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THE LIFE OF JESUS

THE more we think of it the more marvellous it seems that the Gospel narratives record so many of the particulars of our dear Redeemer's ministry —miracles, teachings, etc.—yet never once descend to the discussion of commonplace events, nor of our Lord's sayings or doings other than those directly connected with His ministry. This is one of the strongest internal evidences that these books were written under divine supervision. Experience with the writings of men in all ages will assure all that it would be almost impossible for four men to write biographies of one person, such as these four Gospels are, without entering into social features and events. Our Lord's mother is barely mentioned, and this only where her life touched particularly with that of Jesus. Her husband, Joseph, was probably dead at the time our Lord's ministry began, yet no mention is made of this fact either.

Respecting our Lord's life, previous to His consecration at thirty years of age, we know scarcely anything. The four Gospels merely bring to our attention His miraculous birth, Herod's jealous fury, and the escape of the child before the massacre of the innocents, followed by the incident which occurred in His twelfth year, and the declaration that He increased in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. How brief the record, yet how suggestive !: It would have been no part of the Gospel to have explained the details of His life- as a boy, as a young man, etc. It might, indeed, have satisfied the curiosity of some to have told us whether He was a 'farmer or a fisherman or a carpenter, matters about which people seem inclined to dispute. Undoubtedly the Lord's way in this matter was the better one. Our minds are more drawn to the important features of the Lord's work by reason of the brevity of the sketch given us of His earthly life and interest.

The important thing for us to know is simply stated, namely that He was the beginning of the creation of God--the first born of every creature; that in His preexistent condition He had glory with the Father before the world was, and was the Father's instrument in the creation of angels, principalities and powers .and men, everything that was made (John 1.) The necessary particulars are also given us respecting the transference of this great spirit being to earthly human conditions—that He might become man and redeem man, the world; that He might be born under the Law and thus redeem those who were under the Law, the Jews. Let us then thank God heartily for the simplicity of the narrative, and for the fact that no item necessary for our comfort and peace and joy has been omitted therefrom, and that no needless items pertaining merely to earthly things have been permitted to intrude themselves and thus to dim in any measure the glorious record of the great love wherewith the Father loved us and the great redemption effected thereby.

We see that the boy Jesus, although miraculously begotten, not of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but by the holy Spirit, was permitted to grow after the ordinary manner, gradually getting stronger physically and mentally, being filled more and more with wisdom, and giving evidence that God's favor was upon Him. Quite probably Joseph,

His foster father, was a carpenter; and if so, the boy Jesus, unquestionably, like other boys, would have more or less association in the carpenter shop, its tools, etc. It has been wondered by some that our Lord never referred to carpenter tools or work in any of His teachings or parables, and this has been urged as an objection to the thought that He was reared in contact with such work and tools. It matters not so far as we can see. Our Lord addressed, not classes, but the masses; and quite probably the majority of the people at the time knew little about the carpenter's trade, tools, etc., even less than in our day. Hence, it was not necessary or appropriate that our Lord Should use as figures and parables that which would not be common to the experiences of all or nearly all of his hearers,

In Luke 2:41 Joseph is evidently referred to as one of His parents. This is not in conflict, however, with the previous

statements of the same writer, to the effect that Jesus was begotten, not by Joseph, but by the holy Spirit (Luke 1:30-35). We would consider it proper enough to-day that any child should speak of his foster father or stepfather as father without explaining the particulars of the relationship, and likewise it would be proper for the friends to speak of both father and mother as the parents of the child as in this verse, under consideration, and previous verses (Verse 27).

The narrative passes over the twelve years of Jesus' earthly life to tell us of the incident of His tarrying behind after having been with His parents at the Passover Feast. The religious Jews from all parts of the country went to

Jerusalem upon these feast occasions according to the directions of the Law, and naturally enough close relatives travelled in each other's company considerably. Thus it was that in the large concourse returning from Jerusalem after the feast a whole day elapsed before the boy Jesus was missed by those who properly had guardianship over Him. Although admonished by the angel Gabriel that Jesus would in due time be greatly honored of God, and that He was born differently from others of the human family, nevertheless neither Mary nor Joseph seemed to have caught any considerable view of the greatness of the one whom they called their son Jesus. The prophecies spoken respecting Him, like all the prophecies of olden times, were more or less vague, and could not be comprehended except by the aid of the holy Spirit, which had not yet been given. His mother, Mary, however, we are told, kept all these things pondering in her heart, wondering what would be the consummation—little dreaming, we may be sure, how great her son must ultimately be made, according to the divine arrangement.

