

SHOWERS UPON THE GRASS

A companion volume to As the Small Rain

by

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CHAPTER FIVE

“THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR”

EYE OF FAITH

Abraham believed God and **“he counted it to him for righteousness”** (Genesis 15:6). By taking God at His word, by believing Him, is the only way that any man can become righteous in God’s sight. Abraham believed that the Lord would keep the covenant which He had made with Him when He said: **“I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”** (Genesis 12:2, 3).

Abraham believed God when He said: **“Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and east ward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever”** (Genesis 13: 14, 15). Believing God, Abraham looked forward with the eye of faith to the fulfillment of God’s promise in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Men today have righteousness imputed to them in the same way that Abraham did—by believing God. Apart from faith no man is righteous in the sight of God, for God tells us that:

- **“All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”** (Isaiah 64:6).
- **“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23).
- **“There is none righteous; no, not one”** (Romans 3:10).

Exactly what is it that I must believe in order to be righteous? This: that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, that apart from Him I cannot please God or know forgiveness of sin, and **“by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified”** (Galatians 2:16). Realizing, then, that I am a sinner, I must trust Him for salvation upon the mercy of God, believing that **“the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sin”** (I John 1:7).

This is the Gospel. This is the good news, that I, a poor sinner, lost and undone, without hope and having no means in myself of becoming acceptable unto God, find redemption from sin in trusting the perfect Son of God as my Saviour, realizing that not upon my merits but upon His sacrifice for me on Calvary depends my salvation, knowing that He who knew no sin was made sin for us **“that we might be made the righteousness of God in him”** (II Corinthians 5:21).

There was a rift tonight—
I saw a grey cloud break and let the light
Shine through—a ray of hope to all the earth;
Long had I waited here; I found it hard to say
“The clouds will drift apart, the darkness melt away
Before the radiance of the night’s new birth.”

When lo! I saw it come—
That promised glow to guide a wayward one;
At last, after long hours of doubt and fear
Came light again, and life, and sweet security,
As though a hidden ray from God’s eternity
Peeped out that I might look and see it there.

So, if I can but wait
I know that God will send it, soon or late—
This break within my life’s grey cloud; His gift
To me one star of perfect love to shine and show
That they who walk by faith are told the way to go,
And after storm will come the blessed rift.

— Ruth M. Gibbs

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LABOR UNION

There is, in a church at Copenhagen, a statue by Thorvaldsen depicting the Lord Jesus Christ extending the invitation, “**Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**” (Matthew 11:28). There is an interesting story in regard to the statue. It is said that when it was first placed in the church, a great art critic came to see it. As he stood before the statue, his face gave evidence of his disappointment in the work and his disapproval of it. A little child standing near said, “Oh, no, you are not looking at it right; you must go close to the statue and kneel and look up.” Taking the advice of the child, the critic knelt at the feet of the marble figure of Christ, and looking up, he caught from that angle a full view of the sculptured features and was entranced by the lifelike beauty and sweetness of the face.

The story may or may not be true, but it illustrates a very important truth. The man who sees Jesus Christ rightly must look upon Him with an humble heart. Humanism approaches Jesus Christ with the attitude that here is a man, the finest development to which our humanity has ever attained. The humanist in the pride of his own intellect cannot, standing with head erect and filled with the pride of a fleshly heart, ever behold Jesus Christ as He is; for though the only perfect man that ever graced the earth, He is so much more than mere man that the humanistic view of Him can never be the full and perfect view.

In accepting the invitation of the Son of God to “**Come unto Me . . .**” we must come as those to whom the invitation is addressed: the weary and the heavy laden, those who are needy and sorrowing and who come in simple, childlike faith, expecting to find the burden lifted and the need met. It is the pure, not the proud in heart, who see God. The most restful position which the soul can know is the kneeling position, for it is bowed thus that the burden can be lifted from our backs.

“Come unto Me, ye weary,
And I will give you rest.”
O blessed voice of Jesus,
Which comes to hearts oppressed!

