

UPLOOK

FEBRUARY 2001

The
Women
Who Loved
Jesus



GOD'S CROWNING CREATION

Cherchez la femme. Wherever there is signal blessing, you will always find the woman.

When Adam named the animal creation, it exposed to his own heart that he was missing something. The variety and scope of God's astounding handiwork only accentuated his own need for a help suitable for him. Yet in order to provide that "help meet" the Lord did a remarkable thing. He did not make woman by an independent act. Instead He performed the first surgery, removing something from Adam's own body. The piece He removed was a rib from the man's breastplate, making his heart more vulnerable, more accessible. Never again would Adam be complete unless his bride was with him because she had some of his life within her.

The crowning glory of God's fair creation was given three names. Adam called her Woman or "out of man" (Hebrew *Isha* to his *Ish*). This emphasized her MEANS OF LIFE. Though her life came *from* God, the Source of all life, it came *through* Adam. So it was to be that she would look to her husband as he was to look to God.

But her husband's trustworthiness was linked to two acts on his part: to "leave" his own family to start another, and to "cleave" only to his wife—giving her the first place of loyalty of any earthly relationships.

At first look, it seems a tenuous arrangement for the woman. What if her husband fails her? Sarah is given as an example of that very case (1 Pet. 3:5-6). Abram failed his wife—but God did not fail her. Even when the husband abandons—whether physically, emotionally, or geographically—his wife, God will be a Father to the fatherless and a Husband to the husbandless.


When Abram failed Sarah in Egypt, the Lord came to her aid. Years later, He would bring plagues on Egypt to deliver perhaps two million Jews; on this occasion He brought plagues upon them to rescue one woman.

But Woman was not the only name given to God's fair creation. We read that God "called their name Adam, in the day that they were created" (Gen. 5:2). The word *adam* or *adom* is linked with several ideas. It is used for the color red and for the earth or dust from which man was made. The names of Esau and Edom find their roots in Adam. Of course we all find our roots in Adam. As Paul writes: "The first man is of the

earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven...and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:47, 49). The first man and woman shared a common name because they shared a common nature, as do we all. This name of hers emphasized her UNITY OF LIFE

with all the race that would come after her. There would be one happy exception. Called "the seed of the woman," He would partake of our humanity without being tainted by our sin. As Kinsman, His genealogy would stretch back to Adam (Lk. 3:38) but as Redeemer, He would be virgin born. In this special conception and birth would be found the fullest expression of the truth: "She shall be saved in childbearing" (1 Tim. 2:15).

Woman's third name was given to her by her husband after the Fall. It is a name rich with promise, emphasizing the CONTINUITY OF LIFE. By an act of faith he called her *Chavah*, or Eve, because, said Adam, "she was the mother of all living" (Gen. 3:20). But was she not the mother of the dying? God had just pronounced the curse, concluding with the words, "dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Yet Adam saw in his wife a hope undiminished by the seemingly impossible plight of the human race.

This optimism is not unfounded. Our God is not the God of the dead but of the living. And down history's long corridor from then until now you will find the fragrant memories of a multitude of women whom the Lord has used to bring hope in the midst of despair, revival in the face of failure, joy to sweeten sorrow, and resolute confidence in God when the men are sinking under the load. Salute these intrepid women of faith as they pass before your gaze: the daughters of Zelophehad, Achsah, Hannah, Abigail, Rizpah, Huldah, Ruth, Esther, the women who loved Jesus (discussed in this issue), and on to Anne of Austria, Mary Slessor, Amy Carmichael and thousands more. I know a little about such women. I've lived with one for 28 years. 

J. B. Nicholson

J. B. Nicholson Jr.



CONTENTS

UPLOOK

Volume 68

FEBRUARY 2001

Number 1

Features

SEEST THOU THIS WOMAN? <i>E. O. G.</i>	4
GRACE OUTREACH <i>Ron Hampton</i>	10
BITTERNESS TO BLESSING <i>Paul Beverly</i>	13
AGED ANNA <i>Les Rainey</i>	14
LYDIA OF THYATIRA <i>James Stirling</i>	15
A BUSINESSWOMAN WHO BELIEVED GOD <i>Ross Rainey</i>	16
NO SECOND FIDDLES WITH GOD <i>L. Nicholson</i>	18
MARTHA, MARTHA <i>R. North</i>	19
DORCAS THE DISCIPLE <i>L. Nicholson</i>	20
MARY OF BETHANY <i>W. M. Clow</i>	22
THE WOMAN'S TOUCH <i>Gipsy Smith</i>	25
THE WOMEN AT THE CROSS <i>Andrew Borland.</i>	28
MANY WOMEN & THOSE AMONG THEM <i>L. Nicholson</i>	29
THE TREASURE <i>J. Boyd Nicholson, Sr.</i>	32

Departments

EDITORIAL	2
FRONT LINES	6
WHAT'S GOING ON	12

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“Seest thou this woman?”

Nameless. Hopeless. Christless. Until that day at His feet.

Is it not a little singular that perhaps the most remarkable history of a woman in the Bible should give neither her name nor her place of residence (Lk. 7:44)? It only shows how little store God sets by posthumous fame or the honors this world can bestow. But before the image of this nameless woman the world has stood in mute admiration for nearly two thousand years, and, though nameless still, it has lost none of its interest or power as a monument of the Saviour’s compassion and a sinner’s hope.

The challenge of Jesus to Simon, “*Seest thou this woman?*” has been ringing through all the ages of the past, and hundreds of thousands have beheld her and rejoiced in the glorious truths illustrated in this nameless woman with a power and pathos the world can never match.

We have space only to point out the most obvious lessons this wonderful picture teaches.

She is a sinner. So great a sinner

that she answers to no other name—“*the woman that was a sinner.*” The common name to ordinary sinners became a proper name when applied to her. So notorious a sinner was she that the Pharisee wondered that Jesus allowed her to come into His presence. In fact, according to Jesus’ own estimate, she was ten times as bad as ordinary sinners, for she was five hundred pence in debt, while some are only fifty.

