

Words of Peace & Truth



**No. 122: May – August 2024
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WORDS OF PEACE & TRUTH

(Esther 9:30; see also Jeremiah 33:6 and Zechariah 8:19)

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Editorial

We are in a world of political change and increasing instability, and we need, as enjoined (1 Timothy 2:1, 2) to pray for all men and for those in authority. God, however, “works all things according to the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11) and we may be confident that, great in wisdom and power, He is moving everything towards the judgment of this present, evil world and the bringing in of a new administration under His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. What grace, that His bride, the church, will be alongside Him in His glory! May the article beginning on page 45 encourage us in this prospect. In the meantime, may the other articles help us in our conduct while we are still here, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus as to His followers: “they are not of the world, as I am not of the world” (John 17:14).

Corrigendum

In WPT No. 121 it was said on page 28 that “the beast and the false prophet ... are taken and cast (not into hell but) into the lake of fire.” The parenthesis should have read “(not into hades but).” In the KJV the word “hell” is used in Revelation 20:14 but the Darby Translation, NKJV and NIV all say “hades.” The latter word, we are told, corresponds to “Sheol” in the Old Testament, meaning the place of departed spirits; while the word “hell” is better reserved for “Gehenna,” the place of final and eternal torment.

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FAITH IN GOD

Reader, have you faith in God? Do you know Him? Is there a link between your soul and Him? Can you trust Him for everything? Are you, at this moment, consciously leaning upon Him – upon His word – upon His arm? Remember, if there is any darkness or hesitation as to this, devotedness is, and must be, out of the question. All steady devotedness rests upon the solid ground of personal faith in the living God. We cannot too strongly insist upon this, in a day of profession as widespread as it is shallow. It will not do to “say” we believe. There is far too much of this, far too much head knowledge and lip profession – far too much of mere surface work. It is easy to say we believe; but as James puts it, “What doth it profit though a man *say* he have faith?” Faith is a divine reality, and not a mere human effort. It is based upon divine revelation and not upon the working of human reason. It connects the soul with God, with a living, mighty link, which nothing can ever snap. It bears the soul above and carries it on in triumph, come what may. There may be failure and confusion, error and evil, coldness and deadness, strife and division, breaking down and turning aside, stumblings and inconsistencies – all manner of things to shake the confidence and stagger the soul; but faith holds on its peaceful, steady way, undaunted and undismayed; it leans on God alone and finds all its springs in Him. Nothing can touch the faithfulness of God, and nothing can shake the confidence of the heart that simply takes God at His word.

And, be it remembered, that faith is, in reality, taking God at His word. It is believing what God says, because He says it. It is taking God’s thoughts in place of our own. “He that believeth hath set to his seal that God is true.” How simple! God has revealed Himself; faith walks in the light of that revelation. God has spoken; faith believes the word. But, if it be asked, “How has God revealed Himself? and where is His voice to be heard?” He has revealed Himself in the face of Jesus Christ; and His voice may be heard in

His word. He has not, blessed be His name, left us in the darkness of night, nor even in the dimness of twilight; He has poured upon us the full flood-tide of His own eternal truth, in order that we may possess all the certainty, all the clearness, all the authority, which a divine revelation can give.

Is it inquired, “How can we know that God has spoken?” We reply, “How can we know the sun is shining?” Surely by the genial influence of his beams. How can we know that the dew has fallen? Surely by its refreshing influence upon the earth, if not by the lustre of its pearly drops. So of the precious word of God. It speaks for itself. Do I want a philosopher to tell me the sun is shining, or the dewdrops falling? Assuredly not. I feel their influence. I own their power. No doubt a philosopher might explain to me the properties of light, and a chemist might instruct me as to the component parts of the dew. They might do all this for me, even though I had been born and reared in a coal-mine, and had never seen either the one or the other. But they could not make me *feel* their influence. So it is, in a divine way, as to the word of God. It makes itself felt – felt in the heart, felt in the conscience, felt in the deep chambers of the soul. True, it is by the power of the Holy Ghost; but, all the while, there is power in the word.

Extracted from “Devotedness: What is it?” by C.H. Mackintosh.

THE SERPENT OF BRASS

Numbers 21

And now in the twenty-second verse of chapter 20 they begin the fourth and last stage of their journey, which occupied about one year or so. Then in the twenty-first chapter we have another outbreak of evil, and the story of the serpent of brass. It is very simple, but I do not think that we learn its truth at the beginning of our Christian pathway. Oh, you say, is it not about the new birth? Well, it is connected with it in John 3, but there is something deeper than

merely meeting the need of a poor sinner. What comes out here is that the flesh is incurable and incorrigible. They murmured, “and the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died” (ver. 6). But then as they turned to the Lord, and owned their sin, He bade Moses make a fiery serpent (*of brass*), and set it upon a pole, and when a bitten man looked upon it he lived (vers. 5-9). There, in type, is the wonderful truth that Christ, who knew no sin, was *made sin*.* It is the spring of a totally new life. Our Lord, in the third chapter of John's Gospel, connects it with eternal life, and I do not doubt that the things that are in figure in this chapter are brought out in the doctrine of John 3 and 4. The first man is incurably bad, cannot be mended, and must go from before God's eye. He must go in death, in judgment, that is the point. That is to say, there is nothing in you or me that will suit God. All that we are must go in death, and there is brought in that which is entirely and absolutely new. It is Christ, as Son of Man, lifted up, in John 3:14, 15, and, as a consequence, through faith in Him, not only new birth,† but eternal life, and in the fourth of John you have the water springing up to eternal life, i.e., life in the power of the Holy Ghost rising to its source – the Father – in worship.

