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The World

Robert Surgenor

When reading the English translation of the Holy Scriptures (preferably the King James Version) there are hindrances in some areas in revealing the true meaning of the original text. This hindrance results from the translators taking more than one Greek word and translating it into one English word. Thus the shade of meaning of a particular word is entirely lost to the English reader. This is most unfortunate, but can be compensated with a reliable Greek-English Lexicon such as Thayer's or The Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words by W. E. Vine. Let me give you an example of this. Notice 2 Timothy 2:2. "*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*" Timothy was told to commit the truths that he had heard of Paul to men who were gifted to teach, and they were to commit those truths to whom? Other teachers? No, that's not the interpretation as it would seem to read, and the reason is this. This word, "others," is not the Greek word "allos" meaning men of the same character, but rather "heteros" which means men of a different character. They were to teach those in the assembly who were not teachers but ordinary Christians. In the English translation, words "allos" and "heteros" are translated "others." Coming to John 21:15-17 you find a similar situation. In Peter's restoration the word "love" appears in the text. However, two different Greek words are used, namely "agapao" and "phileo," the former being a love characteristic of God's love, the latter being merely a family-like affection. The difference of the two words is entirely lost in the English translation because both words are translated into one English word, "love."

Three Different Meanings

Coming to the word "world" in the English Bible, we find the same thing. The Greek words, "kosmos," "aion," and "oikoumene," are all translated "world" in our KJV Bible, yet each word has its own peculiar meaning. Another thing to notice is that a Greek word can have different meanings

depending on the context in which it is used. Consequently the word "kosmos" sometimes refers to the earth on which man dwells (Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:24). Other times it refers to the arrangement, the adornment, or the ornament of the world's system. Other times it refers to the inhabitants of this globe as seen in John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world.*" Anyone with common sense can readily see that the verse is not telling us that God loves the earth of dirt, nor the systems and ways of men. No, no! He is telling us that He loves the inhabitants of this globe. So, the context often determines the meaning of the word used, whether the earth, the people, or the adorning and arrangement fallen mankind has devised in his humanistic attitude. Regarding the adorning, or arrangement of this world the same writer who recorded John 3:16, tells us in 1 John 2:15, "*Love not the world.*" So one can readily see that John is not referring to the globe, or the people, but rather to their ways, their adornment, or we might say the system that fallen man has devised to keep himself occupied and happy apart from God. So, if you put John 3:16 together with 1 John 2:15, you would read that God loved the world and that we are not to love the world. However, the seeming contradiction ends when you consider the context and read it like this, that God loves mankind, but we are not to love mankind's false ways.

Professing Christians

I am afraid that there are many professing Christians that do not have a logical idea as to what the world is, that we are told not to love. The reason I say that is because you will find them loving the world. Now this can come from a variety of reasons. Perhaps they are ignorant of what the Scriptures teach. They don't realize the holiness of God, nor are they familiar with His ways relative to Christian behavior. They are not reading their Bibles as they should.

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Then there is another class and they are carnal. They are aware of what the Scriptures teach, but their own fleshly desires come first. They live for their own pleasure regardless of what the Scriptures teach. However, there is another class. They have a profession, but do not possess Christ. They have no power, nor do they have the desire, to put their flesh to death and live a sanctified life for the Lord. In reality they call Him **“Lord, Lord,”** but He knows them not. Notice their conduct. The Lord says, *“And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”* (Luke 6:46). Theirs is a sad lot indeed! They can go on in total disregard to the Lord’s commands and the hand of God never disciplines them, simply because they are not His children. That is the truth of Hebrews 12:6–8. *“For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”* So the false professor is termed a “bastard.” This is not swearing. It simply means one that is illegitimate; he is not a genuine son of God. So, when one sees professing Christians loving the world day after day and the hand of God never coming down in judgment upon them, what are we to think? What do the Scriptures say? They plainly declare that such people are not genuine, they are illegitimate. Many years ago, in two different places, two honored servants of the Lord made a public remark to this effect in the assembly they were visiting. “When the Lord comes, there may be enough of you here to continue breaking bread.” Of course today we are too sophisticated, we are too intellectual, we are too politically correct to make such alarming statements publicly, aren’t we? Nevertheless, I believe, in looking over the present condition, and the worldliness in many assemblies, that statement to be valid.

In looking at the world system and its adornment, consider a few things with me. First; what about **its destiny?** 1 John 2:17 says, *“the world passeth away.”* Every scheme in this world is transient. The fashions, forms and schemes of this world are always changing. Men find pleasure in one thing but the pleasure fades and they go after something new. Nothing satisfies, and nothing is permanent. All are on the move and passing away.

Consider the **Christian’s relationship to the world.** The Lord informs us with very plain words. *“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you ... I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ... They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”* (Jn.15:19;

17:14, 16). Thus, the Christian is living in the world but he is detached from it. Not only this, as a result of his total separation from the pleasures of this world, he is looked down upon, for his path of total separation from the world’s false ways. This draws forth hatred from the world. Noah condemned the world through the way he conducted himself. Paul told Timothy, *“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”* (2 Tim. 3:12). None are exempt. The methods of persecution may vary, but be assured, the godly Christian, through not loving the world, will suffer persecution, whether it be reproach, loss of material possessions, loss of employment, or even martyrdom.

The whole world system, in which we live, has a **definite foundation.** 1 John 5:19 provides us the answer. *“The whole world lieth in wickedness.”* A better rendering is, “The whole world lieth in the wicked one.” Just as a helpless infant lies in its mother’s bosom, so the world system lies as a helpless babe in the arms of the wicked one, the devil. He is spoken of as playing different roles. As the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4) we see his activity in religion, blinding the minds of men with false doctrines. As the prince of this world (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) his activity is found in providing pleasure and prosperity to his subjects in order to keep them happy and occupied without God, in whom only there is true happiness and pleasure. When spoken of as *“the prince of the power of the air”* (Eph. 2:2), we see his authority over all the evil host of the atmosphere. He is the commander in chief of all the hosts of evil angels, and as such he controls the course (a period of time) of this world. When described as “the great dragon” (Rev.12:9) his viciousness and malignant hatred to anything of God is implied. As the “Devil,” (“diabolis”) he is seen as the accuser of the brethren, while his name of “Satan” indicates his activity as an adversary of God and Christ. Let us not look lightly on this powerful person. His methods for the destruction of God’s testimonies are manifold. His tactics for bringing God’s people down are numerous. He is relentless, tireless, and devoted to the destruction of anything that is of God. Paul said, when speaking of Satan getting an advantage over the saints, *“We are not ignorant of his devices”* (2 Cor. 2:11), and neither should we be ignorant. James tells us, *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7). Since we are but frail mortal man, how can we ever stand up against the devil to such a degree that he will flee from us? The answer is contained in the same verse and reads, *“Submit yourselves therefore to God.”* There’s the answer my fellow-believer. **“Submit”!** Regarding worldly things, the spiritual believer will submit to the will of God and have nothing to do with what the world has to offer for pleasure. Can you confess like your Lord, *“Not My will, but Thine be done”?*

Three Characteristics of the World

When John speaks concerning the world, he is careful to define just what the world (the adornment) is. The characteristics are threefold. *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world”* (I John 2:16). The first thing to notice is that all that is in the world runs contrary to the Father. Thus it is to be tenaciously avoided. Consider carefully just what these three definitions imply.

First, **“The lust of the flesh.”** God has given man appointed ordinances such as appetite for food, marriage, and other general needs and cravings of the body, which by the laws of nature, are needful. He has also given him a love for music, an appreciation of the finer arts, a scientific mind, and so on. However, man in his corrupt state can pervert these noble things so that they become lusts of the flesh. This perversion is the world’s aim. Robert Candlish (1806–1873) has put it this way; *“All its arraignments, its giddy sports and anxious toils, tend in that direction. ... Gluttony, drunkenness, uncleanness; the rage for physical or aesthetical excitement which the ball [golf ball, foot ball, soccer ball, basket ball, tennis ball, bowling ball, base ball] the theater [movies and TV], the gambling-table, if not worse excesses, must appease; – these forms or modifications of the flesh may creep into our affections disguised almost as an angel of light. A certain fondness for the good things of this life, an unwillingness to forgo them, a pleasant feeling of fullness in the enjoyment of them, a growing impatience of any interruption of that enjoyment, – how soon may such a way of tasting even the lawful gratifications of sense grow into selfishness and sin! And then how readily does the imagination admit ideas and fancies the reverse of pure! Through how many channels, the news of the day, the gems of literature, the choicest trophies of the fine arts, poesy, sculpture, song, may unholy desires be kindled! I may be out of the world; but this that is in the world, “the lust of the flesh,” may not be out of me.”*

The word “flesh” does not mean our body of flesh blood and bones. What it means is the unregenerate state of man, the seat of sin within him. Thus, the unbeliever is looked upon as in the flesh. Not so with the believer. However, even though the believer is not reckoned as being in the flesh, yet the flesh is still within him, as Robert Candlish has so ably stated. Man still has that depraved nature that he inherited at his birth. This appertains to nature and embraces sensual gratification, and the abuse of natural instincts. The flesh prompts, on occasions, the strong desires of a carnal sort, to gratify self.

The second essential constituent of the world’s life is **“the lust of the eyes.”** Man governs himself basically according to false values. David said, *“I was envious at the foolish,*

when I saw the prosperity of the wicked” (Ps. 73:3). That feeling manifested the lust of the eye. Grudging over the well-being of others, perhaps more prosperous than us, is the lust of the eyes. Vainglory, pomp and fashion, are connected with it. The desire to be admired, to be popular, to be the main attraction, all fall into this category, also coveting pomp, glory, and material splendor. As the lust of the flesh comes from within, so the lust of the eyes originates from without.

Finally, James mentions **“the pride of life.”** How prone the natural man is to rely on his own ability. The more his ability is, the greater is his pride. He considers no one quite as good as he. One can see it on bumper stickers with sayings such as, “I’m proud to be an Italian,” or, “My son is an ‘A’ student,” or, “I was a hero in World War II.” A professional sport is a glaring example of pride. Man covets compliments concerning him. He covets to be looked up to, to be appreciated and admired. What is all this? It is simply “the pride of life.” What painful effort man takes to put on a good appearance. Falsehood is often employed to help maintain a good front. The pride of life can debauch the conscience and is fatal to high goals. People try to outdo one another, some at any cost. The pride of life urges them on, even to unscrupulous actions. Do you have in your heart a liking for the world’s good report of you? Do you have sensitiveness to the world’s frown? If so, you are plagued with the pride [vainglory] of life. Are you proud of your accomplishments? Are you proud of your worldly possessions, success, and seeming security? Is God entirely out of the picture? This condition is termed, “the pride of life.”

These three things are the ideals the world of unspiritual men recognize. These are the things that characterize the forces that govern the world. They are not of the Father. They do not have their origin in His will, neither any affinity with His nature. These things are totally against the life that He intends for men.

(to be continued)

The ornament and beauty of this world, next to God and His wonders, are the men that spangle and shine in godliness.

What is His Name? Jehovah-shalom

Joel Portman

We have noticed that God gives new revelations of His person and ability at times when His people encounter a new crisis that causes them to turn and depend on Him. Is there need for healing? He is Jehovah-rapheca. Do they need victory over their foes? He is Jehovah-nissi. Only a

few examples, but they show that God manifests truth concerning Himself to us so as to draw our hearts increasingly toward Him so that we trust Him completely and know His goodness and power in every exigency.

The same is true when we come to this revealed Name of Jehovah. Reading Judges 6 shows us how easily this condition of unrest can be found among the Lord's people when we allow elements of the flesh to cause division to creep in.

Strife and Famine

The cause of this problem is immediately revealed in Judges 6:1; they did evil in the sight of the Lord, and this usually means involvement with idol worship. This is verified in vss 10, 25, 30, 32. Departure begins in the heart and progresses to outward involvement with objects other than God in the life. Moses had predicted that this evil would be seen in them in Deut. 32:15-21, and thus it had taken place. God is a jealous God and desires above all else the affectionate devotion and obedience of His people, unshared with any other gods or objects in the world. When this takes place, the results are an increase of strife and activity of the flesh, as seen in the actions of Midian (strife) and the Amalekites. Both are unceasing enemies of the saints, and we must not allow them to make inroads among us, lest the same conditions of famine, fearfulness, and feebleness result. Sadly, it seems that many a child of God doesn't enjoy the "peace of God" (Phil. 4:7) because of the same problems that exist in different forms in their lives. Involvement and occupation with the world's elements that are contrary to one's spiritual life and communion with God will always result in disruption of the peaceful disposition that one should have.

The result of these enemy invasions was not their destruction, but their unrest, disruption of life and diminishing of necessary resources. They lacked peace, and only God could bring that about. They likely looked at peace as cessation from the enemy's attacks, food to eat, and security in their homes, but the Lord desired more for them. The Lord says, "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee, because he trusteth in thee,*" (Isa. 26:3). There is no other way to have peace and security, but to have the heart, mind and life centered on God and seeking to do His will. The Lord said to His disciples, "*These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33).

God's Movements and a Man's Response

Israel cried unto the Lord, but His only reply initially was to send a prophet to deliver a message to them that revealed

His assessment of their condition and its causes. This was the first prophet recorded in Scripture since Moses. Moses had given them God's Word and they had failed through disobedience; this prophet came to rebuke them for that failure and to prepare them for God's deliverance through Gideon. To be restored and enjoy the peace of God requires God's work to cause repentance and responsiveness to His Word so there is a desire to make needed corrections in one's life. Sadly, there doesn't seem to have been any generalized response to the divinely sent messenger, as there had been in ch. 2:4-5. Each cycle of departure from the Lord seemed to cause an increase in their deadness, unresponsiveness and spiritual lethargy, until in the time of Samson, the people were willing to deliver him into the hand of the Philistines to appease their enemy. This also seems to be the characteristic of the church age as we near the end of this dispensation. Laodicea failed to recognize its own condition and had no interest corporately in responding to the Lord's verdict.

More than a prophet appeared to Gideon (6:11). An (the) angel of the Lord was an Old Testament appearance of God (theophany) or more specifically, Christ (Christophany). As with other instances of this kind, His appearance indicated the great importance of God's purpose to work on behalf of His people. His heart yearned over them in their predicament and the time had come to deliver them. His appearance to Gideon is worth our study. God was going to use a man who was humble (v15), concerned about their state (v.13), cognizant of past conditions (v.13), and dependent on God (v.16-17). He was personally industrious and determined to get food for himself (v.11) as he was threshing wheat by (in) the winepress to protect it from the Midianites. Only a man like this is capable to be used by God for such a work. Those who were lethargically and lackadaisically submissive under the enemy's hand had no personal or spiritual ambition to engage in this daunting task. And God is still looking for those who are not satisfied to drift on under a sub-standard spiritual condition but who long for clear indications of God's power in their lives. May the Lord stir our hearts and make us more aware of the deficiencies that exist and honestly face them in His presence!

