Our Prince of glory and our King of love.

We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling.  
And needing more each day Thy grace to know;  
Yet from our hearts a song of triumph pealing:  
We rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go.

We rest on Thee, our Shield and our Defender!  
Thine is the battle. Thine shall be the praise: