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Is Communism a Danger to Christianity?

(This article, the subject of a Public Lecture, is presented as fully as space permits in response to a number of requests.)

OUR subject is a timely one, for the reason that Communism is an active, world-wide movement, just as Christianity is also world-wide. The influence of Communism was well expressed some little time ago in a press report on statements by General Smuts of South Africa. He said that what was happening in Asia was creating the gravest situation the world had known for , hundreds of years. He went on to say that Asia contained two-thirds of the human race and was developing a new nationalism, because for over a century the people of Asia were led by European men, capital, energy and organising power, but now Europeans were being dismissed. General Smuts concluded by saying that what was happening in the West (in the disagreement over the German and other problems) was in comparison very small.

These statements, from a world leader, show that Communism is considered a power of no mean proportions, and it is really engaging the attention of the statesmen of our day in every land.

However, not only the world's statesmen are concerned about the advance of Communism, as was revealed recently in a press statement from Rome. It stated that an important change in the Vatican policy towards closer collaboration of the Roman Catholic Church with other non-Catholic Christian churches was forecast, and mentioned that since 1325 a canon law has banned Catholics from taking part in religious discussions or conferences with non-Catholics. However, the Vatican, it was added, was now aiming at the establishment of a strong, united Christian front to pave the way for future collaboration in the fight against Communism.

Inasmuch as the heads of the Protestant churches are mainly in agreement with the Vatican on this matter, thus the leaders of both church and state are united in their determination to use all possible means to prevent the spread of Communism throughout the world.

The meaning of the word "Communism" is also of interest. Webster's Dictionary gives it as follows—"A scheme of equalising the social conditions of life; specifically, a scheme which contemplates the abolition of inequalities in the possession of property, as by distributing all wealth equally to all, or by holding all wealth in common for the equal use and advantage of all." Now, this definition is not really terrifying, but whether Communism, as practiced today, is administered along these lines, by imperfect men, is quite another matter. However, our purpose is to determine, from the Bible, if what is now called Communism is really a danger to Christianity.

The dictionary meaning of the word “Christianity” is—”The religion of Christians; the system of doctrine and precepts taught by Christ.” Passing to the words of Christ Himself, we read—”I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which bath sent me.” And again—”My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.” (John 5:30; 7:16.) These verses help us to see that the teachings of Christ were truly from the Heavenly Father, and that is a most important point in connection with our subject.

From the inspired Apostle Peter we have a most significant record respecting the sacrifice of Christ in the Plan of God. He states—”Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conduct received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” (1 Pet. 1:18-20.) Also from the Revelator we have the testimony that our Lord was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. 13:8.)

The Apostle Paul revealed a further striking truth in respect of the Church, the Bride of Christ, when he declared—”Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he bath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” (Eph. 1:3, 4.)

Further, our Lord Himself, in one of His parables, referring to the earthly inheritance of all the obedient of the world of mankind at the close of the Millennial Age, stated—”Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25:34.)

To summarise, it will be seen in God’s plan, firstly, that Christ, as the Redeemer of mankind, was “foreordained before the foundation of the world,” and the Lamb slain “from the foundation of the world”; secondly, that the Church was chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world”; and thirdly, that the earthly kingdom was prepared for the world of mankind “from the foundation of the world.” In view of these truths, who can doubt that God’s plan of the ages was arranged and ordered “from the beginning of the world.”? (Acts 15:18.)

God’s Old Testament prophets also gave testimony in harmony with the records of the New Testament. Isaiah, under the influence of the spirit of God, declared—”The Lord of hosts bath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? . . . So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isa. 14:24, 27; 55:11.)

The Apostle James adds confirmation to the surety of God’s purposes being accomplished, when he stated—

”Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” What a great help it is to know that God’s plan of the ages, formulated before the foundation of this world, has the assurance of God’s promises that it cannot fail, but will be fulfilled in His own good time. Viewed from this standpoint, it will be seen that the principles of Christianity are really based on God’s eternity.

Casting our thoughts back to the time of the first advent of Christ, we are informed, that, “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Gal. 4:4, 5.) The point of particular

interest is, “When the fulness of time was come”; in other words, at the appropriate time, in harmony with all the features of His great plan, God sent forth Jesus into the world to be the Redeemer.

