

"THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL DESCEND
FROM HEAVEN WITH A SHOUT."

1 THESS. IV. 16.

I was on my way once in a country part to visit a family some distance from where I was staying, and as a farmer brother was taking some young cattle to a distant pasture for the summer, and was going somewhat in the same direction, we went along the way together part of the way, enjoying a little fellowship one with another. All of a sudden we heard a long, distant shout, which was repeated once or twice. We looked round but could see no one, nor could we see any house in the direction the voice came from! But on one of us looking at his watch, we quickly understood what it meant, for it was just about 12 o'clock, noon. And no doubt *the shout* was the call home from some farm house hidden behind the bush between, to some one ploughing in the field, it being dinner-time. This led to a conversation about *another shout*, that is mentioned in the Scripture quoted above. And how, *any moment now*, we who believe in, know as our Saviour, the Blessed Person at God's right hand, we too may be *called home*, by the Lord Himself descending from heaven *with a shout, etc., etc.*, 1 Thess. iv. 16. and this dear farmer brother then told me that many a time when he had been working away in the field ploughing, and he thought it was *near the time*, he had stopt at the end of a furrow and listened to hear

the shout that was to call him home to his mid-day meal and a short rest for himself and his horses. And we both agreed that we Christians should now be just in the same state of expectancy with regard to our blessed Lord's soon descending from heaven *with a shout*, that will call us home, not to a short rest and then turn out again; but to "*go no more out*," but to enjoy "the rest that remaineth for the people of God" for ever. For if Paul in his day could speak of "*knowing the time*," and say then, "the night was far spent and the day was at hand," referring to the return of the Lord Jesus: how very, very much more spent must it be, now that eighteen hundred years and more have rolled away? Yes, dear fellow-believer, dear brother or sister in Christ, *the night is very far spent*. Our Lord is soon, (perhaps before I finish writing, or you finish reading this) coming to take his blood-bought Church, *His own* that are in the world, HOME.

Home to the Father's house in glory, who loves us as He loves Christ. *Home* to the joy and rest of being for ever with and like the Blessed Lord Himself, when we shall see His blessed face who has so loved us, so cared for us, so faithfully kept and sustained and borne with us here. When He will have *His exceeding joy* in having us round Himself and with Himself up there. And we shall have fulness of joy, in being there with Him for ever, and with one another, unhindered by anything within ourselves or around us. No wonder that it is called "*that Blessed hope*," in Titus ii. 13.

To look within and see no stain,
 Abroad no curse to trace,
 To shed no tears, to feel no pain,
 But see Him face to face.

To find each hope of glory gained,
 Fulfilled each precious word,
 And fully all to have attained,
 The image of our Lord.

Reader, how is it with you and with me? Are we pausing at the end of the furrow, so to speak, and listening, yes, even as we go along our daily course listening, expecting to hear *that shout*, "knowing the time?"

Spiritism, (1 Timothy iv); *Formalism*, (2 Tim. iii.) and *Rationalism*, (2 Thess. ii.), together with the general Laodicean spirit, that neither hot nor cold state as to what is due to the Blessed Lord Himself, which characterises the professing church now. *The last state*, described in Revelation iii., before the Church is seen, as in the next two chapters, up in heaven, under the figure of 24 elders, etc., etc. All tell us that we may "*know the time.*" That we are in the very last of the last days: soon to be caught up to meet our Lord in the air, who will "descend from heaven *with a shout*" for us. And then *He* wants us to be looking out for Him, for He said, "Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him immediatelyBlessed are those servants.....Luke xii. May it be thus with you and me, dear reader? May we not plan out hopes or some hope for ourselves

here, that would *put off* the hope of His coming for us till after, as it were, our plans for ourselves here are carried out here.