Look again for a moment at the serpent of brass. The thing that did the mischief was the fiery serpent, and what cured them was a look at a fiery serpent. Sin brought in death, and only by death is sin put away. Sin in the flesh is incorrigible, incurable, and ineradicable. What then can be done with it? God tells us: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and

**Note the distinction between Christ bearing our sins, as, for example, in 1 Peter 2:24 and 3:18; and His being made sin (Romans 8:3 and 2 Corinthians 5:21).*

† Not that faith precedes new birth: faith is seeing with the eyes of the heart but “except anyone be born anew he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh*” (Romans 8:3). That is the serpent of brass. What I am, as a man, has been utterly condemned in the cross of Christ, and absolutely set aside from before God in death. It has gone from God’s eye in the death of His blessed Son, an immense thing for the soul to see. Why? Because until this is learned, there is self-confidence, and an endeavour to improve the flesh. Hence, very often, we have to learn by very painful and prolonged practical experience and failure what a poor good-for-nothing thing man is. When I learn the truth of the serpent of brass I find that God has got rid of me, in the cross of His Son, and only Christ remains.

Next you get, “And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it” (21:16, 17). That is in type what the Lord said to the woman at the well, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water ... Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:10-14). What is that? Why, beloved friend, it is the Spirit of God in the bosom of the Christian, in the soul of the believer, now leading your soul up in the enjoyment of eternal life into that which is yours in heaven, although you are still in the wilderness. “Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it.” That is the Spirit of God carrying the heart now into the enjoyment of heavenly things, that really are our own. It is the energy of the Holy Ghost in the Christian. It is not a bit of use for me to tell you to get rid of this thing and that. You will never do it. What we want to know is the unhindered energy of the Holy Ghost. He will occupy us with Christ; He will bring Christ to us, and tell us of Christ. “Gather the people together, and I will give them water.” Oh, how God loves thus to set His people up in the energy and power of the

Holy Ghost.

You do not get the serpent of brass until the close of Israel's wilderness history. It is a long time before we learn that God has set us aside, and aim to set ourselves aside. Oh, what battles and struggles have souls gone through in trying to get rid of the flesh. I see here, with deep relief and thankfulness, that aspect of the death of Christ in which all that I am, as a man in the flesh, is gone, and that I am replaced by the Man of God's heart, the Man out of heaven, the Lord from heaven. And it is He in the energy and power of the Spirit of God that leads the soul on.

Extracted from "Handfuls of Purpose" by Dr. W.T.P. Wolston, published in 1899.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S BAD ALLIANCE

2 Chronicles 18

Jehoshaphat was a good king over the kingdom of Judah. It says in chapter 17 that "Jehovah was with Jehoshaphat, for he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto the Baals; but he sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments, and not after the doings of Israel."

But at the beginning of chapter 18 we read that he "joined affinity with Ahab," the king of Israel. Elsewhere we read that "Ahab did more to provoke Jehovah the God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him" (1 Kings 16:33). It is also recorded of him that "Surely there was none like to Ahab, who did sell himself to do evil in the sight of Jehovah, Jezebel his wife urging him on" (1 Kings 21:25). The Bible clearly shows that God is displeased by mixture. The Israelites were not to sow their vineyards with seed of two sorts, or plough with an ox and an ass together, or wear a garment of mixed material; see Deuteronomy 22:9-11. In the New Testament the apostle Paul enjoins us, "Be not

diversely yoked with unbelievers; for what participation is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship of light with darkness?" etc. (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Of course, the northern ten tribes over which Ahab ruled were part of God's chosen people, as were Benjamin and Judah, who constituted Jehoshaphat's kingdom. Perhaps Jehoshaphat thought that this justified the alliance, but it did not; both Old and New Testaments tell us to depart from evil (Psalm 34:14, 1 Peter 3:11). So today, the corrupted state of Christendom is such that in faithfulness to Christ we have to stand aside from much that is going on.

The form of Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab was a marriage between Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, and Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. We perhaps do not realise the implications of a false alliance when we enter into it. In the case we are considering, it led to the killing of most of Jehoshaphat's family (see 2 Chronicles 21:4 and 22:10) and to the six-year reign of the wicked woman Athaliah over Judah.

Then Jehoshaphat goes to Samaria and, with his entourage, enjoys Ahab's hospitality. Here he enters into a further involvement with the king of Israel – to co-operate with him in fighting against the Syrians. Perhaps he thought that the object – to regain Ramoth-Gilead – was a worthy one. Ramoth-Gilead had been part of the territory occupied by the tribe of Gad but evidently had been conquered by Syria. But the end does not justify the means. Paul rejects the notion, "Let us practise evil things, that good ones may come" (Romans 3:8). Ahab was an evil man, and someone who sought to walk according to God's commandments, as Jehoshaphat did, should not have aligned himself with him, saying "I am as thou, and my people as thy people; and I will be with thee in the war."

Sometimes political, religious or social groups in the world around us propose action with which we may sympathise, but we must ask ourselves the question, can I, as owning the lordship of Christ, co-operate with those who reject His claims? In the world around us “there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is ... one Lord, Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 8:5) and we must act under His direction alone. “And everything, whatever ye may do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by Him” (Colossians 3:17).