The absolute control over our Lord’s life on earth is also revealed in His answer to Pilate, as His sacrificial life was nearing completion. We read, “Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.” (John 19:10, 11.) Power was permitted against Christ, in accord with His mission to this earth, and following His crucifixion, it is recorded—”Behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. . . . Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.” (Matt. 27:51, 54.) No doubt these manifestations from heaven have had a marked effect upon all who have been able to view them in the same manner as did the centurion—as convincing evidence that Jesus was the Saviour of the world, and that His sacrifice in death was an all-important part of God’s plan of the ages.

The disciples did not have long to wait for further outstanding evidence of God’s power on behalf of Jesus, who had willingly laid down His life on behalf of humanity. The account given in Matthew’s Gospel is most enlightening—”In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven; and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. . . . And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word. . . . Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. . . . And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. 28:1, 2, 4-8, 16, 18.)

The words of our risen Lord—”All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,”—are most significant in relation to our subject. Likewise is the statement of St. Peter’s with reference to the elect class of this Gospel Age, whose inheritance, he states, is reserved in heaven for all “who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Pet. 1:2-5.) The assurance, also from St. Paul, that since our Lord “gave himself for our sins” and was highly exalted to God’s right hand, and will “deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father,” (Gal. 1:4) adds weight to the abundant testimony that nothing can hinder the accomplishment of all God’s purposes.

Thus, all power in heaven and in earth is invested in Christ; the members of the Church are “kept by the power of God,” and shall be “delivered from this present evil world,” culminating in the heavenly inheritance being gained, as promised in the words of Jesus—”Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (Matt. 13:43.)

The assurance also that, at Christ’s second advent, His Kingdom on earth shall accomplish the “restitution of all things,” is substantiated “by the mouth of all God’s holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:20-25.) Isaiah, as one of the numerous, holy prophets of God, gives many graphic pictures of the wonderful restoration which will be accomplished throughout the earth, under the administration of Christ and His Church from above, and the ancient worthies, raised from the dead, as “princes in all the earth” directing affairs on earth for the benefit of all who will obey the laws of that Kingdom. (See Isa. 2:1-4; 11:1-9; 35, etc.) Truly “they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the deep,” when “the ransomed of the Lord (all

mankind) shall return (from death), and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

St. Paul agreed with St. Peter and all God’s holy prophets respecting the restitution of all things, in the Kingdom of Christ, when, in other words, he declared, that “God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained (the man Christ Jesus) ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31.) From the Revelator we have, also, an all-comprehensive picture of the exalted Kingdom of God, showing the harmony between the heavenly and earthly phases of the kingdom, in the vision presented in the fifth chapter—”And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev. 5:11-13.)

In view of the sure testimony of the Scriptures, respecting the outworking of God’s plan which was formulated before the foundation of the world, what power on earth, however great, could be a danger to Christianity? There is absolutely none! Well might men seek to stop the rotating of the globe. The leader of Nazi Germany, Hitler, declared in 1939, that he would change conditions in the earth for a thousand years. He lasted about five years and in the resurrection will be required to bend the knee to the laws of Christ’s Kingdom, or be destroyed from among the people, in the second death, from which there will be no resurrection. (Acts 3:23.) The same will be true of the leaders of all nations, including the leaders in Communism—those who have died, and those still living.

It does us all good to meditate upon the words of the Psalmist, where he says—”When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou has ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psa. 8:3, 4.) Yes, indeed! What is man that thou art mindful of him? What

condescension is shown on the part of our Heavenly Father that He is so mindful of mankind as a whole! Whether in the United Nations Organisation, the Atlantic Pact countries, or behind the Iron Curtain, if only the leaders of nations to-day could be brought to the point of realising their own insignificance in the sight of God, how much better it would be for the world of mankind.