All right to attend to daily duties if abiding in the calling wherein we were called, "*with God.*"

All *right* according to our gift and the ability God has given us, to be *out in the field* for Christ, labouring among souls, ploughing, sowing, reaping or watering, as the case may be, as God gives us opportunities. But let it be as it was with our dear farmer brother when he was in the field, and when *he knew*, (as we ought to know) *the time* was near for *the shout* to be heard to call him home. For if we have any other hope set before us down here, it matters not what it is, that takes the place of the hope set before us *up there*, we shall not, we cannot be found watching for Him when He comes, but sleeping.

"Let us not sleep as do others, but let us *watch* and be sober."

The Lord grant that it may indeed be so and that there may be a waking up, where there has been a going to sleep. "For the coming of our Lord draweth nigh." "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

SUBSTANCE OF A LETTER.

DEAR BROTHER —

Thank you for yours of the 8th, and I am glad to hear of your getting over your trouble of soul, and getting right with the Lord again. What an

important thing that is, *to be right with the Lord.* And what a dreadful thing the flesh is in us. A constant source of trouble and sorrow if we do not "walk in the Spirit."

But what a comfort that truth is, "Ye are not in the flesh (though it is in us) *but in the Spirit*, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." and to know that God *has condemned sin in the flesh*, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sacrifice for sin, on the cross. *So there can be none for us.* And we may, and ought to count it gone in the death of Christ from before God's eye, *judicially*: and though actually in us as bad as ever, "No more I," but an enemy that must not be consulted, or listened to, or trusted for a moment.

"I am crucified with Christ (I as a man in the flesh or child of Adam), nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me (Christ is become my life), and the life I now live in the flesh (here referring to the body) I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians ii. 20.

Two things I find we but feebly take in. One is, that all our spiritual nourishment and power flows down from Christ Himself, a living risen man, a Person, at God's right hand, to whom we are livingly united by the Holy Ghost, and in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; and the other, that we are the constant unceasing objects of His love and sympathy and care *all the time*, who is the head. "No man ever yet hated his own

flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church, (so we can say, even as the Lord does *us*) for we are members of His body." And I find that I seem to be able to have Him more blessedly and constantly before me when I am bearing in mind that *I am always before Him*, and an object of love and sympathy and interest *to Him*, than when I merely *try* and have Him *before me*, as an object *to me*. For the fact is, that He becomes an object to us and before us that we look to and enjoy, just in proportion as we take in and believe that we are an object to Him unceasingly and constantly, and precious to Him, for "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous."

. . . Yours affectionately in Him,

**"BY THE WORDS OF THY MOUTH HAVE
I KEPT ME FROM THE PATHS OF THE
DESTROYER."**

Jesus, enjoying in His own Person and relationship with God as Son of God, the light of His countenance, goes into the wilderness for forty days to be in conflict with the enemy. He did not go away from man, and from all intercourse with man and the things of man, in order (like Moses and Elias) to be with God. Being already fully with God He is separate from men by the power of the Holy Ghost to be alone in His conflict with the enemy. In the case of Moses, it was man out of his natural condition to be with God. In the case

of Jesus, it is so to be with the enemy: to be with God was His natural position.

The enemy tempts Him first by proposing to Him to satisfy His bodily need, and, instead of waiting on God, to employ according to His own will and on His own behalf the power with which He was endowed. But if Israel was fed in the wilderness with Manna from God, the Son of God, however great His power, would act in accordance with what Israel should have learnt by that means, namely, that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The Man, the obedient Jew, the Son of God, waited for this word, and would do nothing without it. He was not come to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. This is the principle that characterizes the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms. No deliverance is accepted but the intervention of Jehovah at His own good time. His perfect patience, in order to be perfect and complete in all the will of God. There could be no sinful lust in Christ; but to be hungry was no sin, yet it was a human need, and what harm in eating when hungry? There was no will of God to do it, and that will, by the word, He came to do. Satan's suggestion was "if thou be the Son of God, command;" but He had taken the place of a servant, and this was not commanding: he sought to get the Lord out of the place of perfect service and obedience, out of the place of a servant.