Passing over the important event when the angel authenticated who He was by causing fire to rise from the rock to consume the offering (a meal offering), we move to the statement that calmed Gideon's anxieties (v.23) and revealed his response to God's Word. Assured that God didn't intend his death, he responded by building an altar (of memorial. . . no offerings recorded as being consumed on this altar) and called it Jehovah-shalom. This name of God declares that in every case, it is the Lord who is peace and as a result, He is the only one who sends peace. This is true

in every period of time, in every experience of life, and in every expectant, troubled heart. It is by looking to and depending on Him that we know real peace in our souls, even in the midst of a troubled and agitated world. Gideon, in giving the altar this name, expressed faith in the Lord that He would change the trying conditions of His people and give them victory over their enemies and peace as a result. Isn't this what is in Phil. 4:6-7? Paul knew something of that peace in his Roman confinement, *"be careful (anxious) for nothing . . . let your requests be made unto God."* This is a peace *"which passeth all understanding"* that *"shall keep (guard) you hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

Peace is . . .

The word rendered "peace" is so well-known as a common greeting between Jewish people, "shalom." Sadly, those who render such greetings have known little of that "shalom" conditions through the centuries of their history. Even now, while peace may be their longing, enemies on every side threaten their existence. Only in turning to the Lord will Israel truly have peace, and that only when He fulfills His promise to return to deliver them.

"Shalom," in the Bible, means more than the absence of conflict. It is found 318 times in the Old Testament and 111 times in the New. It is very clear that God wants His people to know true peace and enjoy it. In the Old Testament, the word has five different shades of meaning:

- 1. Completeness, wholeness, soundness, with nothing lacking, entire. We compare Col. 2:10, *"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power;"*
- 2. Safety, security. Condition of enjoying rest without fear, complicating problems, anxiety. We think of Rom. 8:28-39, that great section that emphasizes the absolute security of the child of God.
- 3. Health, prosperity, as in the Hebrew greeting. We enjoy every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus, as is elaborated in Eph. 1
- 4. Tranquility, satisfaction, fulfillment, contentment with what we have in Christ.
- 5. Friendship, harmony. Enjoying fellowship with others.

Three Aspects of Peace

The child of God enjoys three aspects of peace through Him who is our peace. We have

1. Rom. 5:1 Peace with (toward) God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our sin's condemnation and its results that cause unrest and disturbance in a sinner's heart have been dealt with completely in His work on the cross for us. Our relationship with God is established in Him.

2. Phil. 4:7-8 Peace of God ruling in our hearts. Tranquility of soul, being guarded in mind and heart.

3. Rom. 14:19 Peace with our brethren. Enjoyment of harmony and fellowship with others in the Lord.

Five things about this peace in Christ

1. It is Accomplished by Christ Eph. 2:13, 15, 17 *"Having made peace by the blood of His cross."* This results from the completed work of Christ. (Col. 1:20)

2. It is Received by faith in Christ Rom. 5:1, *"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God."* Only on that ground, believing God and trusting Christ.

3. It controls the heart and mind Phil. 4:7 *"And the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* We are guarded by the power of God so as to prevent anxieties.

4. It is Exercised toward others by our attitude and manner of living. Rom. 12:18, *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*

5. It is Manifested to others so as to make them conscious of what we have in Christ. Heb. 12:14, *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness . . ."*

"Peace in Biblical thought is more than the absence of strife. It is positive well-being, as pointed out in the Old Testament by the word "shalom" which means "health and wholeness" as well as peace."

Above all these aspects of peace, we learn that the One who gives it is the *"God of peace."* He receives this title five times in our New Testament. In Rom. 15:33, He is the God of peace who overrules those who are adverse to the gospel and who might cause contention among the saints (v.31). In Rom. 16:20, it is the God of peace who will *"bruise Satan (the robber of peace in every case) under your feet shortly"* and in Phil. 4:9, it is the God of peace who would be with them as they sought to obey God's Word and act faithfully toward their Lord. In 1 Thess. 5:23, He, as the God of peace, would sanctify them completely and preserve them blameless in view of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, a worthy assurance that follows the apostle's words about the coming day when there will be no peace (v.3). Finally, we see in Heb. 13:20 that it is the God of peace who would complete His work in their lives and adjust them (make perfect) in view of doing His will. So we have peace given

to us, His peace within us, and the God of peace over us as we travel a troubled and agitated world, where, as Isaiah reveals, *“there is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.”* (Isa. 48:22, 57:21).

As in Gideon’s day, Midian disturbs that peace. Strife among believers will always affect the fellowship of the saints. If we allow the flesh to be expressed or to control, there will always be strife in a company of believers. It is only as we have hearts centered upon the Lord that we can have and enjoy that genuine peace that He gives. *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”* (Isa. 26:3).