. At the time of the crucifixion of Christ we have recorded an instance of insignificant, fallen men, using such boasting and blasphemous words at the time of our Lord’s agony on the cross—”And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” (Matt. 27:39-42.) And in the 2nd Psalm we have a prophetic picture of similar opposition to God and His anointed, in the setting up of Christ’s kingdom on earth, at the end of this Gospel Age, the time in which we are now living—”The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed.” However, the outcome is shown—”He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king (Christ) upon my holy hill of Zion.” (Psa. 2:2, 4-6.) Yes, the Kingdom of Christ shall be established, all the opposition of the world’s greatest leaders cannot hinder, nor interfere in the slightest with the progress of God’s predetermined plan for the ultimate blessing of all the obedient of the human family.

Is it asked, then, Is Communism not a danger at all in the world? We answer, that there are some systems in this “present evil world” to which Communism may be a very real danger. All systems of men, comprising the religious, political, financial and social elements, must be removed from the earth, to make way for the Kingdom of Christ, and it is very likely that Communism, as we have it to-day, may assist to that end. Let it be understood, however, from the Word of God, that Communism itself, as formulated by imperfect men, will also be removed from the earth in the great time of trouble it may help to produce. (Zeph. 3:8, 9.)

Some people have hopes that Communism will survive; other have hopes that Britain may survive, but no nation or system of men can survive this great shaking time for “the removing of those things that may be shaken, as of things that are made (man made), that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” (Heb. 12:26, 27. See also Dan. 2:44, 45; Mal. 4:1, etc.) Our Lord Jesus, re-referring to the same time in symbolic language, declared—“Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.” (Luke 21:33.) The “heaven” pictures the religious systems of Christendom, mother and daughter ‘systems, which St. Peter says, “shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” The “earth” represents the political, financial and social order of things, which is to be symbolically “burned up.” (2 Pet. 3:10.) The removal of “heaven and earth” is therefore necessary, so that the “new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” may function for the blessing of all the families of the earth. (2 Pet. 2:13.)

While, then, Communism, Churchianity, etc., will pass forever from the earth, Christianity will be in no danger at all, because it is based on righteousness and contains the laws of God by which all beings, obedient thereto, may live forever. By our Lord using His “all power in heaven and in earth,” and reigning till He has put all enemies under His feet, the Kingdom will then be handed over to God, a Kingdom of perfect beings both in heaven and earth, to God’s praise. (1 Cor. 15:24, 25; Eph. 1:10.) “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

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The Talents.

Matt. 25 :14-30.

AS seen in the preceding parable, even the arrival of our Lord at His second advent would prove to be a testing time among those who were looking for Him. This parable shows that the first work in which Christ will then engage will be in connection with believers, inspecting their condition and progress and rewarding them according to their faithfulness respecting their talents and opportunities.

The man travelling into a far country is identical with the “young nobleman” of Luke 19:12, and represents the Lord, who ascended to the right hand of the Father until He would come again to claim His Bride, the Church, and exalt her to reign with Him. “Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:20, 21.) The “long journey” intimates that the interval between these two events would be a long period of time.

Every Christian has been entrusted with certain talents, an account of the use of which the Lord will, in due time, require. The position in the kingdom depends upon faithfulness. If James and John were to occupy the chief places next to the Lord, then they must be “baptised with His baptism and drink of His cup” of suffering.

In the parable but three illustrations are given: one man receives five talents, another two, and another one. These talents would represent such things as the opportunity of entering the race for the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus”—health, time, money, ability to speak, or sing, or other means of serving the Lord, His cause and His people. Then the Apostle says, “A measure of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” We must use all our talents for the Lord as good stewards in His service and for our own spiritual progress.

When we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ we were “justified by faith,” and were then in a position to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God. (Rom. 12:1.) We there devoted ourselves entirely to God, all we are, all we have or hope to have. The Lord accepts the offering but leaves us in possession of such talents (circumstances, etc.) as we have; not, however, to be used according to our own will, but as good stewards of God’s gifts, to make the most of such health, time, money, business ability, etc., to God’s glory, in His service, and for our own growth in grace and character building.

According to the use of our talents is the reward in the Kingdom.

The same commendation is to the one who only having two talents had faithfully used them, as to the one who had been faithful with five talents,—“Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter into the joys of thy Lord.”