It tells of benediction,
Of pardon, grace and peace,
Of joy that hath no ending,
Of love which cannot cease.

“**And whosoever cometh,
I will not cast him out.**”
O welcome voice of Jesus,
Which drives away our doubt!

Which calls us, very sinners,
Unworthy though we be
Of love so free and boundless,
To come, dear Lord, to Thee!

— William C. Dix

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A MYSTERIOUS WAY

“There is so much in the Bible that I cannot understand.” How often is this given as an excuse for not accepting Christ as personal Saviour. There may be much in the Bible a man cannot understand, but he can understand all he needs to understand in order to be saved.

- “**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . .**” (Acts 16:31).
- “**If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved**” (Romans 10:9).
- “**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God**” (Ephesians 2:8).

The question is not, Do you understand all the Bible? The question is, Are you willing to obey as much as you can understand? Whenever a man seeks to do God’s will, he will know God’s will.

God is just and will not leave an honest man, who earnestly endeavors to please Him, in doubt as to what he should do. **“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God . . .”** (John 7:17).

After all, understanding is a matter of the head. The desire to please is of the heart. No man can fully understand God. If he could, he would be as wise as God. Men cannot analyze God, though theologians may try. His thoughts and His ways are above and beyond the comprehension of the human mind. But God can be obeyed. God does not demand that men understand all the marvelous grace behind the plan by which He saves a poor lost soul. He invites them to trust that grace. In simple faith and trust, salvation is found. It is not by the brilliance of their intellectual grasp that men please God. He delights rather in a heart which is turned in childlike trust to Him. **“Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”** (Matthew 18:3).

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

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.

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

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

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“IT SHALL BE GIVEN”

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

Asking presupposes the power of giving. No man asks another for something which he knows he is unable to grant. One does not ask riches of a poor man or food of a man who is hungry. No wise man asks a favor of one who is powerless to grant his request. Asking of God, we are making our request to the One who has power **“to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think . . .”** (Ephesians 3:20). The man who rightly asks is the man who asks in faith, believing that God is able to grant and that God is willing to grant.

The matter of prayer goes beyond asking, however. We are told to seek, and promised that in seeking we shall find. God sometimes expects us to seek for the answer to our prayer. We may even say He expects us to help Him to answer it. I have known young men who were studying for the ministry to pray the Lord to send them money to meet the needs of their educational expenses, when they were too lazy to go out and make the effort to raise the money. It is good to ask the Lord to send, but it is better sometimes to pray, “Lord, direct me in my search and send me where I will find the thing which I desire.”

Some folks pray for a deepening of their spiritual life, yet never seek to find deeper spiritual life in earnest communion with the Lord and in study of His Word. Some pray for patience, but never seek the tribulation which worketh patience.

True prayer goes still further. **“To him that knocketh it shall be opened”** (Matthew 7:8), is the promise. Some people are not willing to knock and wait for the door to swing wide. They try to tear it open themselves or break it down. God in His own good time will remove the obstacles. When He is ready the door will open. Perfect prayer harnesses itself to the will of God. Perfect faith waits for the answer to come in His own way at His own time.

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

— Alfred Tennyson

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FEAR OR FAITH

I wonder if you ever noticed in reading the account of the Resurrection of our Lord how much there is of fear and perplexity in the story.

When the women came early on that Easter morning and found angelic visitors instead of Roman guards, an open tomb and an empty sepulcher instead of a sealed burial place, they were so frightened that the angel had to tell them not to be afraid.

At least one woman looked upon the beauty of the garden that Easter morning through the glistening of her tears. In John's narrative we are told that as Mary stood outside that open tomb the wondering angels asked her why she wept, and Jesus Himself when He came and stood before her asked the reason for her tears.