And note here the place the written word has,

and the character of Christ's obedience. This character is not simply that the will of God is a rule; it is the one motive for action. We have a will *arrested* often by the word. Not so Christ. His Father's will was His motive; He acted not merely according to, but because it was God's will. We delight to see a child who would run off to something it delights in, stop, and cheerfully do its parent's will when called to do it. But Christ never obeyed thus, never sought a will of His own that was stopped by His Father's.

And we are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. Note further that *the written word* is that by which He lives and by which He overcomes. All depended here on Christ's victory, as all did on Adam's fall. But for Christ, one text (rightly used of course,) suffices. He seeks no other: that is obedience. It suffices for Satan; he has no reply. His wiles are defeated.

The first principle of conquest is simple and absolute obedience, living by words out of God's mouth. The next is perfect confidence in the path of obedience.

In the second place then, the enemy sets Him on a pinnacle of the temple, to induce Him to apply to Himself the promises made to the Messiah without abiding in the ways of God. The faithful man may assuredly reckon on the help of God while walking in His ways. The enemy would have the Son of Man put God to the test (instead of reckoning on Him while walking in His ways) to see whether He

might be trusted in. This would have been a want of confidence in God, not obedience; or pride, presuming on its privileges, instead of counting on God in obedience.

We need confidence, to have courage to obey; but true confidence is found in the path of obedience. Satan could use the word in guile, but not turn Christ the Lord from it. He still uses it as the adequate divine weapon, and Satan still has no reply. To have forbidden obedience would have been to show himself Satan. As regards the place in which the Lord was dispensationally, we may remark the Lord always quotes from Deuteronomy. Taking His place with Israel in the condition they were in when without a king in the land, and, quoting the directions given to them in that book to guide them in the godly path there taught, He uses for His guidance that part of the word which contains the divine injunction on this subject, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" a passage often quoted as if it forbade excess in trusting God, whereas it means to distrust, and try if He is faithful. They tempted God, saying, "Is God indeed among us?" And this Satan would have had the Lord do.

The enemy, failing to deceive that obedient heart, even by hiding himself under the use of the word of God, shews himself in his true character, tempting the Lord (thirdly), to spare Himself all the sufferings that awaited Him, by shewing Him the inheritance of the Son of Man on earth, that which would be His when He had reached it through all

those paths, toilsome, yet necessary to the Father's glory, which the Father had marked out for Him. All should now be His, if He would acknowledge Satan by worshipping him, the God of this world. This in fact was what the kings of the earth had done for only a part of these things, how often done for some trifling vanity! but He should have the whole. But if Jesus was to inherit earthly glory (as well as all other), the object of His heart was God Himself, His Father, to glorify Him. Whatever might be the value of the gift, it was as the gift of the Giver that His heart prized it. Moreover He was in the position of tested man, and a faithful Israelite; and whatever might be the trial of patience into which the sin of the people had brought Him, be the trial ever so great, He would serve none but His God alone.

But if the devil carries temptation, sin, to the utmost, and shews Himself to be the adversary, (Satan) the believer has the right to cast him out. If he comes as a tempter, the believer should answer him by the faithfulness of the word, which is man's perfect guide, according to the will of God. He does not need to see through everything. The word is the word of Him who does, and in following that, we walk according to a wisdom which knows everything, and in a path formed by that wisdom, and which hence involves absolute trust in God.

The first two temptations are the wiles of the devil, the third, open hostility to God. If he comes

as the open adversary of God, the believer has a right to have nothing to do with him. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." He knows he has met Christ, not flesh. May believers *resist* if Satan would tempt them by the world, remembering it is Satau's domain in fallen man.