May we know the reality of that peace within. It may be that, as with Gideon, following such a revelation of God to our souls, we may find that the pathway to enjoy peace involves many contentions and difficulties, as we see him engaging the neighbors where he lived, then facing the prospect of going against the enemy with a very small band of soldiers and using a very unorthodox method of warfare, and then having to deal with the offended Ephraimites, but we know that, as Ps. 37:37 says, *“Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”* On our part, we have the responsibility to heed the admonition of Eph. 4:3, *“Endeavoring (giving diligence) to keep (guard) the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”* As with Gideon, that peace is based on the principle of the altar, so named Jehovah-shalom. It is based on the sacrifice of Christ and what He has provided for us to enjoy, but also requires our willing sacrifice of our own ambitions that might harm our fellowship with others. God is identified with the altar where peace was made and from which it is to be enjoyed by His people.

“He that commands us to be patient, will give us occasion to be so; for He will make us wait, lead us around, let loose our foes, and increase our burdens; but when things are at the worst, to the patient soul deliverance is nearest.”

Rest

E.W. Rogers

The world has been restless ever since the Fall. Is true rest, then, attainable for the Christian? If so, where and how can it be found?

Hebrews chapters three and four are devoted to the topic of rest. The writer uses a word for rest which is different from

that used in Matthew 11:28. In the latter scripture, the Lord is concerned with the lifting up of burdens from others’ weary shoulders; in Hebrews, with the laying down of the legal works of Judaism.

The Hebrews were engaged in a great struggle: the law tended to pull them down; Christ sought to draw them up to Himself. Which would they allow to have the mastery? Christ is superior to angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, and all others. There should be no doubt as to Who is entitled to the mastery, but two other forces were at work which made the issue uncertain.

These forces are named in Hebrews chapters three and four; one is “unbelief” (3:12, 19); the other is “disobedience” (Revised Version, 3:18; 4:6), meaning “unpersuasableness.” Unbelief has to do with distrust of a person; unpersuasableness, with unbelief of promises, and consequent failure to act on them.

Israel was assured that the promised land would certainly be theirs. Notwithstanding the evidence, they remained unconvinced; they could not trust God to empower them to possess the land, nor to redeem His promise and give it to them. God was not trusted nor were His Promises believed. No wonder they fell in the wilderness and failed to enter the land.

Are we totally immune to the same dangers of distrust and unpersuasableness? Do they spoil our rest? Do we too ask, “Can God? ... Can He furnish a table in the wilderness?” “Can He bring us right through our long journey to the ultimate goal?” Do we, by asking such questions, limit the Holy One with Whom we have to do, thus becoming inwardly perturbed?

The Holy Spirit speaks to us in no uncertain tone; He calls upon us “today” to listen and to exhort each other before it is too late. We must pull ourselves up immediately and not defer the issue. To “harden the heart” is a very easy thing to do; we have our Massahs and Meribahs (Exod. 17:7) too frequently, despite the evidence in our past experience of the faithfulness of God. Why then tempt Him now?

If the heart is not right, we will not likely understand God’s ways (Heb. 3:10). We may see His acts, and find it impossible to attribute them to anything but His power, but do we know His “ways”? His acts have to do with that which is manifest; His ways relate to the principles involved, and the latter is of greater importance.

The rest spoken of in Hebrews chapters three and four is a present spiritual experience. Of course, it does not terminate at death or at the coming of the Lord, but it will be enjoyed

all the more fully then. On the other hand, there are cogent reasons for rejecting the thought that the rest relates only to the future in our case, when life is past. Certainly, in Israel's case, the rest lay at the end of the wilderness journey, but it is not so in ours. Some of the reasons for making this statement are as follows:

1. The Christian today is both a pilgrim in the wilderness and a warrior in the land. From one point of view, he has really entered his inheritance already: hence, the rest is something to be enjoyed here and now. (Pilgrimage is prominent in Peter's epistles, and in that to the Hebrews; inheritance and warfare are prominent in Ephesians.)

2. In scripture Canaan never represents heaven, for sin and conflict were both found in Canaan.

3. Faith and rest are united in Hebrews, and what God has joined, we must not separate. As soon as there is faith, rest is enjoyed. "*We which have believed do enter into that rest.*" Note the tense: it is present, not future.

4. Rest is a cessation from works (Heb. 4:4). The Hebrews were liable to persist in legal works and to forfeit their spiritual rest. The two cannot go together. If it is "of faith," it is "not of works." God entered into His creation rest when He ceased from His works.

5. The rest, in Hebrews, is harmony with God. "*He that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from His. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest.*" The thought is complementary to that of Matthew 11:28; in Hebrews, it is the abandonment of the burdens of Judaistic ritualism. This rest is the enjoyment of all that has been procured for us by our Lord Jesus, who, through death and resurrection, brought to an end the Levitical ceremonial system.

Furthermore, note the emphasis laid upon the heart in this section of Hebrews. We must "*keep our heart with all diligence*" lest it should go astray. There is a constant propensity to wander, but we must take care lest "*we always err in heart.*" It is a grievous thing to lapse at all, but altogether a more grievous thing always to do so. Backslidings do occur, although they should not; but how tragic if they should become "perpetual" (Jer. 8:5).