There was certainly perplexity. The Apostle Peter, having heard from the women the angel's announcement of the Resurrection of the Saviour, and having come and seen for himself the empty tomb, went away "**wondering in himself at that which had come to pass.**"

All this fear and grief and uncertainty came because they had failed to understand the plain words of Christ when He had foretold His Resurrection as He had talked to them of His death and burial. Now the time for grief and fear was over. The Lord was risen! The tomb was empty! All had happened just as He had said it would. There was now proof of the fulfillment of His promise—the testimony of the angels and the evidence of the empty tomb, but they could not quite comprehend. Their understanding was dull and their eyes were blind to the truth.

How much sorrow and fear and perplexity we could avoid if we would listen to the Saviour when He speaks! How much unhappiness comes because we fail to take Him literally! How clear and plain is His statement that "**Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life!**" Yet men wander on in the misery and wretchedness and unhappiness of sin because they will not believe in Him. Others of us trust Him as our Saviour and possess the eternal life which is found in Him, and yet go through life failing to enjoy the privileges which are ours as sons of God because we do not take Him at His Word. We worry about our physical needs—food and clothing—because we do not take His promise to provide these things as literal and sure. We are frightened and perplexed by the sudden changes in conditions which face us all. We are disturbed and afraid because we fail to heed His assuring utterance that: "**All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.**" The open tomb rebukes our lack of faith. I wonder that we do not hear the Resurrected Saviour saying to us as He said to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that Easter day: "**Oh, fools, and slow of heart to believe . . .!**"

He dies! the Friend of sinners dies!
Lo! Salem's daughters weep around;
A solemn darkness veils the skies,
A sudden trembling shakes the ground.

Here's love and grief beyond degree:
The Lord of Glory dies for man!
But lo! what sudden joys we see,
Jesus, the dead, revives again!

The rising God forsakes the tomb;
In vain the tomb forbids His rise;
Cherubic legions guard Him home,
And shout Him welcome to the skies.

Break off your tears, ye saints, and tell
How high your great Deliverer reigns;
Sing how He spoiled the hosts of hell,
And led the monster death in chains!

Say, "Live forever, wondrous King!
Born to redeem, and strong to save";
Then ask the monster, "Where's thy sting?"
And. "Where's thy victory, boasting grave?"

— Isaac Watts

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SEED OF FAITH

The Bible encourages man to do good. The man who really loves the Lord will show it by the kindness and goodness of his daily life. The souls of men are not saved by good works. Isaiah says, "**All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.**"

In the sight of a God who is pure and holy, with purity and holiness beyond the comprehension of men, the highest human morality comes far short of the divine standard. "**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.**" Paul states this truth thus: "**By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.**"

Everything about our salvation comes as a divine gift from God. Grace is the unmerited favor which God extends to men. Even the faith by which we lay hold on salvation is a gift from God. It is not of ourselves. There is nothing about being saved which should make a man proud, "**puffed up,**" and boastful. God has made salvation a free gift. It is "**not of works,**" and there can be no reason for human boasting.

To some men God has given great faith. The Bible refers to the measure of faith (Romans 12:3), indicating that to some men has been given more abundantly of this spiritual gift than to others; but to any man who wants to be saved God gives all the faith necessary.

A little faith goes a long way. A pinch no larger than a grain of mustard seed is enough to move mountains (Matthew 17:20), and faith, like a seed which is planted, will grow and increase a thousandfold. No one who ever wanted to believe was denied the gift of faith necessary to believe if he asked for it. The man who by faith has trusted Christ as his personal Saviour will find that God will increase his faith as he exercises it.

A man who came to Jesus with a child to be healed said with tears, “**Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief,**” and the Lord healed his child. He had faith enough to believe Jesus could do it or he would never have come to Him, and, seeing his child healed, his faith in the power of Christ was increased. The sinner who by faith trusts Christ as his Saviour will find his faith increasing as he witnesses the manifestations of Christ’s power in his life.

O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe!

