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Paul's Metaphors

ANATOMY: THE BODY

Alan Davidson, N. Ireland

The metaphor of the human body is perhaps the most easily understood. We do not need to go to the East to study it and its features are as up to date today, as in the Greek or Roman culture of Paul's day. The apostle had the inspired skill of teaching the saints through objects they could easily understand. He takes lessons from the human body to develop spiritual truths concerning the head, members, ears, foot, exercise and sickness. In this health conscious age, everyday conversations are often about physical illness. We sympathetically pray for saints who are physically ill but all too often fail to recognize the symptoms of spiritual ailments in ourselves. Many believers have physical problems which form the basis of frequent discussions and sometimes gross exaggeration while we sadly neglect to pray for saints who are spiritually not doing well.

Paul's writings derive illustrations from the anatomy of the body which can be considered in four ways:-

1. DOCTRINALLY – THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY.

CONTROL: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all". Eph 1:22-23. The control, headship, supremacy and unique nearness to Christ in resurrection, are seen in the

relationship of the Body to the Head. This teaches:-

a. Intimacy as we learn His innermost secrets and submit to His will.

b. Intelligence as we enter into His purposes and what He is doing in the present age.

c. Interests as intimately linked to Him now and in His glorious future.

COMPOSITION: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: as we, being many, are one body in Christ" Rom 12:4-5. Although a variety of distinct members yet the body is one, composed of all believers from the moment of salvation, Jew and Gentile, from Pentecost to the Rapture, the most of which are already in Heaven. This is the Great Mystery, purposed from Eternity, purchased at Calvary, preserved in entirety, whose prospect is Glory.

CONSTITUTION: "For as the body is one, and hath many members (constituents), and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body (physical): so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are (present tense) we all baptised into one body" 1 Cor 12:12-13). From Pentecost the Holy Ghost is not **with** His people but **in** His people. At conversion we are regenerated, indwelt, become part of one body, common, once for all. Baptism is the Spirit is never an exhortation in the New Testament, never an experience subsequent to conversion and never an explicit selective experience true of some and not of others.

COMPLETENESS: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him (Christ) in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph 4:15-16.) All God's development with us is to reproduce Christ in us. God never puts less than that

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is a monthly publication that is freely available on the Internet and is intended to be a help to believers who appreciate the timeless truths of God's Word and who recognize the unchanging principles of God's will for His people. It is primarily intended to strengthen those who enjoy fellowship in local assemblies of believers who are gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

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which is perfect before us and never lowers the standard to meet our weaknesses. The working of the various gifts is meant to bring about spiritual development in us. Thus as we grow up in Christ in all things, we aim at that perfection so that it should not be such a big change for us when we do reach Heaven. This is the standard and just as the joints of the body function as a unit and the body grow physically, so by help, dependence and fellowship of each other, we are nourished and develop spiritually.

2) SPIRITUALLY – THE ASSEMBLY IN BODY CHARACTER.

"Now ye are [the] body of Christ, and members in particular" 1 Cor 12:27. This is the Church of God at Corinth, the church local in body character. The unity of the assembled local company as we gather to remember the Lord is seen in the breaking of bread. "*The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread*" 1 Cor 10:16-17. Everyone who partakes of the Lord's Table enters into communion with the other partakers. They form one local body in virtue of their joint participation and this is distinct from the Church which is His Body considered previously.