The believer's safeguard, morally, (that is as to the state of his heart) is a single eye. If I seek only the glory of God, that which presents no other motive than my aggrandizement, or my own gratification, whether of mind or body, will have no hold upon me; and will shew itself in the light of the word, which guides the single eye, as contrary to the mind of God. This is not the haughtiness that rejects temptation on the ground of being good; it is obedience, humbly giving God His place, and consequently His word also. "By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer," from him that did his own will, and made it his guide. If the heart seeks God alone, the most subtle snare is discovered, for the enemy never tempts us to seek God alone. But this supposes a pure heart, and that there is no self-seeking. This was displayed in Jesus.

Our safeguard against temptation is the word, used by the discernment of a perfectly pure heart, which lives in the presence of God, and learns the mind of God in His word, and therefore knows its application to the circumstances presented. It is the word that preserves the soul from the wiles of the enemy.

There must be no other motive for action than the will of God, which for man is always found in the word; because in that case, when Satan tempts us to act, as he always does, by some other motive, this motive is seen to be opposed to the word which is in the heart, and to the motive that governs the heart, and is therefore judged as being opposed to it. It is written, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee." This is the reason why it is so often important when we are in doubt, to ask ourselves by what motive we are influenced. Observe also that, consequently, it is in the spirit of simple and humble obedience that power lies; for where it exists, Satan can do nothing. God is there, and accordingly the enemy is conquered. Satan departs from Him, and the angels come to exercise their ministry towards the Messiah, the Son of Man victorious through obedience. What Satan would have Him try God about, He has fully. They are *ministering* spirits for us also.

"I AM."

Exodus iv. 13.

Next comes the first great initiatory lesson for the soul, with whom God is about to deal with. When Moses would come to Israel, and they would ask him, "What is his name?" "What (said he) shall I say unto them?" "And God said unto Moses, I AM, THAT I AM; and thou shalt say

unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

Now here is the first thing for the soul's acceptance—God is! He is not far off but near. One out of whose presence we cannot escape. One in whose presence we ever are. Do we act on this, beloved friends, as if we believed it? Does the poor fool who says in his heart, "There is no God," believe this? How do his actions speak in reply? Just in this solemn way—that they are performed without reference to God at all!

Who could sin with impunity, consciously in God's presence? Not even the most depraved. He dare not commit his iniquity there. But his life is formed upon the principle that there is no God. He does not say this with his lips, but his heart says it, (and his walk and ways express what is in his heart.) He would love to think that his desire is true, and that when he died he would be as the beasts that perish and cease to be.

But we must return to this initial lesson of the soul. God reveals Himself as the great "I AM," the self-existing God: beside whom there is none. Let us act according to this revelation, and act always so as to prove that we believe it. There is none who can say, "I am that I am," but He. Where is the man who is not double-minded at times? Does he tell me all that is in his heart? Nay; not even to his best beloved on earth! Paul as a saved one can say, "by the grace of God I am what I am,"—I am what grace has made me. But even he cannot say, "I am *that* I am."

Blessed be God there is a Man of whom God hath said this, even when under the very wrath of the cross. But He stands in this alone, as in all else beside. When He cried, out of those mighty depths—"He weakeneth my strength in the way—He shorteneth my days; I said: O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days," what was the reply? It was then the glory of the self-existing one is expressed: "Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But *Thou art*, and thy years shall have no end. (Psalm cii. 23-27; and Heb. i. and xiii.)

What then must be the first expression of a soul which has to do with God? It exclaims, "God is!" "He that cometh to God must believe that *He is*, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. xi. 6.) God says of Himself, "I Am." He says to Jesus, as Man in weakness, "Thou Art;" and the believing soul bows in faith, saying, "He is!" This is the grammar of divine realities.