These chapters in Hebrews have often caused difficulties to believers; but the writer is quite consistent with the clearly and indubitably stated doctrine of the eternal security of the child of God, when he warns us against possible failure. We must distinguish things that differ. Relationship, the result of life imparted, is not here in view; rather, the pilgrim character of the Christian. These chapters have to do with a

position which we have voluntarily taken by confession (Revised Version, Heb. 3:1), as separated from the world and having started on the pilgrim journey to better things. Having thus confessed ourselves to be among the many sons who are being brought through the wilderness on the way to glory, "*let us, therefore, fear lest*" under the pressure of circumstances or persecution we should "*seem to have come short of*" God's intended rest. In reading these two chapters,—as indeed in reading the whole epistle to the Hebrews—we must remember that the writer is taking his addressees on the ground of their profession. He does not assume that it is genuine necessarily; he would fain hope so, but they must examine themselves and "take heed." This explains his use of the word "if" in such passages as Heb. 3:14 and elsewhere. Continuance is the proof of genuineness; apostasy is the evidence of unreality.

The argument of the writer appears to be as follows: God's rest existed from the foundation of the world; that is, the completion of the restorative work as detailed in Genesis.

God rested on the seventh day, and, if we would be in communion with Him, we too must share His rest. True rest is the product of harmony with given laws; when these laws are broken, discord ensues and rest is forfeited.

Creation's rest was followed by the offer of Canaan's rest but Israel, as a whole, failed to attain to it. They fell in the wilderness. Nor did Joshua bring them into it; enemies still remained in the land.

Later on, therefore, David is able to speak of that rest as still "remaining" available for the people of God. It still remains available for us to obtain; whether we do so depends on the condition of our heart, and on our response to His voice.

The writer speaks of the "word of God" in Heb. 4:12, referring to Ps. 95:7-11. That word is "living and operative." While Heb. 4:12 is true of the whole volume of Holy Scripture, it has special reference to the immediate context. These four verses cited from the Jewish Psalter have life and power in them; their sharp edge is surely felt by those whose hearts are not hardened; they pierce us and reveal what we are; these verses lay us bare and naked before the eyes of God. What failure and weakness they reveal! How sorely we need the help of our Great High Priest! How gracious that He is at once introduced in verse 14!

Leviticus 23 shows that rest is the goal which God has in view for His people. The numeral seven speaks of it. We read there of the seventh day, the seventh week, the seventh year, and the Jubilee year at the expiry of seven sevens of years. Seven speaks of completion, attainment, and rest. On the seventh day God rested. There is, therefore, a "sabbatis-

mos” available for us (Heb. 4:9). This rest “remains” for the people of God, who, like Israel, have been redeemed from worse bondage and by more precious blood. We “enter” it by faith, now; only to discover that it is but the beginning of an eternal rest in fellowship with God Himself.

Assuredly it is possible for God’s pilgrims to have peace in the storm, songs in the night, joy in the prison, light in the cell. *“We which believe do enter into rest.”* Faith is not a blind resignation to events but a simple intelligent trust in God and His word. Faith dispels doubts and refuses to judge things by appearance. Faith rests on God, and in the Him the soul rests also.

“We must never confuse our responsibility with His, His is to work, ours is to abide in Him that we may work only what He works in. In other words, we are instruments; not agents, and the first business is to be in communion with Him. It wonderfully simplifies our Christian living when that all watchfulness and earnestness are ever to be directed to this one end—to abide in Christ.”

At Jesus’ Feet

Mr. J. Dickson

Luke 10: 38-42. *“Mary. sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard His word.”*

John 11: 32-36. *“Mary.... fell down at His feet.”*

John 12: 1-3. *“Mary.... anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair.”*

John 13: 21-26. *“Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.”*

John 19: 25-27. *“When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and his disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, “Woman, behold thy son!”” etc.*

John 21: 20-22. *“What shall this man do?” “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me.”*

We might paraphrase the Scriptures we have been reading into two sentences and speak of them as, **“At Jesus’ feet,”** and **“On Jesus’ Breast.”** Here are three scenes in the life of Mary, and three scenes in the life of John. First, in connection with Mary, it is recorded that she sat at Jesus’ feet; and of John it is recorded that he leaned on Jesus’ bosom. What a good place to be—at His feet, how safe! and then on His bosom—On His breast. These two places are open for each one of us who are the Lord’s. It is comforting to know that it was not only for Mary to sit at His feet or for John to lean on His bosom, but it is for God’s people here and now; and if, by grace and purpose of heart, we are enabled during the year we have just