The apostle takes up the metaphor of the physical body in 1 Cor 12 to show that in the assembly there is:-

i) UNITY: "*The body is one, and hath many members*" 1 Cor 12:12. Under the headship of Christ, the manifestations of the Holy Spirit as seen in the gifts, are to function as the members function in a literal physical body. Each individual member functions in the unity of the body for the benefit of the whole Entity. The foot, the hand, the ear, the eye are all needed as expressing diversity in unity.

ii) VARIETY: "*If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*" 1 Cor 12:17. In the assembly we need ministry to build up, exhortation to stir up, comfort to bind up. Some are marked by shepherd care,

others by generous giving, not all are fitted to visit the sick, yet all are required in the sphere for which they are fitted. The eye may be more easily hurt, the foot may be less prominent, the ear may be less comely, yet they function so that the body may see, move and hear. If one member ceased to function the body is disabled. If a prominent member such as an arm or leg is missing, the body is disabled but some smaller internal organs which are never seen, are absolutely vital to the survival of the body. The assembly is not an organization where everyone has their turn, but a living organism of interdependent members all in subjection to the Head so that there be no schism in the body. Some have professed for a life time, to be working for God and never have learned to work with their brethren.

iii) SOVEREIGNTY: *"But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him"* 1 Cor 12:18). God gives a variety of gifts to further His purposes and He has settled who will do the work. We might have the will and determination to do a certain thing when we are not fitted for, or expected to do it. No one will write with his foot while he still has his hand.

iv) SYMPATHY: *"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it"* 1 Cor 12:26. If a hand is hurt the body is weaker and if a toe is hurt the progress is hindered. So in days of suffering as in days of blessing, there is an expression of love and oneness among the Lord's people that cannot be expressed in the closest relationships of the unsaved.

3) METAPHORICALLY: THE ACTIONS AND AILMENTS OF THE HUMAN BODY.

We are familiar with such expressions as 'seated in Christ'. Paul speaks of 'walking in the Spirit' and we have considered the metaphor in an earlier paper of 'running in the race'. Paul draws many lessons from the actions, activities and ailments of the human body.

"Walk in newness of life" Rom 6:4. Accompanying salvation and water baptism, there must be clear evidence in our daily walk that baptism is not the act of a moment, but the fact of a lifetime. *"Walk becomingly as in the*

day" (Newberry) Rom 13:13. As we wait and watch for the Lord's Return, this imminent event should also have a practical outcome in our walk.

Paul also drew parallels with the ailments of the human body and as he was accompanied on many of his journeys and imprisonments by Luke, the physician and writer, he may have benefited from his company as he uses medical terms in the diagnosis of the spiritual sickness of saints. *"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome (healthy, health giving) words....he is proud, knowing nothing, but sick"* (Newberry) 1 Tim 6:3-4. The symptoms of physical sickness are usually a lack of energy, too weary to work and what was once a pleasure becomes a toil. If we ever feel an increased tendency to miss the meetings, are content to let someone else do the work, not have the same appetite for the Word of God or grow a little irritable with other, it is time to take our own spiritual temperature. These initial tendencies may indicate the start of a more serious complaint or even a threat of an acute heart condition.

Paul found that some saints had a very irritating complaint called "itching ears" 2 Tim 4:3. These ears will want to hear a selective ministry, have a controlled platform, perhaps even a paid pastor or that they will only hear what suits them.

Other patients which Paul had to deal with, suffered from "canker" or gangrene. This ailment usually effects the feet and spreads, developing into a condition of spiritual mortification.

Some ailments leave the patient difficult to nurse; "gender strifes", irritable and quarrelsome; "oppose themselves", cause division and others are of a headstrong mental state, "highminded" 2 Tim 2:23-25.

Paul also wrote to Timothy about those who had a "conscience seared" 1 Tim 4:2. These are very difficult cases to help as they trifle with the truth and depart from the faith.

In this health conscious age, doctors favor preventative treatment and this begins with good food and plenty of exercise. This is also what the apostle prescribed. *"Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine.....exercise thyself rather unto godli-*

ness" 1 Tim 4:6-7.