We see the result of this in Chapter iv. 29-31. We find in those verses, a lovely expression of the sinner's true attitude when first he has to do with God as a Saviour; when he has been seized with the reality of God before his conscience. He has

not yet learned His work of grace, nor has he experienced aught but the great fact that God has interfered? "God has visited the children of Israel. He has heard them; He has looked upon their affliction." What deep soul trouble might be saved were these two points grasped with a firm and mighty tenacity, "God is;" and "God has visited us, and looked upon our affliction."* What now is the soul's true response to these things? "Then they bowed their heads and worshipped." This was faith's obedience. It was not obedience to a claim from Him. It was not obedience to law. It accepts the fact that He has revealed *Himself* as a Saviour.

TROUBLES AND TRIALS.

Life down here is to most people a life of vexation, of trial. The heart wears out under it, or else there is a sort of Stoicism, and as troubles come as the sparks fly upwards, people say, "we have got to endure it, and we must." But how different this experience from that of the Christian who can say, "Show me any sharp flint scorched by the sun, and I can turn it over and find moisture underneath."

How different when all things are seen to be of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by giving us His Son! A person gets the heaven side of things who finds God in everything. It is a blessed thing

* Coming down to us as a Saviour in the Person of His Beloved Son.—ED.

that as there is not a sparrow falls to the ground, nor a flower that blossoms, without the Father, so, as sorrow turns up, and thorns and briars come in our path, to know that the Father is in it all; to be able to say in everything, "There is my Father," and so passing on quietly without care, knowing that every detail of life is watched by a Father's eye.

And when He comes, to unroll our whole life since we believed, will it grieve us for Him to know it all?

When you have failed in any way, and God has brought the sense of it to your soul, do you want not to settle it till a future time? or is it not a positive relief not to cover it up but to feel that the thing has been judged? Nothing will do but making a clean conscience before God, not letting a spot remain, but confessing and taking the whole blame; rejecting the thing and condemning it in yourself first.

Precious thought, "My Father knoweth,"
 In His love I rest,
 For whate'er my Father doeth,
 Must be always best.
 Well I know the heart that planneth
 Naught but good for me,
 Joy or sorrow interwoven,
 Love in all I see.

Precious thought, "My Father knoweth,"
 Careth for His child,
 Bids me nestle closer to Him
 When the storm beats wild.
 Though earthly hopes are shattered,
 And the tear drops fall,
 Yet He is Himself my solace,
 Yea, my all in all.

Sweet to tell Him all He knoweth,
 Roll on Him the care,
 Cast upon Himself the burden,
 That I cannot bear,
 Then without a care oppressing,
 Simply to lie still,
 Giving thanks to Him for all things,
 Since it is His will.

Oh, to trust Him then more fully,
 Just to simply move,
 In the conscious, calm enjoyment
 Of the Father's love,
 Knowing that life's chequered
 pathway
 Leadeth to His rest,
 Satisfied the way He taketh
 Must be always best.

A HYMN.

In hope we lift our wishful, longing eyes,
Waiting to see the Morning Star arise :
How bright, how gladsome will His advent be,
Before the Sun shines forth in majesty.

How will our eyes to see His face delight,
Whose love has cheered us through the darksome
night !

How will our ears drink in His well-known voice,
Whose faintest whispers make our soul rejoice !

No stain within, no foes or snares around,
No jarring notes shall there discordant sound ;
All pure without, all pure within the breast ;
No thorns to wound, no toil to mar our rest.

If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above,
If even here the taste of heavenly springs
So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim sings.

What will the sunshine of His glory prove ?
What the unmingled fulness of His love ?
What hallelujahs will His presence raise ?
What but one loud eternal burst of praise ?

THE
BIBLE AND TRACT DEPOT,
8 GERRARD STREET, EAST,
TORONTO,

Has for Sale an assortment of

Bagster's, Oxford and British Societies'
Bibles and Testaments at current prices.

"The Synopsis," and other writings of J.N.D.,
G.V.W. and J.G.B.

Gospel Tracts in booklet and leaflet form of the
most useful kinds.

Little Flock, Gospel and Children's Hymn
Books.

Wall Texts and Almanacs for 1892.