That will not murmur nor complain
Beneath the chastening rod,
But, in the hour of grief or pain,
Will lean upon its God;

A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

— William H. Bathurst

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THE TIMID TOUCH

Jesus Christ never asked any man a question in order that He Himself might acquire information. God’s Son is Himself all wisdom and all knowledge, and as the God who made men, He knows their thoughts and all the workings of their minds. Whenever the Lord Jesus Christ asked a question it was for some purpose touching the person to whom he addressed Himself. Sometimes it was to break down a wall or reticence and to begin a conversation that He might reach the heart of the one to whom He spoke.

Once He was passing through the streets of a city surrounded by a great throng. He suddenly stopped and said: “**Who touched me?**” (Luke 8:45). The disciples, not understanding the reason for the question, wondered at it, and said to Him, “**The multitude throng thee and press thee . . .**” (Luke 8:45).

To them the question seemed almost foolish considering the multitude pressing upon Him from every side. God's Son knew that through the crowd had come a poor, sick woman who with a trembling hand but a heart full of faith had reached out to touch His garment believing that she would be healed thereby. He knew who had touched Him. He knew why He had been touched. There must have been, therefore, a reason for His question.

Possibly someone in that multitude needed to learn a lesson of faith. Here was an opportunity to teach them the power of faith by a living example. But I think there was another reason.

The poor, timid woman who in humility had reached out to touch the hem of His garment and had found healing in the touch was not to be allowed to go away without a personal knowledge of Him who healed.

It was not the garment but the Wearer who gave life and healing. In faith she had touched the fringe of the robe. In love He wanted her to know Him. Her faith had brought her to the Saviour and a miracle of healing had been wrought. The Saviour wished to assure her of His love.

We may not climb the heavenly steeps
To bring the Lord Christ down;
In vain we search the lowest deeps,
For Him no depths can drown.

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present help is He;
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.

Through Him the first fond prayers are said
Our lips of childhood frame;
The last low whispers of our dead
Are burdened with His name.

O Lord and Master of us all,
What'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine!

— John G. Whittier

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REJECTED BLESSING

“**They despised the pleasant land . . .**” (Psalm 106:24).

These words the Psalmist applies to Israel. Having been freed from Egyptian bondage, having been saved from Pharaoh at the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses, they came to the border of Canaan. The spies sent in to look over the land, came back reporting a rich and fertile land, but with high-walled cities inhabited by giants. The Lord had promised to give them the land—to make it theirs forever, but they despised it. That is, they did not want it enough to fight for its possession. Their fear of the giants was stronger than their desire for the land of promise.

How many people fail to realize all the fullness of blessing which God has in store for them because they are unwilling to pay the price or because they are afraid of the giants which must be faced, giants of scorn and ridicule, giants of loneliness and privation—and sometimes the giant of self.

The tribes of Israel despised the pleasant land because they lacked vision to see it as God intended it should be—their land. They saw it as a country held by giants. God saw it as a dwelling place for Israel. They beheld the heathen altars and groves. God saw the Temple of Solomon. Their eyes were upon the walled cities of the Canaanitish nations. God’s were upon a land of twelve united tribes. So we often despise a pleasant thing which God wishes us to possess, because we see it, not as it may become with the victories of the years, but as it looks to us today, frightening and to be avoided.

The root of the whole matter was that Israel lacked faith. The God of Moses and his people had proved Himself powerful enough to overthrow the Canaanites and give Israel the land which He had promised, but their fear was greater than their faith. Perhaps that is all too often our trouble!

There must be thorns amid life’s flowers, you know,
And you and I, wherever we may go,
Can find no bliss that is not mixed with pain,
No path without a cloud. It would be vain
For me to wish that not a single tear
Might dim the gladness that you hold so dear.
I am not wise enough to understand
All that is best for you. The Master’s hand
Must sometimes touch life’s saddest chords to reach
Its sweetest music, and His child to teach
To trust His love, till the long, weeping night
Is all forgotten in the morning light.
Trust, trust Him, then, and thus shall good or ill
Your trustful soul with present blessing fill.
Each loss is truest gain if, day by day,
He fills the place of all He takes away.