But it is to Jehoshaphat’s credit that he asked for a word from God. Who the prophets were that Ahab assembled, we are not told. Four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal had been killed on Mount Carmel but evidently there were others; see 2 Kings 10:19. “A hundred men of Jehovah’s prophets” had been sheltered in a cave by Obadiah (1 Kings 18:13). It is clear, however, that, whatever may have been the allegiance of the four hundred prophets who were assembled, they did not speak the truth. Alas, this is what so often happens today, not only in the secular world who assume to tell us what the future holds, but also in Christendom. God said in Jeremiah’s day, “I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My council, and had caused My people to hear My words, then would they have turned them from their evil way, and from the wickedness of their doings” (Jeremiah 23:21, 22). What a challenge this is for us! Have we stood in ‘God’s council’ before essaying to speak for Him?

It seems, however, that Jehoshaphat felt some disquiet about those prophecies. No doubt as Christians we have all at times felt uneasy about a situation in which we were. As believers, we all “have the unction from the Holy One” (1 John 2:20 and 27), which gives us an inward knowledge as to what is right. So the prophet

Micah is called, despite Ahab bemoaning that “he prophesies no good concerning me, but always evil.” Indeed, he says, “I hate him.” Ahab had already branded Elijah, the man of God, “the troubler of Israel” and “mine enemy” (1 Kings 18:17 and 21:20). How sad, to regard those that bring God’s light and truth to us as troublemakers and enemies, and to hate them; but such is the fallen, human nature – what is called “the flesh” in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus was continually envied, hated and opposed by this in his life here on earth: “they that hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of My head” (Psalm 69:4). Even the believer on the Lord Jesus still has the flesh within him while here on earth; it is opposed to Christ and has to be held in check in the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8).

Micah refuses to follow the line advocated by the messenger and resolves, “As Jehovah liveth, even what my God shall say, that will I declare” (verse 13). How faithful are we in expressing God’s word to others? Let us have the Lord’s example before us; He only spoke what His Father gave Him to say; see John 12:50. Even when invited by a ruler or Pharisee into a house for a meal, he was faithful and true in what he said; see Luke 7:36 and 14:1.

Nevertheless, at first Micah speaks briefly in a similar way to the false prophets, saying what the kings no doubt wanted to hear. Was he timid at this point? This seems doubtful. Perhaps it was appropriate, at least as far as Ahab was concerned, to “answer a fool according to his folly” (Proverbs 26:5) and it does seem that God, through Micah, was testing the kings as to their reaction.

There are in fact four distinct utterances from Micah; see verses 14, 16, 18 and 27 – besides his retort to Zedekiah (verse 24) – and he is truthful and forthright in declaring what God had told him. Oh, for faithful speakers today, who will, under the Lord’s

authority and direction, declare things as they are in God's sight! Another Micah, more than a hundred years later, was able to say, "But truly I am filled with power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and with judgment and with might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8).

We may have some difficulty in understanding what Micah said about God directing a spirit to be "a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets" (verse 21), but we must restrain ourselves from thinking that we can comprehend all that God says and does. He is, infinitely above everyone and everything and shows His complete supremacy by making all things serve His will. So the psalmist says, "The fury of man shall praise Thee" (Psalm 76:10). God over-ruled the wickedness of man in the crucifixion of Christ to fulfil His purposes of blessing; see Acts 2:23. King Nebuchadnezzar was brought to recognise that God "doeth according to His will in the army of the heavens; and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35). The God who declares the end from the beginning (see Isaiah 46:10) had previously declared what the end of the wicked king Ahab would be (see 1 Kings 21:19) and now this grim prophecy must be fulfilled.

All those who faithfully speak God's truth must expect opposition and Micah faces this from both religious and political sources. Zedekiah had made a very bold (but false) prophecy, using what we today would call visual aids (verse 10), and it is small wonder that he is infuriated by Micah's declaration that he was the dupe of a lying spirit. So he smote Micah on the cheek. How solemn is what we read in the prophecy of the other Micah (5:1): "they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." We know that this happened when Jesus stood before the religious authority represented by Annas; see John 18:22.

Then Ahab, king of Israel (that is, the political authority), instead of accepting God's word, has Micah committed to prison. How often this has happened in human history, that where the message is disliked (albeit true), action is taken against the messenger. This is happening today, when energetic proponents of ungodly and perverted ideas vociferously denounce those who present scriptural truth, and seek to silence them. Above anyone else, the Lord Jesus experienced this. He said, "but now ye seek to kill Me, a Man who has spoken the truth to you" (John 8:40). Eventually their intention was carried out by persuading Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. Thus our Lord also suffered from both the religious and the political authorities. He had previously told His disciples, "If the world hate you, know that it has hated Me before you ... if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 16:18-20).

The prophetic warnings were, however, ignored, "and the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-Gilead" (verse 28). What a serious thing it is to ignore the word of God! – an affront to Him and harmful to us. Many times do we read in Jeremiah's prophecy God saying to, or about, His people, "ye [or they] have not hearkened unto Me," and we know what judgments fell upon them as a consequence.

It seems that, going himself in disguise and encouraging Jehoshaphat to wear his royal robes, Ahab intended to deflect attacks from himself to the king of Judah. He evidently had little respect to the brotherly covenant. But God in His mercy protected the good man: "Jehoshaphat cried out, and Jehovah helped him" (verse 31). We should not put ourselves in wrong positions – "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Luke 4:12) – but God is ready to answer our cries. "In the day when I called Thou answeredst me; Thou didst encourage me with strength in my soul" (Psalm 138:3).