The story of the boy of twelve amongst the Doctors of the Law, discussing the various types of the Law, what these probably signified, and what would be expected to be their antitypes, furnish us a very interesting picture, especially when we remember that the one who was asking the questions was the one who ultimately would give correct answers to those questions in His own experiences. We are not to assume that this precocious boy of twelve was unduly bold or forward; we are not to presume that He undertook to teach the Doctors of the Law. He was not yet anointed to preach, and was, therefore, not yet qualified. The narrative is that He was found hearing the doctors and asking them questions, and not attempting to teach them. There is a good suggestion here—especially for such as are not permitted to teach, by reason of sex or insufficient years—namely, that even a child can ask questions, and in asking may suggest wonderful and powerful answers.

We may reasonably assume that Jesus had previously, after the manner of the Jewish boys, attended the synagogue worship at His home, and that hearing there the Law and the prophets, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, read Sabbath after Sabbath, and having a perfect memory and an active mind, because not blemished by sin and the fall, the various questions of the Law and the various declarations of the prophets would greatly interest Him—especially as He realised that He had left the Father and had come into the world to do a redemptive work.

The Doctors of the Law doubtless remarked that they had never had such pointed questions asked them respecting the Law and the prophets, even by wise men of their day and by each other; hence they evidently noticed the precocity of this boy. As He asked questions, which apparently showed that some of their interpretations were faulty and inconsistent, they in turn considered it not beneath themselves to ply the boy with questions, and according to verse 47 of this same chapter 2 of Luke, they got their questions answered in such a manner as amazed them. Nevertheless, we are to remember that our Lord Jesus could not have Himself understood the full meaning of the Law shadows and the prophecies at that time—nor until after His anointing with the holy Spirit (I Con 2:14.) This little item gives us a suggestion respecting the ability of mind that would belong to a perfect boy. It gives us a suggestion respecting what we may expect of the ancient worthies, also the world of mankind, when they shall be resurrected and brought to human perfection.

It was natural enough that after missing the boy for four days His mother should upbraid Him somewhat, and, taking Jesus' answer in its simplicity, we must suppose that He had been so absorbed with the opportunities and studies that the time had passed without His appreciating the trouble and inconvenience He was causing to others.

“Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business”? must have seemed strange enough even to so remarkable a boy. His parents did not fully comprehend the meaning of the words, but Mary set these apart with the other peculiar things to treasure up, hoping ultimately to see something that would fully justify the words, as she did afterwards see. After making this protest, respecting His desire to be engaged in the Heavenly Father's mission, studying His Word and teachings, and realising that His sentiments were not understood or appreciated, and that really He was still properly under subjection to His parents, Jesus said, no more, but went quietly with them to Nazareth and doubtless to His accustomed vocation.

Our Lord could not begin His ministry because He was under the Law and bound by its every restriction. We note, however, His promptness to engage in His Heavenly Father's business at the very earliest moment, as we read, “Now when Jesus began to be about thirty years of age He came to Jordan to be baptised.” We, who are not under the

restraints of the Law Covenant but, on the contrary, are under grace, are not thus limited as to the time we may present our bodies- living sacrifices upon the Lord's altar to be used in His service; hence we rejoice the more if we can find that at an early date we can give our hearts and our all to Him who loved us and bought us with His precious blood.

It was not the babe of Bethlehem that was to bless the world, nor the boy of Nazareth, nor the young man of Capernaum, but it was to be a full grown man, a mature one, whose sacrifice would offset the sin of

Adam, redeem him and his posterity and satisfy the demands of divine justice against the condemned race. So,,then, while interested in everything pertaining to the divine character and plan, while interested to know how Jesus grew in stature and in wisdom, as He approached the maturity of manhood at thirty years, while interested to know about His miraculous birth, our chief interest in all of these things is that they established our faith in Him as the man Christ Jesus—that He was holy, harm-less, undefiled and separate from sinners, and, therefore, able to make the atonement sacrifice—to give His son's n life a ransom, a corresponding price for the life of Adam, and thus for the life of the whole race of Adam, in his loins at the time of his transgression and thus sharers with him in his condemnation.