Now, here is a test case for sinners. If Jesus saved such as she, none need despair. If His gospel is only for good, respectable people, this woman has no chance. If it is only for Pharisees, she can’t be saved. If Jesus pays only fifty-pence debts, this five-hundred-pence sinner has no hope. Her tears are all in vain if the gospel of Christ was rightly understood by Simon. But Simon did not understand the gospel as well as the “*woman that was a sinner.*”

But in the second place, *she was saved.* Her sins, which were many, were forgiven, five hundred though they were! A big debt, but Jesus “*paid it all.*”

The gospel of Christ is a gospel for sinners, not for the Pharisaical; therefore the woman was saved and the Pharisee was not. Jesus said, “*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*” “*The Son of man is come*

to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Simon knew the woman, but he did not know Jesus. He knew she was a sinner, a great sinner; but he did not know the greater Saviour who was sitting that day at his table, with power to forgive sins and to save the chiefest of sinners.

But a most important question is, *How was this woman saved?* That she was a great sinner, she did not deny. That she was saved, Jesus says Himself. Now here is the vital question: How was this woman saved?

Negatively: It was not by works—she had none. She was a sinner, a woman whose name was cast out as vile. The Pharisee, who had the good works, was not saved; while the sinner, without any good works, was saved.

It was not by baptism or the Lord’s Supper—she had never been baptized, and the Lord’s Supper had not yet been instituted; and yet she was saved at that time, and the Pharisee, who had been circumcised and kept the Passover, was not.

Not by going to church—she was insulted in the Pharisee’s house, and could not have lived in the Pharisee’s church.

Then *how* was she saved? Jesus answers: “*Thy faith hath saved thee.*” Not thy good works, nor thy baptism, nor thy church membership, not even thy repentance, nor thy love, nor thy confession, but “*thy faith hath saved thee.*”

Let that settle the question forever. It is the word of the Author of salvation Himself. Let no blasphemous tongue suggest another way.



Let no impious hand put anything else where Jesus put faith alone. *"Thy faith hath saved thee."*

Ever since Cain, men have sought other ways to be saved—Cain's way, not God's; so did this Simon; so do men yet. But no man has ever yet been saved (or ever will be) who was not saved like this woman—by *faith in Christ*.

There is only one way, and *"I am the Way,"* said Jesus. The woman went that way; so did Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; John, Peter and Paul, and everyone who ever reached heaven.

The woman *believed* He was a Saviour; the Pharisee did not. The woman went to *Him* for salvation; the Pharisee did not. The woman was saved; the Pharisee was not.

The history is a short one, but its consequences are not all told yet, nor ever will be; they are eternal.

This woman showed the reality of her faith by her repentance for her sin. Was there ever a more genuine sorrow for sin than she exhibited? She had been a great sinner; she knew it, felt it, and, voiceless in her sorrow, she had no language but tears, bitter tears, to tell that sorrow. Simon had none.

She also showed the reality of her faith by her love. "Love laughs at locksmiths," they tell us; her love laughed at the sneers of the crowd, at the insult of the Pharisee, at the conventionalities of society, at the etiquette that excluded her from Simon's house—an unbidden, unwelcome guest. No wonder Jesus said, *"She loved much."* Was there ever such love on earth? Behold her kissing the feet she had bathed with her tears; presuming not to kiss the immaculate lips Simon refused to honor, she esteemed it honor enough to kiss His sacred feet.

What but love, love too deep for language, would ever have found such a voice as that! She *"...ceased not to kiss"* the weary feet that had trodden the thorny way for her! Many waters could not quench that love, and the floods could not drown it.

Blessed woman! As we gaze at her there at His feet, we are humbled by the lack of our own gratitude and want of love for that adorable Master. Her memory is a benediction to this sin-cursed earth. It has been written, "God's sacred gallery would not be complete without her nameless picture; the song of the redeemed would not be full without the note of her voiceless love in Simon's house."

Then she showed her faith by her sacrifices. She brought her treasure, like Mary of Bethany (perhaps all her treasure), the precious ointment with which to anoint her Lord and Saviour. Hers was a love that knew

no idol but Jesus, that withheld no offering from His service. The rich Pharisee could not give even the common oil to anoint Christ's head; but the poor woman could pour the most costly ointment on His feet.

I am sorry to say, Simon has more followers today than the woman that was a sinner. Not many prove their faith by sacrifices for the Master. Many of His professed followers bestow more on every desire of the flesh than in the service of the Lord.

Finally, she showed her faith by her noble confession. She believed in Jesus, and she was not ashamed to manifest it. She made that confession under circumstances which would try the courage of many; but she

**Now
clothed in
white
raiment, she
is following
Him...all
tears forever
wiped away
by God
Himself.**

never faltered. She could not help it. *"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."* Paul tells us, *"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* Jesus says, *"Whoso confesseth Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father and the holy angels."* She confessed Him here in this world, and for two millenniums He has been confessing her there before His Father and the holy angels. Seest thou this woman? Nameless here, but with a

new, immortal name yonder, among the angels of God!

Penitent sinner, seest thou this woman, voiceless here, except with tears of penitential joy? Now, with the tongue of a seraph, she sings the new *"song of Moses and the Lamb."*

Seest thou this woman that was a sinner here, weeping bitter tears? Now washed in the blood of the Lamb and clothed in white raiment, she is following Him to *"fountains of living water,"* all tears forever wiped away from her eyes by the hand of God Himself!

Pharisee, seest thou this woman, made righteous in Christ, without any righteousness of her own? *"Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."*

Skeptic, seest thou this woman? Abandoned by men, but not by God—her sins, which were many, are forgiven; her sorrows which were heavy, are removed. Learn the lesson she will teach those who truly see her.

"Be not faithless, but believing."



FRONT LINES

WORD ALIVE SOUTHEAST

Intensive study classes are to be held, D. V., in the facilities of the Washington Chapel (808 E. Robert Tombs Rd, Washington, GA: February 10, 8:00-12:00 Messianic Psalms, Pt. 1 by Mike Attwood; 1:00-5:00 Seven Churches of Revelation by Sam Thorpe, Jr. March 10, Elders Seminar by Alex Strauch at Bethany Chapel, Augusta. April 14, 8:00-12:00 Messianic Psalms, Pt. 2 by Mike Attwood 1:00-5:00 New Testament Church Truth by Rex Trogon.