But God will not be thwarted in fulfilling what He has said. Despite Ahab's stratagem, an arrow shot "at a venture" pierced his armour and he was mortally wounded. A happening may appear to be by chance, but the sovereign, almighty God is over everything. So it is today: occurrences that may seem to be random are used by God to fulfil His purpose. Let us fear Him (in the reverential sense) but also confide in Him and the protection He affords His children. "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears towards their supplications; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (1 Peter 3:12, quoting Psalm 34:15, 16). "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of trial, and to keep the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:9).

Based on a Bible reading in Croydon, 12th June 2024.

THE HOLY CITY JERUSALEM

And its Political Influence in the Coming Day.

"Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in [the] Spirit, [and set me] on a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God."

(Revelation 21:9, 10)

THE great political influence in the Future Day will be the Holy City, Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb. With this thought in view, I would like, with God's help, to bring before you the striking correspondence between the Church, as here set forth in the symbol of the Holy City, and Christ Himself, the Lamb, whose Bride she is.

CHRIST WAS BOTH INCLUSIVE AND EXCLUSIVE. He was inclusive, for He embraced everything that is blessed and beautiful. Nothing whatever was wanting in Christ that God could delight in, and which He would have man to be. The world could never produce a man like Christ.

CHRIST WAS EVERYTHING AND HAD EVERYTHING. Every moral grace and good was there, nothing was lacking. He fully expressed God and what was of God. The more the disciples listened to Him, the more they were amazed to find how blessed He was. Each day He seemed to be more wonderful than the day before. In Him God Himself was “manifested in flesh.” Christ was the embodiment of all the good and of all the grace that is in the heart of God for man, and all that good was perfectly expressed in *Man*. He was entirely of God, the heavenly Man, the Man out of heaven.

On the other hand, CHRIST WAS THE MOST EXCLUSIVE MAN THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN. He excluded everything that was of the world. He would have none of its thoughts and ideas, and none of its ways. The world can never boast that they *made* that Man. And indeed the world has never made a man for God, nor can it do. Whatever we have learnt from the world we have to unlearn when we come to Christ, and learn of Him. His thoughts were in direct opposition to the thoughts of the world. The world never educated Christ. He brought all that marked Him from heaven, from God, Who was the true spring of all His precious thoughts and His blessed ways. He was absolutely exclusive of all that is in the world – whether it was the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eye, or the pride of life. He was exclusive of its pride and self-importance, its ambition and its vanity. He would have nothing of its evil, nothing of its lying and deceiving character, nothing of its hatred, nothing of its lust. He had nothing to say to (*nothing in common with – Ed.*) its violence nor to its corruption. He was the very opposite of all that the world is. Who was ever so gentle as Christ? Who so full of love and grace? Who so meek and lowly? Who so dependent and confident in God? Who so faithful? Who so righteous and true? In every way He was the delight and pleasure of God, inclusive of all that is of God, but exclusive

of all else. He was essentially the Holy One and the True, righteous in the midst of unrighteousness, godly in the midst of godlessness.

Naturally we do not like the idea of exclusiveness. But Christ was also *inclusive*, inclusive of all that is truly beautiful, of everything that has real value and worth, and He distributed liberally on every hand. He came into a world of need with grace to meet every bit of it. He had all the sweet light of God to give to man. He never lived to Himself, nor for Himself. He lived to God, and for God. Though greater than all, He came lower than any in order to serve, and to give Himself a ransom for all. He loved to communicate; and with the utmost patience He taught His disciples, and so He does still. All who are truly taught of Him become like Him, and soon will come with Him from heaven, in the character of the Holy City, in order to exercise their holy political influence for the blessing of the whole world.

Now let us consider THE INCLUSIVE CHARACTER OF THE CITY – WHAT SHE IS, AND WHAT SHE HAS. As the Bride of the Lamb, the City corresponds with Christ and is like Him.

And first, JERUSALEM IS A HOLY CITY. This is in striking contrast to the unholy cities of this world, and the politics of today. Christ is “the Holy One,” and therefore it must be a holy City. All who form it are taught to abhor evil, and to follow after holiness. The Holy Spirit is given us that we may be holy, and thus like Christ.

Next, THE CITY IS SEEN “DESCENDING OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD.” The City is heavenly, and its origin is God. This is another feature of Christ. He was the heavenly Man, and He came from God, and “as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:48). What

wonderful influence we should have even now, if every morning we came down, as it were, from heaven, from God, to illuminate men with the light of Christ! The Church did so at the beginning, when all were in the power of the Holy Ghost, and individually we may do so now.

This brings out another thought – **THE CITY HAS THE GLORY OF GOD AND A LIGHT MOST PRECIOUS.** Her light was like “a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Now in chapter 4 the jasper stone is descriptive of Christ, so that the Church has the glory of God and the light of Christ. Christ Himself is the Glory of God, and was so when on earth. He revealed God fully, and God was glorified in Him. Christ was also the light of the world, the great light to lighten every man. Never before had there been such precious light. So the Church will come out of heaven, having the Glory of God and a light most precious. We find too in Ephesians 3:21, there will be glory to God in the Church in Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. The heavenly City then will bring the Glory of God to the nations, and the light of Christ. How sweetly will that light influence the whole world in the coming Day, diffused as it will be through myriads of saints! May we have grace to do so in some measure even now!