entered (if the Lord tarry and we are spared) to keep at His feet and to lean on His bosom, our lives will be really happy, holy and blessed. It will be a happy, holy, fruitful year—a year that will tell for God down here in our life, and then for us up yonder at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Mary sat at His feet and heard His word. This is in **THE HOME LIFE**. There is nothing that tests one like the home life, where people are seen as they really are, and where we are usually what we are. At the meetings Christians are not seen as their natural selves. Here is Mary in the home; just connected with home life; attending to the things concerning the home. Lazarus, her brother, would likely be well and healthy, and coming in for his meals, and we can understand just how she would feel and be, but it is recorded of her that she sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word. That was her business; the purpose of her heart and hobby of her life—to sit habitually at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ hearing His word, and we find that she was found fault with by Martha who was cumbered about much serving; careful and troubled about many things, and Mary had chosen that good part which should not be taken away from her. Now the Lord help us today afresh to make this choice, by His grace and with purpose of heart, that we will sit at His feet; and the Lord Himself said that this would never be taken away from her. There is something very blessed in this. Our service on earth as the Lord’s people is going to cease, but here is something that will go on throughout the eternal ages—“sitting at His feet.” Sometimes God’s people get weary and tired of what is called the “home life;” they imagine that if they were in some other part of the world it would be better; sometimes we are guilty of living in a “fool’s paradise,” and imagine that if we were only in some other place we would be able to do better for God. God knows that we are in the very best circumstances into which He could put us; He could not put us in any better, and it is for us to be satisfied and contented; seeking in our home life to glorify and please Him, and we shall do this by sitting at His feet. Whatever our responsibilities, whether as parents, or children, or servants, we will fill them to His glory if we know what it is to sit at His feet. So we trust the Lord will speak to our hearts through this word—“Sitting at His feet”—in the home life; seeking to glorify Him, content to fill a little place if He be glorified.

The next is the **“TOMB SCENE.”** This beloved brother, whom Mary had seen in health and strength, and whom she loved, had been taken away in death, and this Scripture in John 11 brings before us her grief and sorrow. When Jesus came to Bethany Martha went out to meet Him, but Mary sat still in the house—she waited until she was called. How had she attained to that

quietness and composure of spirit? Through sitting at His feet. She remained in the house until Martha told her. *“The Master is come and calleth for thee,”* and when she got to Him she fell down at His feet; her heart was broken; her grief was real, but she gave the Lord Jesus His place and before ever she uttered a word she was down at His feet acknowledging Him as her Lord and Master, and after that she told out what was in her heart. *“Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died.”* She had learned that stillness of heart at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ—how blessed it is when we learn our “still lesson.” We were recently reading about a little Quaker girl who had to sit still for half an hour every day without speaking a word. When asked by a visitor what she was doing she replied that she was learning her “still lesson.” Mary learnt that lesson at Jesus’ feet. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who were present, He wept to sympathize with that one and then went on to the tomb and raised her brother.

In the 12th Chapter we have the **“FEAST SCENE.”** There was a supper made for Him, and we have Martha there serving—likely in the right state of soul now; Lazarus also was there, who had come out of death. He seems to keep the secret locked in his own heart of what was after death. He is now at the table with the Lord. Mary is again found at His feet; she takes the box of ointment of spikenard, breaks it and pours it on the feet of this blessed One; she anointed His feet and wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. This aroused the feelings of Judas, who was quite an accountant, an authority on financial matters and good at reckoning. He figured that the ointment was worth three hundred pence, or a workingman’s wages for a whole year, not counting the Sabbath, and allowing a penny a day. But God’s Son put a far greater estimate than that upon this act of love. *“Against the day of my burying bath she done this.”* Here she is as a worshiper; down at His feet, that precious costly box was broken; those feet were anointed and wiped with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Not only was it poured out on Him, but all those around discerned the fragrance of this wonderful thing that Mary had done.

So we have had brought before us three things in her life:

1. A learner—at His feet
2. In her sorrow; before ever she opened her mouth—at His feet.
3. As a worshiper; anointing His feet for the burial, There were those who came and anointed His body when He was dead, but this is better—she does it beforehand—before ever the Cross was erected and He was nailed to it.

Bethany means the “House of affliction”—of trouble, and

if the Lord spares and keeps us we may be sure of this, there will be trouble on every hand and in every way, but if we know what it is to be at His feet in connection with it and discern His blessed Person we will give Him His place and we will have discernment of the times and know what God’s people ought to be and do, and we will thus honor that blessed One.

Then there are the other three scenes in connection with John, the one who leaned on His bosom, right close to His heart; and when a question came up, and they wanted to know something, Peter said to John, “You are the one to ask the Lord who it is that will betray Him,” and so John, leaning on Jesus’ bosom, asked the Lord, “Who is it?” and he got the answer. There was John drinking in the love that filled the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ—not a mere sentiment; not just some kind of a feeling stirred up, but love that would lead Him to live for and honor the Christ of God; love as we see it in his a life in connection with the light, and which exposes all unrighteousness and that which is of the devil; he was able to speak of these things because he had leaned on Jesus’ bosom.