The man who hid his talent illustrates those who, having received the opportunity of running the Christian way, do not appreciate the privilege of sacrifice in the cause of Christ. Hiding his talent in the earth seems to indicate that he loved the world and the things of the world, socialities and pleasures of this life. He sought to save his life and thus lost it. “He that loses his life for My sake shall save it.” This man lost all the privilege he had had. “Take the talent from him and give it to him that hath ten talents.” “Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” That is, that such an one has the light of truth taken from him and he goes into the outer darkness, losing even the justification which he had by faith, he becomes an outsider, an unbeliever, in sorrow realising how great reward he has missed.

It is when the Lord's work of rewarding His saints is complete and thus all His joint-heirs in His kingdom are selected and initiated in their respective positions in glory that the great work in connection with the world of mankind will begin, as illustrated in the next parable.

“Take my life, and may it be,
Lord, acceptable to Thee:
Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet and let them be
Swift on errands, Lord, for Thee;
Take my voice, and let it bring
Honour always to my King.

Take my lips and let them be
Moved with messages from Thee;
Take my silver and my gold;
Nothing, Lord, would I withhold.

Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in constant praise;
Take my intellect and use;
Every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is thine own;
Thus in me Thyself enthrone.

Take my love, my God; I pour
At thy feet its treasure-store:
Take myself—I wish to be
Ever, only, all for Thee.”

FR.H.

Building a Disposition.

“Well, I do hope that when I reach the age when I have to be taken care of, I shall be willing to let other people have their way instead of insisting upon my own and making it hard for everybody else,” said a clear, decided voice as three women parted at the street corner.

They had been discussing the troubles of an acquaintance. As the speaker departed, the other two looked at each other with a significant smile. This friend of theirs was one who had great faith in her own wisdom.

“I am afraid that virtue does not develop suddenly,” remarked one. “I suspect that the person who is to be gentle and unselfishly considerate in old age has to begin to cultivate that spirit much further back.”

That is the story of so many of our failures to attain our ideals. We do not begin to practice their graces early enough. The strong, self-controlled, useful manhood or womanhood does not grow naturally from a careless, self-indulged youth, and the beautiful old age that is a benediction is not likely to spring from the hasty, domineering spirit that has been allowed to rule middle life.

Character is a garden whose gracious flowering calls for early planting.

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Lest Ye Be Wearied

(Continued from June issue.)

THERE is one other characteristic in reference to this important matter, and we notice it very prominently in the life of our Lord; it is one which we, too, must possess if we would be pleasing to Him. We refer to the grace of humility. Both by His words and by His example our Lord taught us we should cultivate carefully this humility. Our Lord assured His disciples that unless they became humble as little children, they would in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He also set an example of humble service when he stooped to wash the feet of the disciples. Let us carefully follow His example in this respect too. Let us not make the mistake of seeking praise from those around us, but rather seek to please God, humble ourselves under His mighty hand, and He will exalt us in due time. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," this mind of humility. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but let each esteem other better than themselves." (Phil. 2:3.) Let us see in others something which is better than what we have, and to appreciate our brethren in this way. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The Apostle goes on to show what this disposition was—it was that of humility. Christ did not aspire to be like God, He did not meditate a usurpation, but made Himself of no reputation and took the form of a servant under the Law, and became obedient unto death. Made in the likeness of men, He humbled Himself that He might become obedient unto death. "Therefore God has highly exalted Him." So the Apostle goes on to say in Phil. 2:12, 13, "Wherefore, ye beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

When men aspire to be something in the world, they think of getting higher and higher, believing better things to be at the top. With the Christian, it seems to be reversed. We find the better things are right down, and as we humble ourselves and become lower in our own estimation, and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, we find we have the better things. God's best things are found in the lowly places. So let us aspire to be great in the Lord's way, that is by keeping ourselves under His mighty hand.

We have the beautiful words of the faithful prophet Jeremiah (9:23. 24)—"Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Then Paul, when he would reprove the ambitious spirit of the Corinthians, their glorying in worldly learning and wisdom, says (1 Cor. 1:20)—"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" The cross of Christ is the only thing that can be gloried in. Things highly esteemed among men are wisdom, power and riches. But this is not the wisdom that cometh down from above, nor the power of godliness, nor the true, heavenly riches. Men of the world have not learned the value of this, and therefore spend their strength for nought, and labour for that which satisfieth not. "The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Faith that lays hold on the might of the Lord is the beginning of power, and the poverty that freely surrenders all things to the will and service of God is the beginning of true riches.