Next, we read **THE CITY HAS A GREAT AND HIGH WALL** The wall is for defence, and to keep out evil. It was of jasper, and therefore like unto Christ, and presents that holy nature which repels instantly and with abhorrence everything which is not in accord with Christ. “Whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” It is the saving character of the Divine nature which allows no evil to penetrate. “Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise” (Isaiah 60:18). God has called us to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and this fellowship is to keep

out evil and to protect the interests of Christ down here, and to share in the wonderful privileges and blessings connected with Him. But it necessitates the fellowship of His death, so that we do not live in that to which Christ died. We are thus drawn together away from the world and sin, and by the Holy Ghost are bound together in holy fellowship. Christians need such help in a world opposed to Christ. They are not meant to walk absolutely alone, as if there were no others who love the Lord. We need the help of one another. Now the walls present to my mind that inner work of a defensive and protective character which is wrought in our souls by the Holy Ghost, without which fellowship would only be an empty name. Christ knew nothing whatever of sin; His holy nature was absolutely opposed to it. If then Christ is in us, we have a new nature which is abhorrent of evil and will have nothing to say to it. **THE WALL IS TWELVE TIMES TWELVE CUBITS HIGH.** No sin or evil of any kind can get in, and this wall is now being built in the souls of God's people by the Holy Ghost, and can never be thrown down. **IT IS INSUPERABLE AND IMPREGNABLE.**

The number **TWELVE** in Scripture expresses perfection in service or administration. It occurs **TWELVE TIMES** in the description of the Holy City, if we count the length, breadth and height as separate twelves. Thus the great thought of the City is administration and service in the day to come, when she will distribute all the goodness of God for the benefit of man. **THE CITY HAS TWELVE GATES**, that is **PERFECTION IN ACCESSIBILITY**. No matter from what point you approach the City, you find a gate. It is accessible to all men. No one was ever so easy to approach as Christ was. And He is still. And it should be just as easy to approach us. The Lord teaches His people to put themselves at the service of the poorest and the most needy. None were too lowly or outcast for Christ to serve, and He encourages us to do the same. Often have heavily

burdened souls found out that they could approach Christians when they could approach no one else. How blessed to think we may be accessible to any poor sinner who has a need, and that it is for us to serve them and to tell them of the love of God. We are left here for that very purpose, that we may give to any and every one the sweet light of Christ and bring the Gospel within reach of all men. There were three gates on each of the four sides, that the Gospel might go out to all, and that no one might have to go away because he could not find a gate. In the future day, the City will be within reach of the whole world, and all nations will find easy access into the good of the City and into the blessing of God.

Another thing brought before us is that **AT THE GATES WERE TWELVE ANGELS**. Angels, though now unseen, have a blessed service in guarding the Lord's people. So that we have here **PERFECTION IN PROVIDENTIAL CARE**. Angels were constantly seen in the Jewish dispensation protecting and guarding the saints, rendering some outward assistance to the Lord's earthly people; or (later) opening prison doors And they still serve us though unseen. Hebrews 1:14 says: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" The Lord, too, says of infants: "That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10). We little know how the objects of God's love are cared for in this way. Bombs may fall all round the Lord's people, and yet, perhaps, not one allowed to touch those who are here for the Lord. Angels will have their recognition in the Coming Day. They have for nearly 2,000 years cared for and protected God's people providentially, and they are at the gates in the day of Glory. They will escort the City when it descends from heaven. Though in a somewhat different way, they will serve Christ and those who are Christ's. They will ever be at the bidding of Christ. They "excel in strength" and "do His

commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word (Psalm 103:20).

Further, I would notice that ON THE GATES WERE WRITTEN THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. God can never forget Israel. It is from them that we got our light at the beginning of the Gospel, for the first preachers were all Israelites, and so too the first converts. Also the history of the children of Israel was written for our instruction (*Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11*). Further, there will not only be a wonderful heavenly rule in the Day of Glory, but there will be PERFECTION IN EARTHLY ADMINISTRATION by means of the twelve tribes of Israel, who will occupy the first place on earth, and form twelve great nations. Israel will get its greatness and glory from Christ through the heavenly Jerusalem. They will be the first to get the good and blessing of the Holy City, and they in turn will become a blessing to the nations, and all who bless them will be blessed. They will love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves, and be the centre of blessing on the earth.

Again, THE WALL OF THE CITY HAS TWELVE FOUNDATIONS. Everything at the present moment is unstable. Men's hearts are failing them for fear. Things that seemed perfectly safe are giving way. But the walls of the Holy City are marked by PERFECTION IN STABILITY. Very soon there will be a general shaking of everything. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come" (*Haggai 2:6, 7*). And this means (*Hebrews 12:27*) "the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." Christians receive a king-

dom which cannot be moved. THE CITY CANNOT BE SHAKEN. Christ can never be overthrown, and never has been, great though the failure of our testimony has been. Christ still remains as precious and as faithful as ever to His people, and He is absolutely reliable.

Next, we read that IN THE FOUNDATIONS ARE THE NAMES OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE LAMB. The Lord entrusted the Apostles with the testimony to give to us. He gave them the words which the Father gave Him, and they received them, and they ministered them to us. We get therefore here the thought of PERFECTION IN TESTIMONY. Centuries have gone by, but nothing has been added to the testimony of the Apostles. The Church has been built upon it, upon their presentation of God as revealed in Christ. Nothing can be added to the Gospel which the Lord gave them to preach. The whole light of a Saviour God was preached at the beginning, and nothing has been added to it since the Apostles' days. And it comes out again in the Day of Glory.