We do well, therefore, to dwell less upon the birth and, infancy of Jesus and more and more to grasp the precious themes set before us in the Gospel, of which the cross is the great point or centre of interest. Similarly, we regard all the followers of the Lord—not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. True, it is good to know of some that even before their consecration and baptism of the Spirit were noble minded, virtuous and irreproachable, and there is a measure of regret when we hear of some who had a contrary disposition to this; nevertheless, our interest centers around the fact that they did turn from sin, did become the Lord's followers and that they have been begotten of His holy Spirit. In this we rejoice. Thus we know each". other according to the Spirit as New Creatures in the Lord, and thus we know our Lord as the New Creature, as the Apostle suggests, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth, know we Him so ne more." Our special interest centers in our Lord from the moment of His anointing of the Spirit until He completed the work there begun three and one-half years later on the cross, crying, "It is finished." Our, interest still holds beyond that point in the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, and the evidence thus .given us that the begetting of the Spirit at His baptism became the birth of the Spirit at His resurrection, and that He was thus the first born from the dead, born of the Spirit to spirit conditions. Then our hope is to follow in His steps, and thus realise the promise that if we suffer with Him we shall also be glorified together and share 'His Kingdom and His nature in glory.

Each in his way is indispensable. To do our own share in the acting, and to feel that each one is an integral, essential portion of the whole, not interfering with the rest, ' is co-operating best in the work.—F. W. Robertson.

“COVET EARNESTLY THE BEST.”

God has His best things for the few

Whose love shall stand the test;

God has His second choice for those

Who do not crave His best.

It is not always open sin

That risks the promised rest;

A good more often is the foe

That keeps us from the best.

The Lord is My Shepherd.

The Prophet David wrote the 23rd Psalm concerning himself; but in his words there is still deeper signification, namely, that Jehovah is the Shepherd of the anti-typical David—The Christ, of which Jesus is the Head and the Church His Body.

In proportion as any are in an attitude of mind in harmony with the Lord they are out of harmony with their present environment, in which the great Adversary is seeking their destruction, under conditions unfavorable - for their spiritual development as the Lord's "sheep." Foxes, wolves, lions and even cattle have means of defense and offense; but the sheep has practically none. It seems to have no judgment; therefore, the sheep is de-pendent on the shepherd. In other words, it is out of its environment if away from the shepherd. God provided for man's protection, but by reason of sin the race got into the wilds and became exposed to various difficulties which otherwise' would not have been man's lot.

Those who are the "sheep" will come back into harmony with the Lord. As represented in our text, the Church class comes back in the present time. We all recognise, as the days go by, how necessary is the Divine care. As we come to see the Divine Plan, we see that "all who are of this fold," all those who will come into harmony with God, will have this care; and that eventually there shall be one Shepherd and one flock.

Our Lord Jesus is the representative of the Father. Humanity, as the Lord's sheep, went astray. All of Adam's posterity are now astray. The Great Shepherd sent His Son for the lost sheep. He is seeking them and will ultimately find all who belong to this true flock. He is, therefore, in the highest sense of the word, the Bishop, or Shepherd of our souls, the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep.

The trouble is within us.

This last century, says Dr. Fosdick, was lighted in by tallows dips and out by electricity; rode in on horseback and out in an aeroplane; came in talking like a Neanderthal man and ended using a microphone; commenced with quill pens and finished with linotype; started with hands for labour and ended with the har-nessed forces of the universe. It is an amazing civilization. But there is something the matter with it. Look anywhere you will—at family life or city governments, at private morality or public wars, at the swift increase of mental disease and the universal evidence of nervous overstrain—something is the matter with it. The need cannot be met by inventive ingenuity. Increasing our speed will not help. Multiplying our machinery will not save us. The need is spiritual life, wise enough and powerful enough to master the instruments we have created and make them servants of an enriched humanity. The trouble is within us.

PEOPLES • PAPER.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported,

A Cross (x) on the wrapper indicates that the Subscription to "Peoples Paper" is overdue.

Pacific School of Religion

PEAKING at the Pacific School of Religion, at Berkeley, Cal., U.S.A.; Dr., Dwight Bradley made some plain statements regarding the sad conditions of the churches to-day. What he describes is very much in line with the prophetic anticipations of Revelation 3:17. He says, "We receive new members into our churches and add up the number with some pride. Our prayer meetings, however, are pitiful, and when we are honest with ourselves we realise how parched and barren is the soil in which the 'souls of our constituents, with a few exceptions, are struggling to keep alive . . . They are hungry and thirsty for religion. It is in us that the lack is to be found. We have no food or drink to give them. Or perhaps possessing a few loaves and fishes we do not know how to perform the miracle that will feed the multitude in the desert. Nevertheless, it is for reality in religion that people are searching, and which they are finding in sometimes bizarre places outside the church."