Contact: Sam Thorpe
(706) 359-6297
thorpes@sylcom.net

YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCES

Monthly conferences are scheduled to be held at Brandywine Bible Chapel (Wilmington, DE). The meetings run from 10:00 AM until 3:00 PM. Lord willing, the following brethren will address specific topics:

February 17	Mike Attwood
	Spiritual Gifts
March 17	Steve Hulshizer
	The New Testament Church
April 21	Keith Keyser
	Works of Flesh vs. Fruits of Spirit
May 21	John Bjorlie
	Habakkuk: Prophet of the Watchtower

For directions or accommodations
Tim Bhatt
(302) 529-9073
tim_bhett@yahoo.com

MEN'S RETREAT

Calling all men: Time to retreat... not to run away, but take a time to reflect at the Men's Retreat at Camp Iroquoia on March 2, 3 and 4. Situated in the beautiful Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania on 200 acres, the camp is a wonderful place to spend a weekend in the Word. Steve Swaim will be the speaker, Lord willing.

Contact: Tom Freeman
609-585-1835
tfreeman3@juno.com.

GOSPEL IN THE CARIBBEAN

In the will of the Lord, brother Joe Jeremiah of Silver Spring, MD, will be returning to the Caribbean for the month of March to conduct two series of gospel meetings on the islands of Antigua and Nevis.

The first series will be March 4-16, 2001 on the island of Antigua and the second series will be March 18-30, 2001 on the island of Nevis near St. Kitts.

The prayers of the saints will be appreciated for the Lord's blessing.

CONFERENCE in PHOENIX

The annual ministry conference at Palms Bible Fellowship (Phoenix, AZ) will convene March 9-11. Invited speakers are: J. B. Nicholson, Jr. and John Bjorlie. The theme of the conference is "Amazing Grace."

One special extra this year is a free breakfast at Old Country Buffet on Saturday morning with time to interact with the speakers. There will be five sessions beginning Friday at 7:30 P.M. and ending on Sunday, at 4:00 P.M. For help in arranging lodging, phone (480) 897-3125.

e-mail: lynnpshort@aol.com.

CREATION WEEK IN CHICAGO AREA

Oak Lawn Bible Chapel presents a special week of creation teaching with Russ Hanson. The meetings will be held March 13-16, 2001, Tuesday through Friday, at 7:30 PM.

The Pre-flood World (Tuesday)
The Genesis Flood (Wednesday)
The Fossil Record (Thursday)
The Dinosaur Dilemma (Friday)
Laurie Hanson will conduct a children's workshop.

Oak Lawn Bible Chapel
4259 W. 107th St.
Oak Lawn, IL 60453
815-485-7009

Announcing a new UPLOOK Ministries Rise Up Conference

RISE UP & WORK: The Lord is Coming!

Mark your calendars!

December 26-29, 2001

Indianapolis, Indiana

More details to come

MINISTRY IN GRAND RAPIDS

The annual Spring Conference, hosted by the assembly at Northwest Gospel Hall, is planned for March 23-25 with speakers Harold Summers (BC) and Alan Park (SC). The conference meetings will be held at White Hills Bible Church (3900 East Fulton St., Grand Rapids, MI). For information:

Tim Johnson at (616) 456-9166
or (616) 791-4179

DALLAS AREA CONFERENCE

The Dallas Area 42nd Conference is scheduled for April 6-8. Lord willing, Arnot McIntee and Jamie Hull will be ministering the Word.

The meetings will be held at Wheatland Bible Chapel (1303 W. Wheatland Road, Duncanville, TX)

For information, call:

John Daniels at 972-424-9889
jandmdaniels@email.msn.com

EASTER CONFERENCE

The Christians at the Marple Christian Assembly (Media, PA) will be hosting their annual Easter conference, Lord willing, April 14 and 15. Meetings are planned for Saturday evening and all day on Sunday. The expected speakers are Donald Norbie (CO), John Bjorlie (MI), and Robert Gessner (PA).

James Martindale
(610) 273-3013
jmarti0219@aol.com

CONF. IN LOGANSPOUT, IN

Believers in the Indiana area are invited to the annual spring conference at the Logansport Gospel Chapel (321 Cliff Dr., Logansport, IN) on April 21. The expected speaker is Art Auld (OH). Refreshments at 9:30 AM with sessions at 10 and 11. Lunch will be provided. Art Auld will again speak Sunday morning, April 22.

Ralph Garver at (219) 722-1012
Leegar@Lneti.com

CHICAGO AREA SPRING CONF.

The Chicago Area Spring Conference will be held, Lord willing, April 27-29 at the Palos Hills Christian Assembly (10600 S. 88th Ave., Palos Hills, IL). The expected speakers are William Burnett, Sandy McEachern, and Tom Wilson. Children's meetings will be taken by Craig and Nancy Rollinger.

Robert Fiebig
(708) 448-2552

LADIES' RETREAT

A ladies' retreat is planned for May 4-6, 2001 at Camp Iroquoia, in Hallstead, Pennsylvania. For further information, please contact Tom Freeman at 609-585-1835 or e-mail tfreeman3@juno.com

MEN'S CONFERENCE

Horton Haven Christian Camp in Chapel Hill, TN will be hosting a Men's Conference, April 27-28. Dave Glock from Emmaus Bible College (Dubuque, IA) will be the speaker. His topic will be Biblical Concepts vs. Traditions. For registration information, contact:

Kevin King
P. O. Box 276
Chapel Hill, TN 37034
(931) 364-7656

HortonHavenChristianCamp@juno.com

ONTARIO WORKERS' AND ELDERS' CONFERENCE

The theme of the 2001 Ontario Workers' and Elders' conference is: Shepherds of God's Flock, with a burden for the local assembly and its role in bringing glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bernard Osbourne from Great Britain has been invited to bring devotional Bible studies, and the other plenary sessions will be taken by Art Auld, Brian Gunning and Ernie Sarlo. A number of seminars will be offered.

The conference will be held, Lord

willing, May 9-11 at Oakwood Bible Chapel in Windsor, ON.

Patrick Long
905-433-0808
pbl@msc.on.ca

WORKERS' CONFERENCE PACIFIC SOUTHWEST

Men and women interested in the work of the Lord are invited to the annual conference at Lakeside Bible Camp on Whidbey Island in Washington State, May 15-18 (Tuesday-Friday) 2001. This year's speaker will be Harold Summers from Vancouver, BC. The cost of the conference is \$65.