Next, we come to the MEASUREMENT OF THE CITY. It is a golden measure that is used, for God only can truly measure things. The measure must be divinely right. And it is the measure of *a man*. The City can never rise to deity; it must keep its true place, and Christ as Man is the only standard of measurement according to God. There can be no exaggeration, no making great what is small, nor making small what is great. We get here PERFECTION IN SYMMETRY. There is nothing which protrudes, nor which offends the eye, for there was nothing uneven in Christ. The City is a perfect cube, and absolutely and entirely the work of God. THE LENGTH, BREADTH, AND HEIGHT ARE EACH TWELVE CHILIADS, or twelve thousand furlongs each way. It is far beyond any other city in measurement. It

surpasses everything. It is God's greatest work, for it is the full setting forth of Christ. It is 1500 miles high*, whereas the wall is only about 250 feet. This shows that the greatest thought is not salvation, nor power to protect itself from evil, for Christ goes far beyond that. So, too, the city expresses a much greater thought than that of the wall. In every direction it measures twelve thousand furlongs, and it sets forth THE PERFECTION OF CHRIST. There Christ is set forth in all His greatness.

Again, THE CITY IS PURE GOLD, LIKE UNTO CLEAR GLASS. Even the street of it is pure gold, as it were transparent glass (*verse 21*). That is, the public highway is marked by Divine righteousness and transparency. It is through and through what Christ was and is. There is no part dark. The saints are made righteous as He is righteous, and “created in righteousness and true holiness” (*Ephesians 4:24*). Nothing less will satisfy the thought of God. Christ, Who “knew no sin,” was “made sin for us,” that we might become “the righteousness of God in Him.” Both publicly and privately, as the street and the inner part of the City indicate, the Church becomes the full expression of the righteousness of God. If the question be asked – How could God put sinners in heaven? the heavenly saints will give the answer, for there will not be a trace of sin about us or in us then, nothing whatever to show that we had ever been sinners. We shall be,

**The author is obviously taking the distance in (English) furlongs (8 to a mile) as in the KJV and NKJV. The Darby and NIV translations adopt stadia (approx. 607 feet), giving a dimension of about 1380 miles. It seems that the cubit was not always exactly the same length and has been variously interpreted as 16-21 inches. The author has adopted a figure towards the top of the range but of course the differences do not affect the points he makes.*

in Christ, the perfect expression of God's righteousness in putting sin away in the sacrifice of Christ, Who was made sin for us. The heavenly company will not be sinners. They will be absolutely abhorrent of sin and perfectly righteous. We shall be entirely like Christ, and a grand proof to the universe of how completely God has put away sin in the death of Christ, and has satisfied all the claims of His righteousness.

I would say again, that great though the wall is, and high, the City is greater and higher still. It is blessed to be saved and to be impregnable against evil, but it is a greater thought that we should be in every respect like Christ and the delight of God. What a wonderful day it will be, when myriads of saints in the image and likeness of Christ reflect His glory for the blessing of the world. At the present moment Christ is but feebly seen in us Christians, but He is seen in no others, for none but true Christians can bring the rays of a living Christ into this dark world. All others speak and act like the world, for they are of the world. Soon the whole world will be filled with His glory.

Next, we find that **THE FOUNDATIONS ARE GARNISHED WITH TWELVE MANNER OF PRECIOUS STONES.** "The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx ; the sixth, sardius ; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl ; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst." Here we have then **PERFECTION IN WHAT IS PRECIOUS AND VALUABLE.** Everything that has moral value and worth is found there, as was the case with Christ Himself, and is still. Nothing whatever was wanting in Him. All grace was there, everything that God could value. There was more value in Him when down here than there was in the whole world put together. He presented everything that is precious in the eye of

God, and that in striking contrast to the world. Babylon, the false Church, is built upon every vile and worthless principle, on selfishness, pride and lust of all kinds, and will fall in one hour when its day of judgment comes. But Jerusalem, the true Church, is founded in everything that is precious, as set forth in Christ, and now in those who are Christ's at least in the measure in which they are like to Him. It will be the most valuable building in the universe, because it will resemble Christ more closely than any other.

Next, we read that THE TWELVE GATES WERE TWELVE PEARLS. "Every several gate was of one pearl." This sets forth PERFECTION OF BEAUTY. At whatever gate you approach the City, you are struck by its amazing beauty. It is unparalleled. There was never such beauty seen in this world before as was seen in Christ. But it needed anointed eyes to see it. In the eyes of the blinded Jews there was "no beauty" that they should desire Him. There was no halo round His head, as is falsely represented in pictures. But there was a moral halo, an indescribable moral beauty which at once marked Him off from every other man. See, for instance, how in contrast to the bitterest hatred round Calvary's cross, the beauty of His spirit shone out in the words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Similar beauty, too, marked the early Christians. The words of Stephen when they were stoning him to death, illustrate this: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." There is a beautiful spirit about Christians who live and walk under the influence of Christ, which at once attracts those who are seeking light. The only approach to the City to get the good and blessing of it, is by means of the gates of pearl, the beautiful testimony of Christ. Christ sold all that He had to buy the Church, the "pearl of great price" (*Matthew 13:46*). Its beauty corresponds with that of Christ Himself.

Here I would notice that **THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB SHALL BE IN IT**. For this City of light and glory will be the seat of the rule and government, when God and the Lamb are universally owned. God could never connect His rule with Babylon, where man must have a name, and which is only a system of confusion and evil. The Holy Jerusalem is the seat of His rule, and the saints will reign with Him for ever and ever. Yea, even now, if we are right, He rules in our hearts; His throne is there. If we submit to His rule now, we shall be trusted with rule and political influence when Christ reigns.