— Anonymous

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BEYOND THE HILLS

There are many who claim to be children of God, who call themselves Christians, of whom God must be greatly ashamed. Their lives are full of sin; they are constantly defeated by temptation; they are so in love with the world and the things of the world that they have little time or desire for fellowship with God. That there are some of whom God is not ashamed is very evident from the reading of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. We are told that of some, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others, God was not ashamed; in fact, the sixteenth verse of this chapter says: **“God is not ashamed to be called their God.”**

The reason why they were no cause for shame to their Lord is made clear in the chapter. We are told there that they saw God’s promise afar off; that is, that long before the promise should be fulfilled, they trusted in the promises. In other words, they took God at His Word; they believed Him.

There are many today who do not. They trust the words of men, but hesitate to give full credence to the Word of God. These discussed in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews were convinced by God’s promise. That means that they were so sure that what He had promised He would perform that they brought their whole lives into line with His promise; that is, they accepted God’s Word so fully that they lived in expectation of the fulfillment of His promise. Therefore, their whole lives were different from the lives of their neighbors and those among whom they sojourned.

The same thing is true of the life of a man in our day who is fully convinced that God will do what He has promised to do. He will seek to bring his life into the place where God’s best promises can be fulfilled toward him.

In the third place, God was not ashamed of them because, believing His promise and bringing their lives into line with His will, they greeted them. The word used in the King James Version is **“embraced,”** which means, *“hailed”* or *“greeted.”*

This is the picture: a man on a long journey stops on a hilltop and looks out across the distant valley where he sees the home toward which he is going, nestling on another hillside, and from the distance, though the mists may lie between and make his view shadowy and indistinct, he nonetheless perceives his house, and he lifts his hand to wave a greeting to one who stands on the porch.

So these, believing God’s promise of a heavenly city, were so assured that there was a home prepared, because God had said He would prepare it, that they actually lived as these who see in the distance that toward which they are journeying and who, assured of its reality, wave out a greeting toward it.

God was not ashamed of them, nor is He ashamed of those in our day who have the same faith and confidence and trust in Him.

I love to steal awhile away
From every cumbering care,
And spend the hours of setting day
In humble, grateful prayer.

I love in solitude to shed
The penitential tear,
And all His promises to plead
Where none but God can hear.

I love by faith to take a view
Of brighter scenes in heaven;
The prospect doth my strength renew,
While here by tempests driven.

Thus, when life's toilsome day is o'er,
May its departing ray
Be calm at this impressive hour,
And lead to endless day.

—Phoebe H. Brown

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FAITH BRINGS MIRACLES

How often our Lord Christ performed great miracles quietly, almost in secrecy, and admonished those who beheld them that they should tell no man. So it was when the daughter of Jairus was raised from the dead.

The Lord came into the house where the body of the maiden lay. Oriental mourners, according to custom, filled the house with their cries. When He arrived, Luke tells us, “**He put them all out . . .**” (Luke 8:54), and taking with Him only the mother and father of the maiden and Peter and James and John, He went in and took her by the hand saying: “**Maid, arise,**” and life came again to her.

There are several reasons why the Lord ordered the mourners out.

In the first place, they had no faith, and lack of faith is always a difficulty to be overcome in the performance of a miracle. When He said “**She (the maid) is not dead, but sleepeth,**” they “**laughed Him to scorn.**” God's power is great enough to overcome any obstacle, but our Lord demands faith if He is to work a miracle for men. It need not be much faith. Indeed, on one occasion when asked by our Lord if he believed, a man cried: “**Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief**” (Mark 9:24).

This was poor faith, it was faith enough to believe that God could provide the faith necessary to claim the miraculous, and faith need be only as a grain of mustard seed for God to honor it. Sometimes, as when Lazarus was raised, Jesus Christ permitted the doubters to stand by that God's power might be shown and their doubts rebuked; but the mourners in the house of Jairus were not only doubters, they were scoffers, and the blessed Saviour would not permit them to behold a miracle.