Worldly wisdom tends to self-exaltation and pride. Riches among those who have not learned from God the responsibility of stewardship tend only to render the soul impervious to the inspired sentiments of love and brotherly kindness. The man who by dint of labour and strife succeeds in obtaining one or more

earthly prizes generally considers himself a wise man; but he does not realise how unsatisfactory and transient they are, what snares are in them, nor how great is the value of the heavenly treasure he has missed while grasping for the fleeting earthly things. To the worldly, who have never known the treasures of Divine grace, these things are of paramount importance, but to the child of God they only increase the responsibilities of his stewardship, for they are not his but the Lord's, all being included in his consecration. Whatever he has in learning, education, must be held in subservience to the will of God. No human theories may be entertained. A "Thus saith the Lord" must be the end of all controversy when human reasonings come in conflict with Divine wisdom, for the wisdom of this world that would raise itself in opposition to the heavenly wisdom is foolishness with God, and will later on be brought to the most ignominious humiliation.

So with human might, it shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. The heaped riches shall be scattered to the wind. What folly it is for anyone who has been enlightened by the truth and made a child and heir of God, to forget the importance and value of the heavenly treasure, and turn to minding earthly things! Let it not be so with us. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." "This is life eternal," said Jesus, "that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." This is the knowledge that does not puff up, the wisdom that cometh from above. The beginning of this wisdom is indeed in the Lord, and we must grow in it by growth in reverence of the Lord. If in any degree we cease to reverence supremely His Word and seek to cultivate His graces by communion and prayer and study of the Word, meditation upon His glorious character and teachings, to the extent of our neglect we fail to realise the blessings that come from above. But if in the use of these privileges we open our hearts to receive all that Divine grace has intended for us, then indeed we may glory in the Lord. "Let such an one glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me."

To "know the Lord" is not merely to know something of His works and ways, but by intimate fellowship and communion and in living faith to have the seal of His Word upon our hearts—that which makes us realise that His promises are ours personally, that the Lord Himself is our Friend, our Helper, our Counsellor, our Guide. We thus become acquainted with His spirit, principles, methods of action. We understand Him, in the same way that we understand our friends. We learn to know our friends, so we know what they would do, how they would act under various circumstances. This is the way we learn to know God, how He will act, what He will do. We learn this through His Word, and by our daily experiences in life. We thus become acquainted with Him more and more. We know how to interpret His providences, to note His leadings, to observe His attitude towards us, and thus we can walk with Him. We are led to a fuller appreciation of the Lord's righteousness and loving-kindness, which will in due time establish justice in the earth. We may glory in the Lord personally when we come to understand and know Him.

In this blessed sense of the Divine love and care we may surely say, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord."

"I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth." "O magnify the Lord, and let us exalt His name together." "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is gracious; blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye His saints."

How precious are these experiences of a child of God, which can never be the experiences of a proud heart, for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." It is hard for those who are rich in the wisdom, or power, or wealth of this world, to do this. Our Lord referred to this fact, saying (Matt. 19:24-26)—"Again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then

can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”

How difficult it was for the camel to go through the eye of a needle. Some have interpreted this as being the smaller gate within the larger gate into the city. With great difficulty the camel could be got through the gate, but it must kneel and unload everything, and then it could just get through. This is the picture of how the rich man may enter the kingdom of God. By kneeling down, humbling himself, unloading his wealth, whatever it may be, perhaps intellectual wealth, money or property; but like the rich young ruler, he must be prepared to set his heart on the higher things, otherwise he cannot aspire to membership in this heavenly kingdom class. How hard it was for the Scribes and Pharisees, and for the whole Jewish nation, who were proud of being the seed of Abraham, to whom pertained the promises of God—how hard for the Greeks, proud of their wisdom and intellectual attainments—how hard for the Romans, proud of their power and prestige among the nations. And it is hard to-day for all who have pride in anything. We all have in us something of this pride, and it must be humbled. We may often, even, have a sort of pride in our humility. But God can help us as we humble ourselves under His hand. The Apostle intimates that the greatest struggle is along this line. After pointing to the severe humiliation of the Lord Jesus he says, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