If medicine is required, Paul had no doubt what should be prescribed; "sound (health giving) doctrine" 1 Tim 1:10; "sound (wholesome) words" 2 Tim 1:13. It is not dangerous to exceed the stated dose of this medicine and if taken and applied, recovery will begin immediately. The ingredients are clearly stated:- "the glorious gospel" 1 Tim 1:11, which will warm the heart of the saints; "the words of our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Tim 6:3, in his earthly ministry; apostolic teaching "heard of me" 2 Tim 1:13; the plain Word of God to "reprove, rebuke, exhort" 2 Tim 4:2; the latter may be bitter to take but will have great beneficial results.

OPPORTUNITY

In the private journal of a lady in New York these words were found after her death: "I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show, let me do it now. Let me not neglect or defer it, for I shall not pass this way again." Our Lord Himself saw the limits of our opportunity with great clearness. We "must work while it is day" (John 9:4). Even the Eternal Christ had only a day in which to work; the very healing of the blind man hastened the night; yet the day was enough; within that little limit was wrought out the salvation of the universe. Our "day" is a section purposely cut out of eternity for us, and it defines the limits in which all our work can be done; a day, short as it is, always equals the business of the day. But there must be intense concentration. "How desperate the case of those we are sent to save, and how short the time in which to save them!" (Spurgeon). It is a "must" charged with infinite power: -- a Divine commission; a desperate need; a priceless service; a lessening band; a hastening night—"We MUST."

For our Lord lifts the limit sharply on the horizon. "*The night cometh, when no man can work.*" The Saviour's own activity was never strained, but it was always full; and when the disciples wondered, He explained that He had so

much to do and so little time in which to do it; for (He said) night comes, when work is over. Jesus thus confirms Solomon's word: "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is NO WORK, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest*" (Eccl. 9:10). There are insects that are born, mature, breed, and die all within twenty-four hours. So

Our little life

Is rounded with a sleep.

As the light was fading on the evening before the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon, pointing towards the setting sun, said: — "What would I not give for Joshua's power, to hold back that sun for two hours!" The old naturalists used to say that no swallows fly so fast as the Norwegian, because their summer is so short.

So the burning heart of it all lies in the fact for all of us that the Lord reveals. "The night is coming." Canon Knox Little says:—"By waning power, by failing health, by weakening memory, you find in some way or other that the finger of God is touching you. The world may not see it; friends may not read it; those who are dear to you may not tell it; but you know it—the witness, whatever it is, is come. It speaks to you in the silence of the night. It wakens with you when you waken in the morning; it travels with you as a settled consciousness, when you are going about the world; it is the whisper of that unrelenting law of unchanging changefulness—"the night is coming."

So one golden maxim irradiates our horizon. "*While we have the opportunity, let us DO GOOD*" (Gal. 6:10). Should we not be very much more tender and more habitually kind in speech and action if we only realized the brevity of our opportunity? "*For this I say, brethren, the time is shortened*" (1 Cor. 7:29). A well-known Christian figure in Norwich said to a friend inside the chapel, where a meeting had been held-- "I am good for another ten years yet"; and as he crossed the threshold, he fell dead. Could anything be more unutterably sad than this – that as a husband once placed a flower carefully and tenderly in the dead hand of his wife, a bystander said, "That is the first flower he ever gave her?" Could anything be

more unutterably pathetic? It was Carlyle's heart-broken cry over his dead wife, after the sad years of estrangement-- "Oh, that I could see her again for five minutes, to tell her that I loved her through it all!"

A little girl approached the lifeless form of her grandfather, and taking his hand in hers she said, "Dear grandpa, you know I was always good to you while you were alive." What a world it is worth to be able to say that! Perhaps few of us, looking back on all we have done and said to loved ones, would not say that the past does not bear thinking about; or would not say, "I should be so glad if I had never said that word, not have taken that line of action, and never done what I did!"

A wife was offered a kiss of reconciliation by her husband at the cottage door, ere he departed for business, after a domestic misunderstanding, and she refused it. At midday he was brought home dead. "O God," cried the heart-broken woman, "if I had only spoken to him as I should have done!" Let the law of kindness be upon our hearts and upon our tongues before it is too late. We are accustomed to heap flowers upon the bier: Mary did not wait till the Savior was dead before she broke the oil upon His feet.