Contact: LeRoy Junker
505 Mackenzie Road S.W.
Olympia, WA 98512
whitebeard@home.com

CONTACT IN POWELL, WY

John Tillotson, former correspondent for the assembly of believers in Powell, WY has moved to the Gillette, WY area. Please pray for them as they meet with a few families who are interested in starting a new assembly in Gillette.

The new contact in Powell is:
Kevin Schmidt
Assembly of Believers
656 North Clark St.
Powell, WY 82435
(307) 754-8095

LOOKING FOR USED BOOKS

If anyone has extra copies of books from "The Serious Christian" series or knows where they may be obtained, please contact:

Aaron Silva
P. O. Box 339
Sandwich, MA 02563

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

The Board of Directors of Horton Haven Christian Camp in Chapel Hill, TN recently decided to begin a Discipleship Training Program in



September 2001. The program is for young men who have graduated from high school and are interested in investing a year of their lives in intensive Bible study and practical discipleship. It is designed to present a survey of the Old and New Testaments, Hermeneutics, NT Church principles, and personal Bible study methods.

Courses with practical experience will include: teaching of the Scriptures to adults and children, witnessing effectively, and other pastoral activities.

The young men will be mentored by elders from area assemblies.

Horton Haven Christian Camp
P. O. Box 276
Chapel Hill, TN 37034
(931) 364-7656
HortonHavenChristianCamp@juno.com

SCHOOL OF EVANGELISM

If you are interested in evangelism and want to increase your Bible knowledge, you may pray about attending The Ezekiel Project School of Evangelism. This is a nine-month program that combines the teaching of God's Word with practical experiences in evangelism.

The Ezekiel Project, Inc.
P. O. Box 51
Armada, MI 48005
(810) 784-4142
www.tepse.org

WORKERS NEEDED IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

The town of Hearst, Ontario is situated halfway between North Bay and Thunder Bay on Hwy 11. It has a population of about 6000 people—90% of whom are French speaking. There is a small assembly in the town with 20 to 25 adults and approximately 12 children. The Christians have been praying that the Lord would send someone to help in the area there. The worker should be

GOSPEL OUTREACH IN TAMPA, FL AREA

Are you interested in reaching out to the lost with the gospel? Join with us in a gospel outreach. Bible and Life Ministries together with the Land O' Lakes Bible Chapel, in Land O' Lakes, FL (Tampa area), is organizing a weekend outreach on Friday, March 23 and Saturday, March 24. There will be a special push on Saturday, March 24. Our goal will be to reach 1,000 homes in this town, with door-to-door evangelism and tract distribution. Bob Brown (LA) will be with us for meeting during the weekend.

Come and join with us! For more information, please contact:
David Dunlap: phone 813-996-1053 or e-mail d.dunlap@juno.com

bilingual, with French as the first language or who speaks very fluently in French. Contact:

Allen Lemoine
lemoine@ntl.sympatico.ca

COMMENDATION

Roger and Sarah Poling

The elders of Warrenville Bible Chapel (Warrenville, IL) believe that Roger and Sarah Poling have been led by the Lord to serve Him at Emmaus Bible College (Dubuque, IA) and the surrounding area. The Lord called Sarah to serve as Field Studies Co-ordinator at the college. Roger has a full-time job and is involved in Emmaus ministries.

Roger and Sarah have maintained a good testimony and are now in fellowship at Asbury Community Chapel (Dubuque, IA). Both have been faithful in attendance and participation at the meetings as well as serving the Lord in children's and youth ministries. Roger and Sarah have shown hospitality to many and have encouraged and nurtured many students at Emmaus Bible College.

Jonathan Glock

The elders of the assembly of believers that meet at College Heights Chapel (Murfreesboro, TN) commend Jonathan Glock to the ministry of teaching and preaching both to youth and adults. Jon has faithfully served the Lord among the believers for more than six years at College Heights Chapel.

Becky Blais

The December/January issue of *Uplink* reported the homecall of Ray Blais. His wife, Becky, desires to be fully occupied with the Lord's work. She has many opportunities, especially in connection with Camp Li-Lo-Li. The elders at Northgate Bible Chapel, Rochester, NY, consider her a commended worker in her own right. They praise the Lord for the gift, experience, and wisdom that she has demonstrated.

Charles and Bonnie Nunley

Due to personal reasons, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nunley are unable to continue the work of door-to-door and street evangelism in central Florida, which they were commended to by Hiawassa Bible Chapel (Orlando, FL). Charles and Bonnie have agreed that the commendation would no longer be in effect. However, they still value our prayers for them as they seek to serve the Lord in other ways.

Morris Johnston

The assembly of believers at Fairview Hall, Dublin (Rep. of Ireland) commend Morris Johnston to full time service for the Lord. Originally from N. Ireland, Morris has been in fellowship at Fairview Hall since 1997. During these past three years, he proved himself to be a faithful and committed servant of the Lord in attending and participating in regular assembly meetings as

well as being engaged in door-to-door visitation and follow-up work.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Southwest Bible Camp

Southwest Bible Camp in Glenwood, NM is in need of a full-time, commended worker. Recently Gordon and Hazel Sutherland retired, providing an opening for someone who possesses maintenance skills as well as camp management skills.

After forty years, the camp continues to be fruitful and is growing with the primary vision to serve Southwest area assemblies with summer camps and retreats throughout the year. The individual will

report to the Board of Directors.

Contact: James Hunt
7717 Springwood Dr.
El Paso, TX 79925
(915) 598-4660

Native Children's Camp

An experienced camp cook is needed to provide meals for approximately 30 people. This is a wonderful opportunity for a believer with a servant attitude and a love for native children.

This is a paid position, working five-and-a-half days a week for six weeks during the months of July and August 2001. The camp is located near Parry Sound, Ontario.

Ray or Anna Smith
(705)329-4587

EYE NEED HELP

Dr. Mike Gaynier, Ophthalmologist, is looking for and praying about an associate (either an optometrist or an ophthalmologist) to share his practice in the Dayton, Ohio area.

Call (800) 900 EYES.

CLARIFICATION

The notice that appeared in our December/January issue about the Arabic Emmaus Correspondence Courses in St. Louis, MO, should have mentioned that the work of translating these courses into Arabic has been done since the 1940's by assembly workers in the Middle East. It is now being done in France and in Nazareth, Israel.



Teach and Testify (TnT) Teams Ireland is a cross-cultural missions opportunity which doesn't require learning another language to be effective. After four days of orientation and evangelism training, the team shares in 17 days of evangelism and ministering to assemblies.