Some things are too sacred for any but the eyes of love. Into the room where the dead maiden lay, the Lord took the three disciples who loved Him and the father and mother who loved their child; and in the presence of these, love which yearned for a miracle and faith which believed it possible, saw before their own eyes how love and faith can be rewarded. How often are the love and faith of father or mother still honored by the miraculous! Many a parent who believes that God can save a child, in his love for the lost son or daughter, lays hold upon God until the miracle is accomplished.

A home where sorrow had ceased to be found was no place for mourners. The shutting out of those who were crying and weeping for a dead child was both a token of joy to come in the Resurrection and a sign of the love of the Saviour who wished the dead girl restored to her parents, not in the midst of the noise of grief, but in the quiet and the friendly surroundings of the peaceful life which she had known.

Faith believed for a miracle, love demanded it and Christ supplied it.

The waves unbuild the wasting shore;
Where mountains towered, the billows sweep,
Yet still their borrowed spoils restore,
And build new empires from the deep.
So while the floods of thought lay waste
The proud domain of priestly creeds,
Its heaven-appointed tides will haste
To plant new homes for human needs.
Be ours to mark with hearts unchilled
The change an outworn church deploras;
The legend sinks, but Faith shall build
A fairer throne on new found shores.

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

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“DAY BY DAY”

When Jesus Christ sent out the twelve disciples, He admonished them to take nothing for the journey—neither money nor scrip nor bread nor extra clothing. There is a sound reason for this, as there is in everything which the Lord did.

These men were sent forth on a special mission—to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

To be burdened with unnecessary possessions would have hindered them in their going. The journeys were to be hard; they were to be made on foot. Often they would enter places of poverty. For them to be weighted down with possessions or with money in their hands would have delayed them and hindered them in their contact with people who were themselves so often, poor.

There can be no greater barrier sometimes than that which wealth raises between its possessor and the one who lacks it. Our Lord did not wish His disciples to be concerned with things, for all too often the possession of something breeds greed for something else. Many a preacher has been lured from his love for lost souls by a growing love for money. As the riches of the world increase, not only do its cares increase, but their demand upon the time and thought and energies of their possessor also increase. These men were to be occupied with preaching, not with acquiring. They were to be busy with the care of sick souls and bodies, not with the care of money and things.

How much of criticism was avoided by our Lord's injunction! Had these men, sent out by the Saviour, accepted payment for preaching or for healing, it would have been said of them, "They did it for money."

While it is true that such criticism has been often unfairly directed against the servants of the Lord, there can be little doubt that the present system of paying the preacher provides a basis upon which even so false a structure of criticism can be erected.

It is equally true that the servant is worthy of his hire. In our modern day, God's ministers must live by their ministry. However, in these early days when the first preachers went out, our Lord intended that their payment should be food and shelter and the meeting of their needs by those who heard them or were healed, and that there should be no accumulation of things beyond the need of each day.

There was also a test of faith for the disciples in our Lord's command. The faith which heals must be the faith which trusts the Giver of the power of healing. If these men were to preach a Word which could transform lives and stretch out a hand to heal sick bodies, they must have hearts which rested upon their Lord, that trusted Him to meet their own needs every day.

While the command may not apply literally to us, and while it is true that it was addressed to the early disciples, perhaps if we took less thought for the morrow, we might find more power in our lives today.

Day by day the manna fell:
O to learn this lesson well.
Still by constant mercy fed,
Give me, Lord, my daily bread.

“Day by day,” the promise reads,
Daily strength for daily needs:
Cast foreboding fears away;
Take the manna of today.

Lord! my times are in Thy hand:
All my sanguine hopes have planned,
To Thy wisdom I resign,
And would make Thy purpose mine.

Thou my daily task shalt give:
Day by day to Thee I live;
So shall added years fulfill,
Not my own, my Father’s will.

— Josiah Conder

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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