On the fortieth year of his ministry Mr. Cuff preached in Shoreditch Tabernacle from the text on which he had preached his opening sermon forty years before; and there were but five of the old faces in that vast congregation, only five who heard both sermons.

Oh, friends, I pray tonight
 Keep not your kisses for my dead cold
 brow,
 The way is lonely, let me feel them now.
 Think gently of me; I am travel-worn,
 My faltering feet are pierced with many a
 thorn.
 Forgive, O hearts estranged, forgive, I plead;
 When dreamless rest is mine, I shall not
 need
 The tenderness for which I long tonight.

Our opportunity is at least as magnificent as it ever was: if we have run steadily, our influence is greater, our opportunities are more numerous, our circle is wider than it ever was;

and it is possible for all of us to begin seeking the highest and the best: God is as strong as ever; Christ is as fresh as ever; the Holy Ghost is as full of love and the power to impart love as ever He was..

After the last speech Mr. Gladstone ever made in the House of Commons, when the House had emptied, another Member saw the old man go and stand alone behind the Speaker's Chair, and, shading his failing vision as he looked out over the arena of all his battles, he knew that he looked out upon it for the last time: then the old man quietly slipped out of the House for ever. It was the last look. Some year it must be so with us. As we stand today shading our eyes and looking out over the misty unknown, and remembering that there must come a year when we are looking out for the last time; backward also over the life—how it makes us feel the pilgrim spirit, and desire to use wisely the little time in the old home—the old church—the old business; for today, for aught we know, we may be taking the last look. "While we have the opportunity, let us do good;" a whole harvest may be gathered in in the closing weeks: "unto all men"-unto all who come within the circle of our touch.

There are moments quickly passing,
 Opportunities which rise
 Nevermore to cross our pathway
 As we journey to the skies;
 Opportunities, God-given,
 With these precious moments flow,
 Oh if we are watching, waiting,
 We shall seize them as they go.
 There are moments quickly passing,
 Soon our little day is done;
 Soon beyond the far horizon
 Fast will fade the setting sun:
 Let us use these golden moments
 Which the Lord to us doth give,
 Till at length with Him in Heaven
 We the life of lives shall live.

D.P.
 WIS Apr 1943

Attendance at Meetings

C. H. Hinman

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but ex-

horting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

This is a verse of vast importance, and we believe never more so than at the present moment. We are living in a time of great declension, when many are forsaking the assembling of themselves together; therefore it may be well to have it pressed upon the conscience. When the heart is off its center—Christ—and other things have taken His place, we can easily have excuses against going to meetings—against gathering ourselves together. One may say, "Oh, I read my Bible at home"; another, "I am too tired to go to meetings after a day's work", a third, "I am really too busy to go; I have not time," etc.—none of which excuses would have been made when the presence of the Lord was enjoyed.

If God's divinely-appointed way of ministering to the needs of His people is by the assembling of themselves together, depend upon it we shall be great losers if this is neglected. Attending the weekly prayer meeting and Bible reading may often mean a little sacrifice and self-denial, but God will not be our debtor. Time given to Him is not wasted, but, on the contrary, is well spent. Over-anxiety about the business, the farm, or household matters may prevent many attending the week night meetings, and their souls will suffer much in consequence. This yielding to other claims what might be and ought to be given up to the Lord, may prove to be the thin end of the devil's wedge to get souls into bypaths. Believers cannot get on without help, and we cannot afford to miss the helps that God has put in our way.

The apostle Thomas missed seeing Jesus through being absent when the others met, and when told about it he uttered one of the grossest expressions of unbelief to be found in the Word of God. The Lord often comes in with a special manifestation of His presence at the prayer meeting, revealing Himself to our souls, as He did to His disciples in the upper room, so it is well to be there in order to profit by it. Then again, He frequently gives much precious instruction and help at

the Bible-reading, that many of His people miss through not being present. Their absence must grieve Him; it also grieves the few who attend regularly, and it certainly gives the devil a good opportunity of gaining an advantage.