Along with a busy schedule of serving, there is also time each day for personal quiet time, group Bible study and prayer. Team members are built up through fellowship with each other, with the Irish believers, and with missionaries.

"Apart from the practical help in bringing the gospel directly to our neighborhood, which was very much appreciated, those that participated on the TnT Team were an immense encouragement and example to us all but especially to our own young people. The eagerness of those on the

TEACH AND TESTIFY IN IRELAND

team to participate in all aspects of the life of the assembly had a marked effect..." —*Eric Davis, assembly elder and commended worker, Dublin, Ireland*

"While in Ireland we received good discipleship by fellow teamers and the Irish folk. Going to Ireland provided me with an opportunity to build new relationships as well as to be stretched outside of my comfort zone." —*Jen Nichol, 2000 TnT Team member, Fortier, MB*

"What stands out to me most is how friendly the Irish believers are and how much respect they have for the Word of God... This experience has definitely given me a better idea of the prayer needs in Dublin as well as in the rest of Ireland."

—*John Lawford, 2000 TnT Team member, Silver Springs, MD*

"Oh yes, short term workers are vital! They are a great encouragement to us resident missionaries, as they bring their zeal and youthful enthusiasm, and also sometimes a different perspective on things that

we might not see. It is wonderful to be able to cover areas in a more intense way, such as distributing 10 or 15,000 tracts in a few weeks, with a group of folks."

—*Kathy Moriarity, commended assembly missionary*

Several Irish assemblies and missionaries have requested a TnT Team for this summer. Plans are underway to try to meet these needs. Will you prayerfully consider coming to Ireland and getting involved in ministering to these assemblies and in reaching out with the gospel?

If you are 18 years or older, in good health, and someone whom your home assembly would recommend, if you believe that the Lord would have you get involved with TnT Teams this summer, please contact Ron Hampton for more information and an application:

TnT Teams
874 London St, Winnipeg, MB
Canada R2K 3P7
TnTTeams@attcanada.ca
204-663-9628 or 204 669-6026

Grace outreach

There are creative ways to get out the good old gospel.

The Grace Chapel assembly, Winnipeg, MB decided that it had been far too long since we had mounted any kind of concentrated gospel effort. While we decided to organize such a special outreach, we believed we needed to try something different from simply a week of gospel meetings held at the chapel. With this in mind, we invited brother Gary Weeks, commended by the Markham Bible Chapel (ON) to come and work with us from November 24 to December 3, 2000.

For those not familiar with brother Gary Weeks' history and ministry, Gary and his singing partner Dave Beckett in 1973 had a Canada-wide and international pop hit with their song, "Could You Ever Love Me Again." Over the next few years they had many more pop hits in Canada and around the world. By 1977, Gary and Dave were performing with such acts as The Carpenters and The Captain and Tenille. In the midst of this, Gary also became a commercial airline pilot.

Gary is no longer a pop singer, an entertainer, nor a commercial pilot. He and his wife Claudette have been serving the Lord full-time since the early 80's in Canada, Ireland and Greece. A pivotal point in Gary's life and relationship with the Lord came in 1979 as, according to him, "I found myself in Jerusalem as a tourist standing at the place where Jesus was crucified. And standing there in the shadows by myself, I realized how ashamed I was about the way I had lived my life."

The first weekend Gary was with us he ministered to and challenged

us from the Word of God on such subjects as "Knowing God's Will" and "Old Testament Heroes—The Kind of People God Uses." This was timely ministry for an assembly preparing for a gospel outreach. Following the weekend of ministry came what we named "The Grace Outreach." The object of this week of outreach was to sow the good seed of the gospel of grace, trusting the Lord for the reaping.

While seven days wasn't a lot of time, as an assembly we wanted to accomplish as much as we could. We prayed that the Lord would make it clear to us what He would have us do. We believe He did! Since we are a smaller assembly, we then prayed that the Lord would supply the people and the finances necessary to do what we believed He wanted us to do. Again, wonderfully He did!

Personally we wanted to reach out to our unsaved families and friends. We also wanted to reach out to the neighborhood around the chapel. Finally, we wanted to do something that would scatter the seed in the broadest way possible across our city of some 650,000 people. In order to reach out personally, we organized what we called Hospitality Evenings in the homes of some of the believers. These hosts invited Gary for supper and then invited their own unsaved family, friends, neighbors, workmates, etc. over after supper for



Gary Weeks plays his guitar and sings during a Christian concert hosted by the assembly.

coffee and dessert and an opportunity to meet Gary and hear his testimony. For the most part those who came to the homes were those who hadn't and wouldn't come to the chapel. It is easier getting people to come to homes they are familiar with than to a church building.

One couple in the assembly, saved later in life, moved back to Winnipeg to be witnesses for the Lord to their grown children and grandchildren. While this couple has been faithful in sharing the gospel in word and deed, their family had been very hesitant to come to anything at the chapel. In a real answer to prayer, almost all of the family members came to the home. Gary used the opportunity to present the gospel as clearly as if he had been standing behind the pulpit at the chapel.

On Friday evening, we hosted a

Community Christmas Banquet in the chapel. We distributed 3000 invitations to the chapel neighborhood, knocked on some doors, took out ads in our community newspaper, and personally invited people to the free four-course banquet. While the banquet was free, our neighbors seemed to appreciate us collecting non-perishable food items to be distributed by an inter-city mission. Gary was our after-dinner speaker, sharing the gospel and singing.

More than sixty visitors came for the banquet including many from our neighborhood whom we had never met before. In fact, we received a needed rebuke as an assembly when a family who lived at 20 Berrydale Avenue said they had often wondered who we were and what went on in "that" building. By the way, Grace Chapel's address is 19 Berrydale!

On Saturday evening we put on a free Christian concert titled "An Evening with Gary." We advertised for people to come and hear former Canadian pop star Gary Weeks of the singing duo Gary and Dave, tell his story "From Pop Star to Preacher." While we didn't have as many visitors come to the concert as we expected—a more neutral venue might have helped—the lead-up to this concert certainly gave us unprecedented opportunities. Literally hundreds of thousands of Manitobans had the chance to hear Gary share his testimony and the gospel.