In the 19th Chapter we find that John remains true to Christ; all the other disciples, like a lot of frightened sheep, had run away and left Him; Peter had denied Him; Judas had betrayed Him, but not so with John—he was at the cross; he is right where God’s Son is in rejection, in crucifixion, being murdered, and he is there watching the dying agonies and sorrows of the blessed Son of God; and whilst there the Lord Jesus Christ commits a service to him. He sees His mother. That sword, which old Simeon had spoken about, is now piercing her soul as she sees her son nailed to Calvary’s Cross. Probably Joseph is dead, and she needs someone to care for her. So the Lord Jesus, in His dying agonies, did not forget His mother and He committed her to John, saying: *“Woman, behold thy son,”* and to John He said, *“Behold thy mother.”* So here is John at the cross bearing the reproach of Christ, for we are told in the same chapter that Jesus, therefore, went forth bearing His cross, and in Hebrews 13th we are exhorted to *“Go forth therefore unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach.”* What is going to enable us to follow Him? Will human love do? No; Peter was full of human affection for God’s Son and he failed. There is only one kind of love that will enable us to follow Him outside the camp, and that is DIVINE LOVE. Where will I get it? By leaning on His bosom and drinking in that love that fills Him, and the Holy Spirit will pour into the believer the love that is in that breast. And so at the time that the Lord Jesus wanted comforters John is there, and he had this blessed service committed to him of looking after the mother of the

Lord. Likewise the Lord will find a service for each one of us. Far better to be engaged in the service that He has given us, walking in His path and way in connection with His reproach and rejection, than in any other service, however fruitful it may seem. Far better to have service at His hand, if it is connected with that blessed One whose reproach at the hands of the world we are exhorted to share, for we are also reminded that *“here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”*

In the 21st chapter the Apostle John is spoken of as the one who leaned on Jesus’ breast, and he is following; that is the last glimpse we have of him in the Gospel. Peter turned about and saw John following. John had just heard the Lord Jesus say to Peter, “You feed my lambs and sheep.” Was he jealous? Not a bit; he was quite content to let Peter have his place and hear the Lord say to Peter, “You do this and that,” and he was simply following. And Peter turned round and said, “And what shall this man do?” The Lord replied “What is that to thee? follow thou me.”

These things are written for our instruction; for our health and encouragement; our warning and our blessing, and the Lord help us to know more and more of the blessedness of being at His feet, and the blessedness of being on His bosom, taking in His love, and then we will have strength to stand against the world, and the departure on every hand, about which we have been telling God in prayer—the departures and declensions. What is going to preserve us, what is the safe-guard? Love to Himself; to his Blessed Person, and if we have that we will be willing to share His reproach; we will be glad that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for His blessed Name, and it will be for our blessing and joy and gladness now and up yonder at the Judgment Seat of Christ it will tell to our account.

WIS 1920

“Tis joy enough, my All in All, low at Thy feet to lie; Thou wilt not let me lower fall, and none can higher fly.” H. Beecher Stowe

Sounding Brass, Tinkling Cymbal

TAKE these two words together, since they both occur in 1 Cor. 13:1—the only time Paul uses them, and because the lessons derived from the use of them elsewhere are so closely akin. The A.V. renders them “sounding” and “tinkling”—both words conveying the idea of useless,

meaningless, discordant noise. This is what the love-less man is like, though his speech be as silver and his oratory that of a Demosthenes. Without **love** he is just an unpleasant noise.

Luke uses the former of the two words in his report of the Lord's prophetic discourse (ch. 21: 25) for the roaring of the waves, a noise that may temporarily excite wonder, but which becomes monotonous and wearisome. It is a noise that effects nothing; no result ensues therefrom. Even so is the **sounding** of the preacher or teacher whose service is not the outcome of a God-wrought love in his soul. His powers of speech may astonish, but they do not edify; he becomes to his heart-weary hearers just a noise; harsh, discordant, meaningless.

The second of the words is used by Mark (ch.5:38) for the insincere wailing of the women, hired for the purpose, in the chamber of death. Matthew bluntly calls them “people making a noise” (ch. 9: 23). Browne, in his “Hebrew Antiquities,” describing the custom, remarks, “The wailing was loud and long (usually lasting seven days), and was kept up with the aid of professed mourning women.” Amos doubtless refers to such professional mourners when he speaks of “such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing” (ch. 5: 16). Jeremiah, too, speaks of the “mourning women” and calls them “cunning,” that is, clever at their art (ch. 9:17).

Think of the hollowness of it all! One does not expect much depth of grief on the part of an undertaker’s man who assists at a funeral, but his sympathy is quite respectable compared with that of persons who gain their livelihood by making a wailing noise around the bed on which lies the corpse of some person whom they never knew. Wailing, indeed! Could insincerity go further? Yet that is the word used for the noise made by the man who speaks with eloquent lips without the love that is of God shining in his soul. He is just a nasty noise, a clanging cymbal.

May the Lord preserve us from such speaking, having no effect since it may be insincere and without expressing love to the Lord nor to the hearers. (Anonymous)

Recommended Message:

“Living for Nothing,” a message that deals with the futility of lives that are lived to no purpose and without proper priorities, challenging us to devote our time for God.

You may listen to it at:

<https://dl.dropbox.com/u/4677625/Living%20for%20Nothing%20Cairns.mp3>