Then, proceeding from the Throne is **THE RIVER**, a pure river of water of life. It presents the **LIVING INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT** flowing far and wide and bringing life wherever it goes. Its source is God and the Lamb, but no one can say how far it flows. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It is found in the City, for all true Christians have the Holy Ghost. It is both now and in that day the Spring and Power of all blessing, and goes out far and wide.

In the midst of the street of the City, and on either side of the river, is **THE TREE OF LIFE WITH TWELVE MANNER OF FRUITS**, yielding fresh fruit every month. The Tree is Christ Himself, and the twelve fruits express **PERFECTION IN DELIGHT**, for Christ knows how both now and also then to minister unceasing fresh delight to those who feed on Him. What was lost through the fall of man is given us in a far higher and more blessed way in Christ. Then **THE LEAVES OF THE TREE** are for **THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS**. It may be we shall be employed in healing the nations, by bringing to them as it were a leaf from the Tree of Life. Oh, that now, instead of hurting one another, we knew more how to heal the wounded with the grace of Christ.

Now let us look at THE EXCLUSIVE SIDE. There are SEVEN THINGS which the City excludes. First, NO TEMPLE is there, no distance, nothing whatever between us and God. It excludes the religion of this world, which puts us at a comparative distance, and would rail off God's people lest they should come too near. But we shall be in His immediate presence, in holy enjoyment of His love, and we may be now. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. Secondly, the City had NO NEED OF THE SUN, NEITHER OF THE MOON, to shine in it. It is exclusive of all created lights. There is no place there for great men, nor for glorying in man. THE LAMB IS THE GREAT LUMINARY there, diffusing the light of the glory of God. And instead of the kings of the earth hating the City, as they will do the false Church, the great whore, Babylon the Great, and destroying it, they bring their glory and honour unto it. The nations, too, greet the welcome influence of the Holy City, and walk in the light of it. Thirdly, "there shall be NO NIGHT THERE." No authority of darkness has sway there. It is all light, there is no dark spot. All there love the light and are light. Therefore THE EXCLUSIVE CITY IS ALWAYS OPEN. "The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day." The gates of a city are shut at *night*, but there is no night there, and so the gates are always open. The more exclusive of evil we are, the more open we shall be for the blessing of man. We must be exclusive, if we would keep the gates always open. Fourthly, NOTHING THAT DEFILETH shall enter there. It is impossible to connect Christ with defilement. The City must be holy, and so free from defilement. Fifthly, NO IDOLATRY has place there, "neither whatsoever worketh abomination." God has had His witnesses against idolatry ever since the days of Abraham and of Babel when, by means of idols, demons got man's heart instead of God. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). Everything that takes the place of God in our hearts is an

idol. But nothing that works idolatry shall enter there. Sixthly, NO LIE IS THERE, nor anything that “maketh a lie.” Satan brought in the lie. Christ was the truth. Nothing false will the Spirit support in those who are Christ’s. All must be true. Lastly, NO CURSE is there, for “there shall be no more. curse.” Sin brought in the curse, but Christ removes it. Christ never taught us to curse, but rather to bless. No people have ever been such a blessing as Christians, and then we shall be the blessing of the nations. What a day that will be for HIS SERVANTS! They have been despised for thousands of years, but then they shall serve Him, and shall see His face, and His Name shall be in their foreheads – not the name of the Beast, but the Name of God and of the Lamb!

Then when the millennium is over, and the new heaven and new earth are made, the Holy City, New Jerusalem, will be the TABERNACLE OF GOD, and God will dwell with men for ever and ever. May we all be fitted now to have our part in it, for His Name's sake!

By H. D’Arcy Champney (1854-1942)

THE WOMAN’S HEAD COVERING

1 Corinthians 11:3-16

It seems that the practice of Christian women covering their heads when prayer is being made was widely observed for hundreds of years. Now, however, it is being widely abandoned, even by many women who previously put on a head covering. Moreover, there have been cases where Christian ladies who felt it right to continue the practice have been asked by a minister or pastor to desist from it! The question must be asked, therefore, does the widespread abandonment come from a better understanding of the relevant passage in the Holy Bible, or is this yet another example of

trends current in the world being reflected in the church of God? It is hoped that the readers of this magazine agree on two things: first, that the Holy Bible (at least in its original languages) is the inspired, inerrant and authoritative word of God, by which everything must be tested; second, that “the whole world lieth in wickedness” (or, “in the wicked one” – 1 John 5:19). As in the Old Testament we read of the children of Israel being warned against falling into the ways of the nations around them, and being disciplined by God when they did, so in the New we are taught the need to be delivered from the world that has rejected Christ and is soon coming under judgment.

Turning to the passage of Scripture noted above, Paul is addressing the position of a woman praying or prophesying. He does not limit the *circumstances* in which they do so; indeed, he does not specifically refer to the saints coming together until the next section, beginning at verse 17. Elsewhere he directs the women not to speak in assembly but to keep silent (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:8-14) but surely they would in spirit be supporting the prayers articulated by the men and, like Hannah, be praying in their hearts (1 Samuel 1:13). Then at home a woman would not only offer her own prayers but also quietly support those offered by her husband. It seems that the daughters of Philip the Evangelist prophesied at home (Acts 21:9). So the question is not of *where* the prayer is made but simply the *activity*, involving communion with God.

Then we should consider the *context* in which the apostle sets the instructions. Of late some have contended that these were given with reference to the culture of the time, but there is not a hint of this in what he actually wrote. It is surely a dangerous practice to interpret Scripture on the basis of alleged or assumed external factors, not mentioned in the passage. On the contrary, Paul tells us

what is the basis for what he directs – *God’s order in creation* (God, Christ, man, woman), which he desires to be visibly displayed.