Because of Gary's past success in the pop music industry, we were able to get him interviews on two morning radio programs. One was on the perennially top-rated program in Manitoba. The presenter of this open-line program who typically comes across as off-handed and cynical was personally moved by Gary's conversion story, the song Gary sang on air and by being reminded of the impact similarly sincere Christians had years before on his own family. The moderator's parents were Hungarian Jews whose lives were saved during World War II through the efforts of Christians. He commented on Gary's obvious "love for his Lord" and continued to remark on the air, "I saw the same spirit of Christ in Gary Weeks that must have been in the people who saved my family." It was a marked change from the anti-Christian rhetoric that is typically heard on secular radio.

During the second interview on another station, the

DJ gave Gary the opportunity to not only share his testimony but also to talk about the unconditional love of the Lord Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death on the cross at Calvary. Remember: this is on a pop music station! It turned out that this DJ, while seemingly not interested himself, had an uncle who years ago was the president of a Bible college and another uncle who was involved in the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. The door is wide open for Gary to return to both these stations in the future. It was amazing to see how God overruled, opened doors, and made it possible for hun-

dreds of thousands to hear the gospel who might not have otherwise.

The impact of the week on the saints, the assembly, and those who heard the gospel is still being felt. While we know of no professions, we continue to trust the Lord for the results. How many have been set on the road to discovering Christ as a result of the radio interviews, the community banquet, the concert and the home hospitality evenings, we'll only know in eternity. One thing is certain: a tremendous work of sowing the seed was accomplished. Now we pray for the reaping. While the staple of any assembly's evangelism needs to always be the personal witnessing of the saints in word and deed, special outreaches by the

assembly (which might be termed "event evangelism") are still needed. Specially planned outreaches can accomplish any number of things: focus much-needed attention on evangelism; stimulate the assembly to pray more urgently and expectantly; stretch the assembly's faith; produce practical unity; cause greater commitment and involvement of the part of the assembly members; challenge the believers to invite family, friends, neighbors, workmates, etc., which initiates personal evangelism opportunities; encourage Christians to become bolder and better equipped as witnesses; provoke the saints to create more contacts with non-Christians; get believers in the mindset of "going out" with the gospel instead of just waiting for people to "come in"; supplement personal witnessing; give opportunity for the gospel to be preached by a gifted evangelist. Of course when some or all of these things begin to happen, real blessing always results: the gospel goes out, the lost are saved, the believers are built up, the assembly grows, and most importantly, the Lord Jesus Christ is glorified!



WHAT'S GOING ON?

THE BIG PICTURE

- The per capita income of the world's 17 richest countries exceeds \$20,000 annually.
- Per-capita income for the 21 poorest countries is under \$1,000.
- The earth's population, now 6.055 billion, is growing at an annual rate of 1.3 percent. This means a net increase of 145 people per minute or 76 million people a year.

—www.wheaton.edu

WITCHDOCTORS? SORRY, THE GOSPEL HAS ARRIVED

NTM missionaries in Indonesia Keith and Anita Miles recently reported that after a plane crash in a remote tribal area, which killed several government officials, rescue efforts were hampered by bad weather. One official taking part in the rescue asked for witch doctors to pray to their gods to move the clouds away. The missionary told the official that since the gospel had arrived, the people relied on God alone to move the clouds. A group of villagers prayed to God for a clear sky.

The next day dawned without a cloud. Rescue efforts were completed by 8 A.M., and the officials came back for a follow-up prayer meeting.

CHILDREN'S WORK IN CUBA

In Cuba, primary school children are typically indoctrinated with the basics of Marxism. Despite that, an increasing number of children are hearing the gospel in children's meetings, which mostly take place in private homes. These groups meet every week, attracting children between 3 and 4 years old; older teenagers with no church back-

ground also attend. The services include puppets, music, and biblical stories. Most services are attended by 30 to 50 children, and the parents send their children even if they themselves are not Christians.

—Pulse

EMMAUS GOES TO CHINA

I was privileged to visit Mainland China in early November. Boyd and Blanche Aitken, veteran missionaries among the Chinese people, several believers from the On Fook assembly in Hong Kong and myself traveled together to Shaanxi Province. We met with a devoted brother who is helping with the translation of Emmaus courses. What a great encouragement it was to visit with him, discuss the possibilities of

using the Emmaus courses and find out about some of the household churches in the area.

There is a tremendous need for material that will ground people in what happens to them when they trust the Lord Jesus as Savior. Beyond this there is a great need for the simple truths about living the Christian life, recognizing false teaching and meeting together as an assembly of believers.

It has been pointed out that God in His Sovereignty has used the political leaders of China to prepare for the spread of the gospel. The country has been unified by the language, the building of modern roads, railway and telecommunication systems and, strangely enough, the attack on traditional religion, superstition and idolatry.

We anticipate in the Lord's will to have about twelve Emmaus courses (now in Classical Chinese) converted to the Simplified Script. We are trusting the Lord to help us have a network of believers who will help distribute them when we reach that stage. It may be, in the end, that the best thing we can do for the sake of the gospel and for the edification of the believers are to provide them with solid Christian literature. Emmaus courses have been used by the Lord in more than 90 countries in the world and there is excitement at making these available in Mainland China. —Charles Fizer

EARTHQUAKE IN INDIA

The earthquake which struck India in January is reported to be the most powerful ever experienced by that country. One source estimates that 20,000 people are dead, 30,000 are injured and 125,000 are missing or unaccounted for.



CMML
Disaster Fund (India)
PO Box 13
Spring Lake, NJ 07762-0013

Bitterness to blessing

Only One has the power to turn the brackish experiences of life sweet.

As the tree that was cast into the bitter waters at Mara turned them sweet for millions of the children of Israel (Ex. 15:23-25), so seven New Testament women bearing the name of Mary, meaning “bitter,” became a blessing to many. Was it not because the “tree,” the Lord Jesus Christ, became a part of their lives?

Let us examine seven blessed characteristics of the Lord Jesus as reflected in the lives of these women.

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

Bitter: “*And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed*” (Lk. 2:34-35).

Blessing: “*And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour*” (Lk. 1:46-47).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the **Saviour**.

MARY OF BETHANY (house of affliction)

Bitter: “*Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled*” (Jn. 11:32-33).

Blessing: “*And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go*” (Jn. 11:44).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the **Master**.

MARY OF MAGDALA

Bitter: We are told that she had been possessed or controlled by demons (Mk. 16:9).