Fellow-believers, seek, if possible, to be always in your place. It will cheer and help others to see you, and it will be a constant source of blessing to yourself. Seek to be a help in the assembly, and in watering others you will yourself get watered. Do not be among the number who turn up on Lord's day morning, and are not seen again till the following Lord's day. Imitate the men of Zebulun, who could "*keep rank and were not of a double heart*" (1 Chron. 12:33), and your good example will have much effect upon others.

May the Lord stir up His people, and cause many more of them to come to the front and become the channel of blessing to others. Any self-denial you may exercise will be richly rewarded, both here and hereafter.

A CARE FOR THE SAINTS

Franklin Ferguson, New Zealand

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the Church at Philippi, he says, "*I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus (Timothy) shortly unto you, that I may also be of good comfort when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally (sincerely) care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's*" (Phil. 2:19-22).

It is not "natural" in the strict sense for any of us to care for the state of our fellow-believers. Yet, through Divine grace, it is possible for some, even in these days, to care so sincerely and genuinely for God's beloved saints, that it will have the appearance of a spontaneous flow from the heart, like the up-flow of an artesian well. Of such it will be blessedly true, "*The hearts of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother*" (Philemon 7, R. V.)

Such was Timothy's care for the saints. For him it seemed as "natural" to "spend and be spent" in seeking the soul-advancement of oth-

ers, as for him to breathe or digest. But this condition can only come in sweet communion with God, and there realizing how precious to Him are the sheep and lambs of God's flock.

There is an urgent call in these last days for such godly and disinterested men. The flock for which the good Shepherd gave His life, is pressingly in need of under-Shepherds of the Timothy character, and of the sort described by the Apostle Peter, who *"will feed the flock of which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away"* (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Often have we sighed before God because of the scarcity of "men" that had *"understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do"* (1 Chron. 12:32). The qualifications for service among saints is stringent, so that one's steps tremble under the responsibility of it. *"He giveth more grace,"* is however, an encouragement to a sincere soul to go on steadily in such needful work.

"A bishop (one who oversees God's flock, and may even follow the calling of a baker, draper, or farmer) then must be blameless (not sinless but without blame) the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous"—and let it be engraved permanently on the mind of all bishops, that which here follows—*"one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"* (1 Tim. 3:2-5). This last clause is a Divine conclusion, and is quite convincing to any instructed mind.

The Personal Example

We are told in Titus 2:7, *"In all things showing thyself a pattern."* We all know the great value of an object lesson for impressing a thing on the mind. "Example is better than precept" is a true saying with a keen home-thrust. A disregard of conscience on so vital a matter as our example, is a shocking state of things. Doth not God

know? Doth He not try the hearts? Will He not compare the public ministry with the manner of life? Hath He lost the *"balances of the sanctuary"* wherein He weighs and estimates with unerring exactitude? Verily, *"the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all His goings"* (Prov. 5:21), But let it also be remembered that He will *"show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him"* (2 Chron. 16:9) .

An experienced laborer writing to us from abroad concerning the care of the sheep, remarked, "the building up of the saints of God is no sinecure" (an office of profit, or honor without duties attached) .. He who would desire the position of an overseer, will not meet with what is easy, pleasant and popular; he must be prepared for suffering, a discouragement, perplexity and misunderstanding. If prepared for this path which true and noble men have trodden, then the Lord hath need of thee!

Besides the service of overseers in well established assemblies, there is the need of wise men with shepherd hearts, set at liberty to visit the little struggling companies of sheep here and there; some hidden away in the backwoods, some nestled on the lower slopes of mountain ranges, some in the up-country townships, some in the heart of great cities—all needing a sympathetic care for their state. To cast in one's lot with the people of God scattered abroad; for them, to live and labor, to cheerfully *"endure all things for the elect's sake"*-this will bring its own special reward in the "crowning day" of which we sing.