Christians sometimes worry about what *neighbours* or others might think on entering a church and seeing the women’s heads covered but Paul is concerned about what the *angels* see. Elsewhere he writes about the “principalities and powers in heavenly places” learning from the church (not just when assembled) “the manifold [or all-various] wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:10). Do we think about this? Or are we limited by natural, human thoughts?

Paul does not specify what *form* the covering should take. Some have argued from verse 15 that the woman’s hair is the covering, because many translations (e.g. KJV) say that “her hair is given her for a covering” but in that verse the Greek word means something that wraps around. So in the Darby translation we read: “her long hair is given [to her] in lieu of a veil.” In verses 5-7, however, a different Greek word is used, meaning something put upon the head – this as a sign of the authority she is under (verse 10). Practice over hundreds of years suggests that this distinction was long appreciated and that the confusion is of comparatively recent origin. To claim the hair as the covering is all the more questionable at a time when many women seem to prefer short hair.

There is sometimes a tendency with us to consider some Biblical injunctions as being of greater, and others of less, importance. But the Lord Jesus, in speaking of such differences, said, “these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Matthew 23:23). The Psalmist says: “I regard all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right” (119:128). As believers on the Lord Jesus we are to be “children of obedience.” If I am making up my own mind as to what I shall do as important and what I shall leave aside as unimportant, I am off the ground of obedience

and acting in self-will. Would a right-minded parent, who had given his child, say, three things to do, be satisfied if the latter did two of them but decided that he did not need to do the third? If we have acknowledged Christ as Lord, the decisions must be His, not mine, and His instructions include not only what He Himself said in the course of His ministry on earth (before the church was formed) but also what He has given to the church from the glory through His apostles. Perhaps many take their cue from what is expected at the church which they attend, but we should rather think of what *the Lord* desires from us and our individual responsibility to *Him*.

It has sometimes been claimed that the truth as to God's order in creation is still acknowledged but is now displayed by other means than the woman's head covering. Two questions arise here: firstly, what right have we to decide that the God-given token of the authority under which the woman is can be abandoned in favour of some other sign? Secondly, what other, substitute token is actually displayed today? Someone claimed that a ring can serve the purpose, but it is common nowadays for both a husband and a wife to wear a wedding ring. In any case, the distinction is not simply between husbands and wives but between man and woman.

We are thus driven to the conclusion that the change of practice over recent decades is not due to further light being shed on the Scriptures. Reluctantly, we have to conclude that this is yet another example of the church aligning itself with the world around us, where much is made of the equality of men and women and the truth as to subjection, as taught in the Bible, is largely rejected. It nevertheless remains a principle that God Himself has ordained and which is beautifully displayed in the Lord Jesus Himself. Though ever remaining God in His person, He emptied Himself and took the form of a servant, "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Having assumed manhood, He

would do nothing and say nothing apart from the word of His Father (see John 4:34, 5:19, 6:38 and 12:50). It is not that Christ is in Himself inferior to the Father, but it is a question of the *place* that He has taken. Indeed, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (2:7) we read that He was “made a little lower than the angels for [or, on account of] the suffering of death.” It goes without saying that He is infinitely above angels – indeed He created them (Colossians 1:16) – but angels do not die, yet He took upon Himself a condition in which He could die (Hebrews 2:14). And in the future, when Christ has reigned a thousand years in the world to come and everything has been subdued to Him, “then shall the Son also Himself be subject [or, placed in subjection] unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28). So with man and woman, it is not a question of the latter being inherently inferior to the male, but of the *place* that God has assigned to each. If the principle of subjection has been so beautifully displayed in Christ, why should it be objectionable to us? The passage in 1 Corinthians 11 makes it clear that God desires it to be visibly displayed that man (the male) is the head of the woman, that Christ is the head of the man, and that God is the head of Christ – according to the place that Christ has taken in manhood.

Before leaving His disciples, the Lord Jesus said to them, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love” (ch. 15, v. 10). Sometimes in our day much is made of the love and grace of God (for which we should ever be thankful), while we overlook the need for us to obey the injunctions He has given. The apostle John wrote, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). *G.S.B.*

POETIC PAGE
Nearing Home

Nearing home, yes, one day nearer,
 To our Father's home on high,
And His love is growing dearer
 As the days glide swiftly by.
Sorrow's storm will soon be over;
 Tempests never more will come;
Tents no more will form our cover;
 We shall dwell in peace at home.

“Yet a little while” He's coming!
 We have got His promise sure;
Patience waits, while love is yearning
 For His presence in the air.
Sleeping ones will rise immortal,
 Living, we shall changéd be;
Then caught up through glory's portal,
 We shall all our Saviour see.

“As He is” in all His glory
 His own image we shall bear,
From Himself learn love's sweet story,
 And His throne and kingdom share.
O what bliss! to be thus near Him;
 Satisfied His heart shall be;
Filled with joy beyond all measure,
 When His glorious face we see.

Joseph Pellatt, 21st September 1912.

NOTE

The Editor trusts that the selection and composition of material for this magazine has been undertaken with the Lord's guidance and that the contents are of moral and spiritual value and appropriate to present needs. The only infallible statement of truth, however, is found in the Holy Bible and the reader is, therefore, urged to follow the practice of the Bereans, who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). The Editor is always happy to receive comments and inquiries, and to consider suggested articles for inclusion in future issues.