Blessing: “*Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils*” (Mk. 16:9).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the **Liberator**.

MARY, MOTHER OF JOHN MARK

Bitter: Her son was a quitter (Acts 15:37-38). “*And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work*” (Acts 15:37-38).

Blessing: “*Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry*” (2 Tim. 4:11).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the **Restorer**.

MARY, A ROMAN BELIEVER

Bitter: The labor involved in the work of God can be a costly thing. “*Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us*” (Rom. 16:6).

Blessing: But when it is done for the Lord, any bitterness is turned to

sweetness. Her name is recorded eternally in the Word of God as a blessing to the Lord’s people.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the **Record-keeper**.

MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS AND JAMES

Bitter: She wept at the cross. “*And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto Him: among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses...*” (Mt. 27:55-57).

Blessing: She rejoiced at the tomb. “*And...Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him...And [an angel] saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him*” (Mk. 16:1-7).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the **Conqueror**.

MARY, WIFE OF CLEOPAS

Bitter: “*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene*” (Jn. 19:25).

Blessing: “*He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself...He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him...*” (Lk. 24:27, 30-31)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the **Teacher and our Abiding Friend**.

Aged Anna

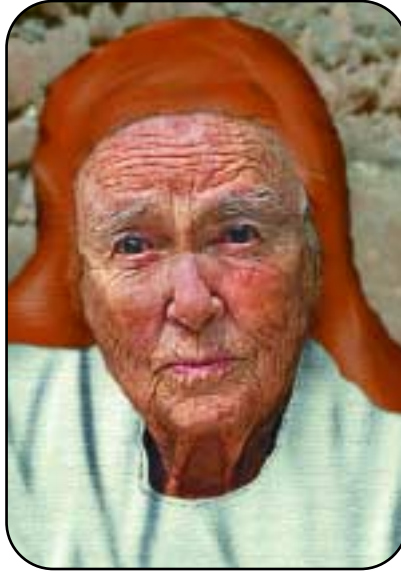
The Lord through Luke took notice of her. We should, too.

Again and again I have been greatly moved at the records in the New Testament concerning the devotion of women. Never can I forget the prominence that Luke, the beloved physician, gives to five widows. The most renowned is Anna—and what a beautiful name, meaning “favor” or “grace.” She was the daughter of Phanuel, which means “the face of God” and linked with the tribe of Asher, which is rendered “happiness” or “prosperous.”

1. *Anna was known as a prophetess* (v. 36). Why? It may be that her husband was a prophet, or because she was one through whom God spoke to others.

As Anna gazed upon the Babe of Bethlehem she knew the prophetic volume of truth was fulfilled in Him. During her long, godly life her mind had been saturated with the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Redeemer, the seed of the woman, and she knew this Child was none other than the Lord’s Anointed. She spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. For eighty-four years as a widow her soul had been sustained by the Word of God, and all her hopes and aspirations were bound up in Him (Prov. 16:31).

2. *Anna was a servant of God* (v. 37). What better epitaph could one have than a testimony of having served the Lord? “*Ye serve the Lord Christ*” (Col. 3:24) was the apostle’s word to the Christian slaves at Colosse as he urged them to do their menial tasks as unto the Lord




Himself. A carpenter was once asked why he troubled to finish off a magistrate’s bench so carefully. His reply was, “I can’t do otherwise; besides, I may have to sit on it one of these days.” A better reply was given by the little servant girl when she was asked why she took such pains in washing the doorstep. “I am doing it for the Lord Jesus.” Ah! if anything be done for Him it will be done well.

3. *Anna was self-denying.* It is said she fasted (v. 37). Anna did not fast, as some do, to obtain favor with God, but, knowing the grace of the Lord, she was willing to deny herself that she might serve the Lord better.

4. *Anna was prayerful* (v. 37). Her prayers ascended to God “*night and day*.” She was incessant in her pleading. An old writer says, “Prayer is the key of the morning and the lock of the evening.” If we pray each morning before we go out on life’s

pathway, we shall unlock the mercies God has for us; and if we look to Him at the close of the day we shall know that we are locked in with God from all harm and evil, as Noah was when the Lord shut him in the ark.

5. *Anna was thankful.* Simeon was not alone in his thanksgiving, for Anna “*gave thanks likewise unto the Lord*” (v. 38). Praise is comely to the Lord. Those who bless God with their praises are sure to be blessed by God with His mercies. A thankful man is full of blessing.

6. *Anna was a true witness.* “*She spake of Him*” (v. 38). Her testimony of Christ is implied in that she “*spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem*.” A true witness always tells what Christ is, what He has done, and what He is able to do, as known from personal experience. She became the first herald of the incarnation to all who looked for the Redeemer in Jerusalem. What greater prophecy or witness could there be concerning this helpless Babe? She was foremost of the prophetesses in the New Testament and is linked with eminent Old Testament figures like Miriam, Deborah and Huldah. How we thank God for such godly sisters of the past as well as in our generation. Such ministry may be hidden from men and be seldom in the limelight, yet it is so precious to God and of tremendous benefit to those who serve. Oh! the blessedness of those who prayerfully and patiently await His coming. God grant to our generation more women like Anna. 

Lydia of Thyatira

How strategic was this open heart to the gospel advance into Europe!

The aggressive spirit of Christianity in the early days is evinced by the fact that Christ had not been twenty years in glory when His missionaries planted His ensign of salvation under the walls of Philippi. Jesus Himself led His missionary band from Asia to the shores of Europe—the field where His cross has struck deepest root and won many noble triumphs. Paul was borne by divine impulse to Troas, which looks across the sea to Greece. There a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There was a man of Macedonia beseeching him, “Come over into Macedonia, and help us” (Acts 16:9). The man of Macedonia, genius of the Hellenic race, waved the distress signal to Christianity. The outcome of that spirit was a yearning outlook towards Calvary.

When Paul and his comrades arrived in Philippi, the man who had invoked their aid seemed to have disappeared. In this great city there was no synagogue, no holy place held by faith as an outpost of the heavenly world. When, therefore, the Sabbath broke over the town, the Christian pioneers went to a riverside where there was a place of prayer.