One could not help deploring this sad and all too true statement, when reading in a recent leading London religious journal an appeal of an anxious bereaved father for comfort. He had been a lay preacher for 32 years, but now that his much loved and talented daughter, in whom his affections and hopes were centred, had been killed, he felt his faith so shattered that he could not enter the pulpit—he must stop preaching. He surely, "asked for an egg and received a stone." The reverend gentleman responded with expressions of great sympathy, but acknowledged that he would feel about the same. He said he could not preach a God that permitted such a thing—he could not understand it, and it was just better to let time heal and try to think of God as loving and merciful, although there were such dreadful things taking place that seemed so out of accord with the thought of an all powerful God of love and mercy. He said no one could explain why God permitted such things. So the people perish through lack of knowledge. "There is a famine in the land, but not for bread."

It is one of the signs given by our Lord (in Matt. 24) respecting His second presence, that those who were hungry for spiritual food would be separated from the church systems, two might be in a (creed) bed, one should be taken, another left; two might be grinding at the mill (trying to find food for the hungry); one would be taken and the other left; two in the field (the world) one taken, the other left. The disciples asked where would they be taken to? And the reply was, "Where the 'carcase' or the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together" (Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:34-37.) That is to say that being unable to find spiritual food in the churches the hungry ones, like eagles, seek it elsewhere.

How strange that a man could be a preacher for 32 years of the Gospel of how "God gave His only begotten Son" to die on the behalf of sinners—not to be quickly killed, but in agony and the torture of the cross—yet, as soon as one of the calamities which are happening to thousands every day, comes to him in taking away his lovely (laughter, he finds his faith too weak. His knowledge of God, of the great Divine Plan of the

ages, is so lacking, that his faith crumbles up. Certainly we agree that he should stop preaching until he can teach a reasonable doctrine and be able to show that God is not responsible for all the sin, sickness, death and calamities, which abound everywhere. Mankind, represented in our first parent, disobeyed God, chose to obey Satan and God has simply withdrawn His providence and protection from the human family and left them to learn the hard lesson of experience. Left them to see how wretched the condition is outside of the Divine providence. Then God, in His wisdom and love, has arranged that the penalty for sin having been paid by Christ all shall have an opportunity of serving righteousness and obtaining eternal life.

It may be argued, but surely God will protect those who believe and are Christians. Yes, indeed, "Saints are His peculiar care"; He will, indeed, make all things work together for good to them who love Him and are called according to His purpose. The question is, who is to judge as to what is good for one or another? We are not capable of

discerning just what experience will prove to be best for us. We know, however, that even the experiences of our Lord Jesus, terrible as they were, all worked out good to Him as well as to the whole world. We know too, that God loved His son as much as any parent can love his child; "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Yet He allowed His Son to pass through the most terrible ordeal and cruel death. Then why should we think that we should be spared from such experiences. We have no right to the love which Jesus so well merited. As Christians, on the other hand, we have covenanted to follow Christ, to walk in His steps and have yielded ourselves in consecration to God, that His will should be our will. "We have taken up our cross to follow Christ. We shall be tested, we must be eroded, and if we fully trust in God as our Heavenly Father, then we shall know that the fiery trials which are sure to come are designed not to destroy our faith, but to lead us step by step to "trust Him more," and we learn like Cowper that:—

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour ;
The bud may have a bitter taste
But sweet will be the flower."

So we trust and look forward to the completion of the Divine Plan, when not only the Church shall be glorified with her Lord, but the whole groaning crea-tion shall be delivered from their travailing in pain into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:19-22).

CHRISTMAS CONVENTION.

It is a pleasure to announce that the Melbourne. Class have made arrangements to hold their Annual Convention gatherings again over the coming Christmas season, and a hearty invitation is extended to all friends who may be able to attend at that time for worship, praise and fellowship before the Lord.

The meetings will be held, D.V., on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, December 24th, 25th and 26th, afternoon and evening, at Molesworth Chambers, 450 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, and a helpful and refreshing time is expected with the Lord's blessing over all.

Accommodation can be secured for visiting brethren; programmes will be forwarded and other information supplied on request.

VARIOUS ITEMS.