In conclusion we would call attention to a verse of Scripture that should be remembered by all who care for the Lord's flock: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch on their flocks by night" (Luke 2: 8). They may, like Jacob, have it to say, *"Thus I was, in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes"* (Gen. 31:40). In this thing let us also keep before us God's servant Moses, who, *"endured, as seeing Him who is invisible,"* and who *"had respect unto the recompense of the reward"* (Heb. 11:6, 27).

The Power of God

Thomas D.W. Muir

God must reveal Himself, His greatness, grace, and glory, or with all our fancied knowledge we must remain in ignorance of Him. How varied are the opinions of men as to His character.

One man speaks of Him as though He were a cruel tyrant, more than willing to crush the creatures of His hand. Like the hard and austere man, who *"gathered where he had not sown"* (Mt. 25:24), they think of Him as exacting from other men what they cannot give.

Another speaks of God as though He were such as themselves, who would wink at sin. And even though He had threatened judgment on account of it, He would fail in the execution. In other words, they think of God as a weakling, unable, and perhaps unwilling, to deal with the rebellion of His creatures.

But those who are the children of God know Him as He is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. *"The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"* (Jn. 1:18). They know His matchless love, His boundless grace, His inflexible righteousness, the exceeding greatness of His power, and rejoice in them all.

Regarding this latter attribute of His character, His power, Scripture is blessedly clear. Shall we note a few of its manifestations?

1. His Power to Judge: *"Fear not them which kill the body, but [have not power] to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Mt. 10:28). Man can put an end to this life, but God cannot only kill the body, but cause both body and soul to miserably perish in hell! This judgment all have deserved, and from it none can deliver himself, or redeem his brother. Neither can any future obedience cause the old debt to be canceled, so that, humanly speaking, our case is hopeless. And--solemn thought for the Christ-rejecter--the One who is ordained to be the Judge is the same One who was despised, rejected, and crucified. To Him the Father has given *"authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man"* (Jn. 5:26-27). But, blessed be God, He is now exercising His power to show grace.

2. His Power to Save: *"The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"* (Mt. 9:6). He still has "power," and the "earth" is still the scene of His gracious activities. The gospel of Christ is still *"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"* (Rom. 1:16). For, while the *"preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness,"* to those who are saved it is the "power of God."

What a mighty change is involved in such an act! Once lost, now found. Once treading the ways of sin and death, now brought to God. Once exposed to wrath, now rejoicing in His great salvation. As the Son of man, He is appointed to be the Judge, but it was the Son of man who came to "seek and save" the lost.

3. His Power to Make Alive: *"Dead in trespasses and sins"* (Eph. 2:1) is man's natural condition. What could be more terrible? Not dying, merely, but dead. Medical aid may reach a dying man, but the physician stands impotent in the presence of death. Nevertheless, the proverb is true that "Man's extremity is God's opportunity," for those who were once dead in sins are quickened by God's power and now have life in Christ.

Thus the apostle prays that the Ephesian saints might know *"what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead"* (Eph. 1:19-20).

In other words, the same almighty power that brought again our Lord from among the dead has now quickened us in Him. *"God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us...hath quickened us together with Christ"* (Eph. 2:4-5).

4. His Power to Keep: *"I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, who gave them Me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are One"* (Jn. 10:28-30). What a place of absolute security!

He has *"begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be*

revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:3-5). The inheritance is being kept for us, and we for the inheritance.

Paradoxical though it may seem, we who are assured of salvation now are being saved, and still hope to be saved. Saved from the penalty of our sins by His atoning death, we are being saved from the enslaving power of sin by His priestly intercession. And we hope to be saved from the very presence of sin in all its humiliating and defiling character at His coming again. Then will our salvation be complete, and we shall enter into our eternal inheritance (see Eph. 5:25-27).