Those who have endeavoured in all sincerity to do so have always found the grace of God sufficient for them; but very few are ever disposed to make the effort. To all the worldly ones, the preaching of the Cross is foolishness, and they have no disposition to take up their cross daily and follow Christ. It is for this reason that not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble, are called to share with our Lord, the glory of His kingdom. They are generally so engrossed with the things of the present life, its pursuits, cares and pleasures that they have no ear for the Lord’s call. They are not humble enough to hear and obey the call and walk the narrow way of self-sacrifice. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, those not noted for worldly wisdom or wealth, to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty. How truly does the power of God operate in the humblest of God’s people! Systems of error, the growth of centuries, do their best to confound, but the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall fail.

Why has God chosen these weak, inferior instruments for His great work? Why doesn’t He employ the eloquent tongues, the ready orators? It is in order that no flesh should glory in His presence. The great work of destroying sin and establishing righteousness is the Lord’s work. No human power is equal to the emergencies of the case, yet God is willing to let instruments be used which can be used without injury to themselves. If God used the proud, they would arrogate to themselves the glory that belongs to God, instead of bringing honour to Him in appreciating the privilege of being humble instruments for the Master’s use. Not only the wealthy and educated, but the poor, may become puffed up. It is sad to see a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, thus deceiving himself, but especially so, when even the rudiments of education in Christlikeness are lacking. We believe that modesty and simplicity should be cultivated by all followers of the Master.

Whatever may be the triumphs of the Truth through us, let us remember we are among the things that “are not.” Let us therefore endeavour to make the Apostle’s experience our own, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to abound, and how to be abased. I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.”

In God’s dealings with His people at all times we can see His care in guarding them against pride and self-sufficiency. If He chose Israel to be His peculiar people, we find them first of all enslaved, then with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm He gathers them to the promised land. Moses, too, the chosen Deliverer, was of humble birth, slow of speech. Paul had his thorn in the flesh, from which the Lord was

not pleased to deliver him. "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." That is, my strength will be more manifest than if the vessel were a perfect and polished one. In that case men would ascribe the greatness of the work to him alone, and by and by presume that as he is only a man, it is only presumption for him to teach other men. But if the power is seen to be of God, then the testimony of the grace of God will be weighty with them; and so it was. To this assurance from the Lord, Paul meekly replied, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The Lord, with unerring wisdom, has always chosen the meek for every great work. Moses was the meekest man in all the earth. Meekness was a characteristic of all the prophets and Ancient Worthies. The Lord Jesus Christ was meek and lowly of heart. Though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor. Of humble birth, laid in a manger, reared in the humble town of Nazareth that He might be called a Nazarene. The Apostles were plain fishermen. The true Church, whose names are written in heaven, have been chosen from the poor of this world, that more and more the power of Christ might be shown through them. Let us, then, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. This is not the time for exaltation, but humiliation and trial. Let our present glory be, that we understand and know the Lord, and that He condescends to make use of these poor, earthen vessels, showing through us the excellency of His power.

Let us try to "Consider Him." Let us keep the character of Christ before us in the days ahead. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Let us consider His faith, His courage, His meekness, His humility, His love. Let us strive that by God's grace we humbly trust Him more.

We all are sometimes lacking in faith. How we need to draw near to God, to exercise our faith and confidence in His great power, and let our eyes look up and consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds.

Question Box.

Question.—There are many words in the Old and New Testaments in italic letters; why is this, and why are there less of these in the Revised Version than the Authorised?

An ewer.—All the words in the Bible printed in italics have been supplied by the translators, and are not found in the original. In translating it is sometimes necessary to supply additional words to convey the sense or proper meaning of the thought expressed by the original. These additions make a considerable difference; some helpful, emphasising the thought, but some the reverse, obscuring the real sense, and giving the thought in the mind of the translator, which was not always the correct one. It has been claimed that the Authorised Version has over 20,000 mistranslations.

The Revised Version was prepared under greater religious liberty, and with the aid of 700 manuscripts compared with only eight (and none of these earlier than the tenth century) when the Authorised Version was prepared. This, no doubt, would help to explain why the Revised Version has fewer italicised words than the Authorised Version.

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