A suggestion has come forward that our readers may like to obtain extra copies of this year's "People's Paper," either for filing for their own use or passing on to friends who may be helped thereby. Those so desiring may have the twelve copies covering the past year sent to them for 1/3, post paid. Previous years' issues are also on hand and may be procured at the rate of 1/- for each year, or three years' numbers for 2/6, post paid.

Expressions in appreciation of the book, "Divine Plan of the Ages," similar to those appearing in the Correspondence of this issue, are received from time to time, and it has been thought well to make a special offer of this very fine work at this time of the year to all who may desire to use it as a present to their friends or in other ways. This volume in red cloth binding may therefore be obtained during December for the special price of 1/ , post paid to any address; also the same book and one copy of "Some of the Parables" for 1/6, post paid.

A variety of post cards with suitable verses that appeal to the Lord's people are now in stock; also book-marks, and various kinds of wall texts. The cards may be procured mixed, for 1/4 per doz., or 9d. per half-dozen; the bookmarks and wall texts from 3d. upwards.

A request was received recently for copies of the picture in fulfilment of Isaiah 11:6; with which many of our friends will be familiar, and these are now in stock in three sizes for all who may desire them.

The prints are well worth framing; the picture itself being in the following sizes:-5 x 3; 7 x 41; and 9 x 5i. The prices are 6d., 9d. and 1/- each, posted.

BIBLE STUDY MEETINGS.

The friends of the Adelaide Class extend a hearty invitation to each and all in those parts who may desire to join them in their Bible Studies.

The meetings are quite unsectarian, and are held each Sunday afternoon and evening, also mid-week, in Liverpool Buildings, Flinders Street, Adelaide.

For further information address the Class Secretary, Mrs. H. H. Bartel, 10 'Forest Avenue East, Clarence Gardens, Adelaide, South Australia.

Correspondence,

Durban, South Africa, 18/9/33.

The Berean Bible Institute.
Dear Brethren in the Lord,

Greetings! Just a line in remitting 5/- as subscription towards a copy of the "People's Paper," which you have been so kindly forwarding me at the request (I believe) of dear Bro. Nicholson. I have long been wanting to send a few shillings, and the Lord knows how we enjoy the pages of this little "Paper." You have been sending me two and sometimes three, copies, and I have been passing the extra copies on to the brethren, who, in turn, have been passing them on to friends.

Our little Class at Durban are very earnest students, and all are looking forward to making their calling sure. The "Peoples Paper" and "Herald" are looked for each month, and I know that in my home their pages are read and re-read. We are at present studying the 1st' Vol. of "Studies in the Scriptures," and are receiving a' great amount of blessing and enlightenment from its pages, more so as we see the times in which we are now living and the trouble in the world. Unemployment is still very great here in South Africa, and many are on relief work, yet there are many thousands unemployed.

Should you see Bro. Nicholson we should be very grateful if you would convey to him our very best love, and hope that he is still pressing along towards the mark of perfection, and still about his Father's business. How we have enjoyed his visits to Durban the great God whom we love and desire to please alone knows, for He alone can read our hearts.

I will now wish you joy in the Lord and His service, and close with Christian love to you all.

Your Brother by His Grace, G.W.

South Australia, 11/11/33.
The Berean Biblical Institute.

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the Master's name. I am pleased to have the opportunity of writing. I would like you to send some literature to New Zealand for me. I have a young friend there, and both he and his wife have recently accepted Jesus and are starting out in a new life. Naturally I am delighted, and realising what a help you have been to me, I thought that they couldn't do better than become interested in the "Bereans." I do appreciate your "Paper," and there is no doubt life is very different under the standard of the Cross.

Things are very complex to-day; the stage seems set for a remarkable manifestation of interesting events. However, these things and the secrets thereof belong to God. The Man from Calvary has given us our instructions; I know I fall short a long way, but the narrow way is not easy.

Well, brethren, I must close. Again thanking you for what you are doing for me and hundreds of others. Your Brother in Christ,

R.V.W.

P.S.—I will enclose . Use your own discretion on what to send. I would suggest “Some of the Parables.”

Victoria, 19/11/33.

Dear Brother,—

The little parcel of tracts for distribution came to hand alright, also your kind letter. The tracts are very suitable, touching briefly but clearly on many vital Bible truths in a way calculated to cause the readers to desire more detailed knowledge. I will do my best to place them well. This is forest country with but a small scattered population, and not many of them have the hearing ear, but there are a few who read eagerly and understandingly. These few I help all I can. Some of the tracts I will distribute by post as far as Western Australia and Echuca, to my sisters and to others in different parts of Victoria.