Jude addresses the saints as *"them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ"* (Jude 1, RV). He closes by saying, *"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now and for evermore. Amen"* (Jude 24-25, RV).

5. His Power to Serve: *"Let My people go,"* said the Lord to Pharaoh, *"that they may serve Me"* (Ex. 8:1). That is God's order still: liberty first, then service. And surely God well deserves our best service! But how humbling it is to learn that we have no power to serve Him, except as it is given. *"Without Me ye can do nothing,"* said the Lord. As it is His power that saves and keeps, so it enables us to serve.

Before His ascension, the Lord Jesus told His disciples to wait until they were *"endued with power from on high."* This power they received on Pentecost when they were filled with the Spirit. Later, when Peter and John were surrounded by a curious multitude who had heard of the cure of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, Peter protested: *"Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man walk?"* The power of the risen Christ had enabled them to speak strength into his helpless body.

None were in their labors more abundant, or in blessing to souls more fruitful, than Paul. He makes known the secret of the power he had for his service: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me"* (Phil. 4:13). Again he says, *"When I am weak then*

am I strong." God's grace was sufficient for him, and His strength was made perfect in His servant's weakness. The enemy was puzzled at the power of God's witnesses, but when they, by threats, sought to stop them, they merely drove them to God for fresh grace and more power, which He gave them (see Acts 4:21-33).

6. His Power to Subdue: Sin has created widespread rebellion against God, as well as ruin in God's fair creation. While the Lord Jesus was on earth He went about as a man among men. A mighty Man, a wonderful Man, a gracious Man, a powerful Man He was--His enemies themselves being judges. He went about *"doing good, and healing all those who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him,"* but after all, it was but a slight amelioration of the outward condition in which the world then was. The rebellion was in the heart of man, and that remained.

It is true there were a few who, seeing deeper than the surface, believed on Him, but the mass neither knew Him, nor would they receive Him. A Roman gibbet was their answer to the grace of God in sending His Son. The power of sin and Satan seemed to prevail, but the triumph was only temporary. God has Him at His right hand till His enemies become His footstool. And this result will be brought about not by the civilizing effects of the gospel, as some would tell us, but by the exhibition of His mighty power to *"subdue all things unto Himself"* (Phil. 3:20-21).

The world doesn't know this, but His people do, and are looking for the time of His manifested glory, when He will change their bodies to be like the body of His glory. But that power which He will use in them, He will also later use in the suppression of all evil *"till He has put all His enemies beneath His feet."* To Him shall every knee bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God (Phil. 2:10-11).

Well might we echo then that heavenly song, *"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb forever"* (Rev. 5:13).

This is Not Your Rest

Events of our time remind us of the solemn message God sent to Israel: *"Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction"* (Mic. 2:10). It is true that the words are not an exhortation to God's children to depart out of an ungodly world, but rather the announcement of His immutable purpose to cast them out of the land they had polluted by their iniquities, even as they had cast out others from their homes and possessions. Yet by way of application the language may be addressed to all Christians, reminding them that this polluted world is not their rest.

We read of a Creation rest, which was soon disturbed by the introduction of sin (Gen. 2:2, 3). We read of a Canaan rest, which was soon lost by the unbelief and idolatry of Israel (Josh. 1:13; 22:4). The former rest was never regained, for our Lord Jesus said to the Jews, *"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"* (John 5:17). The latter rest could never be recovered except by the coming of One, of whom Solomon *"the peaceable"* was a type, and of whom Jehovah said to David, *"Behold, a son shall be born unto thee, who shall be a man of rest"* (1 Chron. 22:9). There is a rest He bestows, blessed be His name, even amid the wild distractions and tumults of earth; but it is still true that He says to His followers, *"Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest."*

First, There is a rest He gives. *"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matt. 11:28). It is a rest given, not sold, and it must be received as a gift, or it cannot be received at all. God gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16); the Father gave us another Comforter (John 14:16); Christ gives us eternal life (John 17:8) He gives repentance and remission of sins (Acts 5:31) He gives us everlasting consolation (2 Thess 2:16); He gives Himself (Titus 2:14). All is a gift, and the soul never gets rest until it accepts as true, and true as meeting its own need, the testimony that *"the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Rom. 6:23).