I am enclosing stamps for you to send a copy of “A Voice from Switzerland” to me when they come to hand,

You asked me in your letter if I had read the “Divine Plan of the Ages”; and you will excuse me if I give a very long reply. In my youth I was taught in the Wesley Sunday School till 16 years of age; when a young man I became a member of the S.A., and was a bandmaster there for 16 years. I earnestly sought to be perfect, while some members, according to their testimony, really thought they had attained that desirable experience, so I thought they were better than myself. And when the leaders of meetings would sometimes, as it were, almost hold the people over the mouth of hell and stress its tortures I used to feel almost angry instead of saying amen; for this I also blamed myself. Further, when we were taught that death was an immediate passport to heaven or the region of fire and brimstone, in my mind I would be debating, if so where does the resurrection and day of judgment come in. I was behind the rest again; I could not understand it, but I do now. The point I want to stress is this: there is no man with an honest desire for the unadulterated truth in Christ Jesus, but what God in some way will have it brought clearly to him. The way in my case was this:—I was on a visit to a town, and in a friend’s house on the mantelshelf was a book. I picked it up and was at once intensely interested; it answered all my questions and seemed to be a veritable Bible key. That book was the “Divine Plan of the Ages,” and since then the Bible is to me an intelligible book, and God has an exalted place in my heart and mind.

I have read “Foregleams”; it is very good, and I intend to get you to post one to an address for me; what is the price with postage ? I hope I have not wearied you.

Victoria,

19/11/33. Berean Biblical Institute.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for the loan of book, “Divine Plan of the Ages.” It certainly is a book well worth reading, and does all you claim for it. Before reading this book I had just read “The Martyrdom of Man,” by W. Read. It is only by reading such books and comparing them that the truth is driven home to one.

I have not been of a deeply religious mind for a number of years, having come to the conclusion that religion draws but the Church repels. I am sorry to say that the majority of our present-day ministers do not preach the Word as it should be. For the falling off of church-goers they are themselves to blame. Money and the greed for a higher promotion is overcoming their higher ideals. How often to-day do we see (especially in small country towns) ministers surrounded with all the luxuries of the present day, whilst the average member of the congrega-tion cannot afford to give what they put in the collecting box? I think that the race is becoming as warped in mind as it is in body.

Wishing you every success in the future,

I am, yours truly, R.J.

Wisdom from Above

Wisdom is the principal thing.” “With all thy getting get understanding,” says wrote the wise man, Solomon, and so we all agree: wisdom is necessary at the very beginning of any matter that would result favorably. Wisdom is craved by the whole world of mankind, and the majority, even while going in divers directions, would claim to be seeking, to walk in wisdom’s ways. How important, then, that we discriminate as between the true wisdom and that which it is frequently misnamed wisdom, which is really folly !

One of the first lessons of life to be learned is, that our own judgments are unsafe, and even those who are least unbalanced by the fall are liable to make the mistake of seeking wisdom in a wrong direction—leaning to their own understanding (Prov. 3:5.) Those, therefore, who would take the wisest course should promptly admit their own unwisdom and seek for divine direction, divine wisdom. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not” (James 1:5).

But alas, how few are disposed to accept the wisdom that cometh from above ! The majority have so large a degree of selfishness that they seem, indeed, to make miserable failures out of the best opportunities of their lives, before they realise that they lack wisdom and need guidance by the great Teacher. Hence, as the Lord declares, only the humble, only the “poor in spirit,” are in the way that leads to eternal life and the kingdom—because only these will seek for and obey the heavenly wisdom from the great Counsellor. This class alone is in the condition to be taught of God: and concerning all who shall attain to the fulness of divine favor it is written, “They shall all be taught of God.”

For the humble, then, God has provided true wisdom in Christ. His words, no less than His example, show us that we are sinners and that “no man cometh unto the Father” except by Him. He tells us of the Father’s pity, and of the redemption provided through His own blood, and of our privilege to accept of divine grace unto full forgiveness and reconciliation, and of our need of the heavenly wisdom for every step of the journey, if we would walk the narrow way, which leads to the glory of the kingdom and life everlasting; and all who accept this “call” accept the great Advocate’s instruction and guidance, as the very essence of divine wisdom. With varying degrees of promptness and after varying degrees of wandering from this good Shepherd, and being sought and found by Him, the faithful eventually reach the position where they put no confidence in themselves and their own wisdom, but all confidence in the wisdom of Him whom God hath.. appointed to be our wisdom—”who of God is made unto us wisdom.” When this degree of progress has been attained, a measure of rest and contentment takes possession of the true sheep, which permits them to look up to God with confidence in every matter and at every time—especially in seasons of distress and grief and trial. They learn not to trust to their own wisdom any longer; but to trust, implicitly to the wisdom and goodness of the great Shepherd.

But not for a considerable time is such a development of confidence in the Lord’s wisdom attained: meantime they have many battles and contentions against the wiles of Satan, who would tempt them to use their own wisdom, or the wisdom of other men, and to doubt the results of following the divine wisdom and its programme. On every hand, the flesh, assisted by the devil, offers inducements and seductions to follow its way and to cease to follow in the Lord’s way. In business affairs, in church affairs, in home and family affairs, the temptation is continually advanced that we should choose our own way, follow our own preferences and thereby reap larger and better results. It is only after considerable experience, and frequently after many failures, that the “pilgrim” for the heavenly country learns to trust no wisdom but that which cometh down from above and is in accordance with the Divine Word. Describing the attitude of the true children of God, abiding in Christ as branches in the vine, the Apostle says:—”He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mysteries of His will” (Eph. 1:8).

“We also pray for you and 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” (Col. 1:9, 10).

Let your hearts be “knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:2, 3).

Notwithstanding the fact that those who accept Christ are the “meek,” “the poor in spirit,” and lower than the average standard along the lines of worldly wisdom and power and wealth, yet, nevertheless, the acceptance by these of Christ as their wisdom makes them really wiser than others ;—not only in respect of the greater riches which they are laying up in heaven, but also wiser in respect of the most ordinary affairs of this present life. This is not because they miraculously receive new brains or a better and more orderly arrangement of the brains they have, but because

submitting their judgments on every subject to the will of the Lord, and walking according to His directions in every matter and in every particular, they have His wisdom, His spirit, to guide them. Hence, although their own minds are imperfect and unbalanced as much or more than the average of the race, the Apostle is able to say of such, “God hath given us the spirit of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:7).

The spirit of a sound mind enables its possessors to view things more correctly than they would be able to view them of themselves; for instance, it cautions us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but according to the measure of the Lord’s spirit possessed. Yet while cautioning us to be very humble, it guards us against being fearful, men-pleasers, flatterers. While constraining us to be peace-lovers and peace-makers, and kind, and forgiving, and generous, without maliciousness or vindictiveness, it nevertheless cautions us to ‘be firm respecting principles of righteousness and truth. We may and should gladly yield our own preferences to those of others, for the sake of serving others or doing them good, yet we must never do so at, the expense of the truth and principle. We should never say, let us do evil that good may result, let us yield some principles for the sake of harmony and the good of the cause. Alas, this seems to have been the difficulty with some of God’s people all through the Ages. The fear of man, that bringeth a snare, has interfered with the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. All Spiritual Israelites should learn, should fix it in their hearts, that while moderation and a disposition to be obliging and helpful and considerate of the wishes of others are prominent elements of Christian grace and to be cultivated, nevertheless the principles of the divine law are never to be infringed, nor even compromised for the sake of blessing others.

We are to remember that when great emergencies arise God is superior to every one of them, and they can never be understood as His voice commanding us to violate the principles of righteousness, nor to compromise respecting the truth—the foundation doctrines of ‘Christian faith and hope, and the truths of this harvest period of the Age. We are to do our duty in harmony with His law as kindly, as gently, as wisely as possible, and leave all the results to Him—the Almighty. Whatever others may do, how-ever, others may think or compromise, let us take the Apostle’s standpoint and say, “We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor. 13:8).

In the family, love is to be the rule, blended with mercy and justice, kindness and generosity; nevertheless, the rod is not to ‘be spared if its use be necessary to the proper training of the child. And the Christian father is not only to be “kind and gentle toward all,” but is to “rule his own family well, having his own children in proper subjection.” Thus, we might multiply the various counsels of the heavenly wisdom, as it enters into the lives of those who. are fully devoted to the Lord and gives them wisdom and grace for the affairs of life far beyond any that they would have had without it.