Second, There is a rest found. *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto*

your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:29, 30). The only way to find real and permanent rest is to walk in fellowship with Himself, yoked in loving service, and walking side by side with our Lord, even as He walked. When we can say with Paul, *"The love of Christ constraineth us"* (2 Cor. 5:14); *"To me to live is Christ"* (Phil. 1:21); *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Gal. 6:14), our peace shall be like a river, and grow deeper and wider as it flows on to the boundless sea of God's love.

Third, Rest is the portion of Christ's followers in the midst of service. *"He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile"* (Mark 6:31). He did not send them away from Himself, but said, *"Come,"* going before them and with them into a quiet retreat, where they were undisturbed by the confusions and strifes of men. Often the believer is ready to exclaim with the Psalmist, *"Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest"* (Ps. 4:6) but the Master ministers to him in his discouragement the consolations of the Holy Spirit so that he can truly say, *"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee"* (Ps. 116:7).

Fourth, There is to be a rest from labor soon. *"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them"* (Rev. 14:13). Of the righteous, who are taken away from the evil to come, it is written, *"They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness,"* or as it is in the margin, *"before Him"* (Isa. 57:2); and to Daniel it was said, *"Go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days"* (Dan. 12:13). Job, too, found comfort in the thought of the grave, for *"there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest"* (Job 3:17).

Fifth, There is to be rest from trouble. *"To you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels"* (2 Thess 1:7). *"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward"* (Job 5:7), and especially Christians in a polluted world; but the time is surely coming when it shall be said to the tempted and tried

believers, *"The Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve"* (Isa. 14:3). Like the apostle we may be *"troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair"* (2 Cor. 4:8), because we hear the voice of our unfailing Friend saying to us, *"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest"* (Ex. 33:14); and again He says, *"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me"* (John 14:1)

Sixth, There is to be a glorious rest at His coming. *"In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious"* (Isa. 11:10). Then His people *"shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwelling places, and in quiet resting places"* (Isa. 32:18). Then to the now downtrodden Jerusalem and oppressed Israel will be fulfilled the sweet promise, *"The Lord thy God in the midst of these is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing"* (Zeph. 3:17).

Seventh, There is an everlasting rest that awaits the redeemed. *"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us hasten therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief"* (Heb. 4:9-11). Let us close the year remembering that *"here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come," "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb. 11:10; 13:14). It is a city where all is holy and happy and eternal, and where the ransomed sinner can say with Solomon, *"Now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent"* (1 Kings 5:4).

The Cross was His Own

They borrowed a bed to lay His head
When Christ the Lord came down;
They borrowed the ass in the mountain pass
For Him to ride to town;
But the crown that He wore,
And the Cross that He bore
Were His own.

He borrowed the bread when the crowd He fed
On the grassy mountainside;
He borrowed the dish of broken fish
With which He satisfied;
But the crown that He wore,
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

He borrowed the ship in which to sit
To teach the multitude;
He borrowed the nest in which to rest,
He had never a home so rude
But the crown that He wore,
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

He borrowed a room on the way to the tomb
The Passover Lamb to eat;
They borrowed the cave; for Him a grave;
They borrowed the winding sheet;
But the crown that He wore,
And the cross that He bore
Were His own.

The thorns on His head were worn in my stead,
For me the Savior died;
For guilt of my sin the nails drove in
When Him they crucified;
Though the crown that He wore
And the cross that He bore
Rightly were mine.