After exhorting us that “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God,” the Apostle James (1:5) says, “Who among you is a wise man and endued with knowledge? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have strife in your hearts, glory not (to think yourselves led of the Lord and guided by. His true wisdom), and lie not against the truth. This wisdom (which in selfishness seeks its own gratification and advancement, envying others and striving selfishly for its own advancement) descendeth not from above but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is con-fusion and every evil work; but, the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make for peace” (James 3:13-18).

Let us remember well this analysis of the wisdom that comes from above.

First, it. is pure, guileless, sincere, honorable, open above board: it cometh to the light, loveth the light, it is not of the darkness, nor of sin, it is utterly opposed to secret whisperings, back bitings and all slanderous and underhanded works and ways. It takes the lord at His word, receiving the pure word of wisdom into a good and holiest heart. It is honest: it does not deceive itself into believing that self-will is the Lord’s will.

Secondly, it is peaceable: that is to say, so far as is possible and consistent with honesty and purity it is peaceable.

It loves and desires peace, harmony, unity; hut since peace is not first, but purity first, therefore it can only be fully at peace and fully in harmony with that which is pure and honest and good.

Thirdly-, it is gentle—it is not rude, coarse, rough, and has no sympathy with such a spirit and such methods. It is not only of God, but God-like. Nevertheless, its gentleness follows its purity and ‘peaceableness: those who receive this wisdom are not first or primarily gentle, and therefore peaceable and pure, hut they are primarily pure, sanctified with the truth, and therefore are peaceable, and therefore are gentle, and therefore, are easy to be entreated. But they can only be easily entreated in harmony with purity, peace and gentleness: they cannot he easily entreated to assist in any evil working of bearing false witness or scandalmongers, or slandering, „or evil-speaking, nor into any of the works of the flesh and the devil.

Fourthly, it is full of mercy and good fruits: it rejoices in mercy, because that is a part of its very self; mercy and all the good fruits of the spirit of the Lord are sure to proceed from the heart in which rules the spirit of love, honesty, purity, peaceableness and gentleness. But this mercy, while taking hold upon the ignorant and the unintentional evildoers with sympathy and help, cannot have the slightest sympathy or affiliation with willful wrong-doers, because the spirit of wisdom is not first mercy, but first purity; hence, the mercy of the spirit of wisdom can only exercise itself upon the unintentional wrong-doers, or the ignorant wrong-doers.

Fifth, without partiality (which would signify injustice): the purity and peace, gentleness, mercy and good fruits of the spirit of wisdom, lead us to lie no respecters of persons except as character shall demonstrate real value: the outward features, the natural man, the color of his skin, etc., 'are ignored by the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom that cometh from above. It is impartial and loves that which is pure, good, peace-able, gentle, true, wherever found and under whatever circumstances it exhibits itself.

Sixth, it is without hypocrisy. This heavenly wisdom is so pure, so peaceable, so gentle, and so merciful toward all that are worthy of consideration or notice, that there is no necessity for hypocrisy where it controls. And it is bound to be out of harmony, out of sympathy and out of fellowship with all that is sinful; and in fellow-ship and in sympathy with all that is pure or that is making for purity and peace and gentleness—so that it has no room for hypocrisy.

Let us, dear brethren, as children of God, more and more fully accept Christ as our wisdom, for all of the affairs of life—little as well as great, temporal as well as spiritual. Let us seek to be More and more filled with the spirit of true wisdom, that cometh from above, whose ultimate teaching is holiness to the Lord.

Missions Without the Cross

“Where can the motive for foreign missions be found, and how can energy for it be expected to well up and overflow,” asks Toyohiko Kagawa in an article on the “Rethinking Missions” report in “The Christian Century” (Chicago), “except as proceeding from a sense of absolute commission from God,? There would have been no need for Christ to be crucified merely to propagate humanism!”

“There are, indeed, many religions in the Orient; but is there any that clearly teaches that God loves humanity with the love of the Cross? Buddhism propounds abstract principles, but it failed to wipe away my tears. To this day Buddhism compromises With the system of public prostitution in Japan. Shintoism and militarism, and Brahmanism and superstition, are closely associated. I do not wish to attack other re-ligions, but it is useless to be too lenient with them. Man will not be saved thus.”—’Christian World.’”

It is, indeed, good to have such a sound note of warning coming from Mr. Kagawa. He recently visited America and was rather scornfully referred to as though the Ministry of the West disdained to learn from an Asiatic, but while the majority of professing Christian ministers, to-day, are losing faith in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and, in the necessity of the Cross of Christ for the salvation of the world, Mr. Kagawa seems to be on the only sure foundation. “God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

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