The missionary company consisted of four—Paul and Silas, Luke and Timothy—four great names. Survey these men as they make their way to the riverside. Can these men conquer Europe? Can they subdue the sophists of Greece, the hordes of Germany, the painted clans of Britain? What do these sons of Asia seek in Europe? Not land, nor fortune, nor renown. They come to start

the heavenly plow; they carry seed from the granary of Calvary; they will plant the cross on a new continent. They carry spiritual supply for spiritual demand. A group of women have prayed by the river, and the knights of the cross are the answer.

Paul and his comrades join the company of devout women. But there is another, an invisible Presence—the Man of Macedonia, the Pioneer, the Missionary of missionaries, the Explorer of man’s soul. Jesus Christ is there in the clime of Homer and Socrates, of Philip and Alexander. He has planted the invisible cross, He has come to annex Europe to His crown.

Paul has been led into Macedonia by the Lord of the harvest, yet he does not begin to preach the moment

he touches the quays of Neapolis. He is deep in the spirit of the cross; still he awaits his Lord’s signal. He expects no ovation, no civic reception. He is not on the outlook for the aristocracy, the leaders of public life.

He knows that the gospel is quiet, that it begins with the cottage and homespun, with persons and not with crowds. He abjures learning, rhetoric, and eloquence. He speaks not of his visions or of his commission, of his labors or of his triumphs. He is to the women by the river what Christ was to the woman at Jacob’s well. He points to the heathen city, without God. He establishes a common platform of faith. He is soon in the holy Book and in the holy land. The river shore becomes Judean soil. A little hill crowned with a cross



arises outside the gate. There is a garden near, and in the garden a grave. From the slope of Olivet ascends the Fulfiller of the Law, the Redeemer, the Hope of men.

Think of this picture in the blue-roofed morning, in the stillness of the Sabbath air. Without priest, without ritual, without patronage, without the favor of states, without routine, and without traditional restraint, slowly as a seed and silent as a force of nature, was the beginning of the gospel in Europe. We would give much for a descriptive report of this service. In subject and method it would supply a model for missionary preaching. We

are certain of two things: Christ was the theme of the glorious conversation; and Paul's personal experience was the atmosphere through which the cross was revealed. Paul could not speak long without stamping his hearer's mind with the terms distinctive of the gospel. Hence Lydia's entreaty, "*If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house,*" is an unconscious echo of the great Pauline doctrine of justification by faith in Christ.

Christ opened His mission in Europe among women, and this in Greece, whose great teachers had left women

A businesswoman who believed God

by Ross Rainey



Paul's second missionary journey was well under way when the apostle and his companions were stopped by the Spirit of God from taking the gospel into Bithynia, the result being that the Spirit thrust them into Europe. Having crossed the Aegean Sea, this party of gospel pioneers landed at Neapolis, the seaport of Philippi, and then proceeded to Philippi proper. The far-reaching effects of the events recorded in Acts 16 can hardly be overestimated. Philippi, originally called Crenides (from its many springs), was seized by Philip of Macedon in 356 BC. In 168 BC, it passed to the Romans with the rest of Macedonia, and in 42 BC it was made a Roman colony—"Rome away from Rome." Soon it was to feel the impact of the gospel.

The situation in which Paul and his fellow-laborers found themselves was not a promising one, but as always proves true, "Little is much when God is in it." It is apparent that Philippi, being a military outpost, had few Jews. There was no synagogue there, but a mile west of the city

by the Gangites River an enclosure had been noticed which they "*supposed...was a place of prayer*" (16:13, ASV). A new era for women and for Europe was about to dawn, Lydia being the first convert on the continent of whom we have record.

In pursuit of the Holy Spirit's brief biography of Lydia, we wish to stress two particular things.

HER OPENED HEART

Lydia's birthplace was undoubtedly Thyatira in Lydia, the latter having been a Macedonian colony in Asia Minor. It may be that she was named after her homeland. One of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation was located at Thyatira (see Rev. 2:18-29), the city having been especially noted for its dyers. Lydia became "*a seller of purple*" (16:14), purple being a name for a dye which was made from shellfish. The fluid from them was placed on wool, which turned it blue. It was then exposed to sunlight, which turned it green, and finally purple. When it was washed in water it became a brilliant crimson, such material was widely desired and brought a high price. Lydia apparently became a woman of considerable means, eventually carrying on her lucrative business away from her home city. However, money cannot buy peace of mind and heavenly joy, and she was typical of multitudes in her day, as well as at present, groping after reality amidst the vexation of this earthly scene.

Perhaps Lydia had become a Jewish proselyte in her home city, for at that time there was a Jewish settlement in Thyatira interested in the dyeing industry. At any rate, the pagan practices of her day could not satisfy her inner longings, so she sought the monotheism of the Jews.

out of sight. Socrates, the greatest, wisest talker among the Greeks, delighted to waylay men of all crafts and classes with his conversation. But homely and gentle as he was, he would have passed by those women as unable to comprehend his discourse on life and duty and the gods. In Plato's academy woman had no place.

When Christ comes to Macedonia, He opens His school among women. The first member of His Church in Europe is a woman. Lydia is the Western Mary, the mother of European Christianity. She rocks the cradle of the Gentile Church. Her home is the Nazareth from

which have issued the life, the freedom, the reforms, the art, the progress, and glory of Europe.

Marriage or trade had drawn Lydia to Philippi. But God was leading her for higher ends. Her meeting with Paul was the supreme event of her life: Paul and she pursued converging lines of heavenly purpose. Lydia's way to Philippi was as divinely opened as was her heart (v. 14). Thus did Cornelius from Italy and Peter from Galilee meet at Caesarea. When we leave our homes to embark in the world, we are prone to leave our religious habits and convictions behind. Lydia carries the fear and

It is also apparent that she was sincere. In the darkness of her soul Lydia truly longed for heavenly light and peace, and I am convinced that anyone who truly desires to know God will eventually be given light from God Himself. Lydia meant business with God, and through divinely-directed circumstances light came to her through Paul and his companions.

The power which lightened it. Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy were helpless in themselves to open Lydia's heart to Christ and to the truth of God's Word. They were but instruments in the hand of God, but as they conversed with these women by the riverside, presenting the claims of Christ on the soul, Lydia truly believed on the Saviour, realizing that here at last was the answer she had been sincerely seeking in regard to the problem of her sins. Having heard the way of salvation, her heart was opened by the Lord as she heeded the things spoken by Paul (see 16:14 with Rom. 10:17).

The Person who became Lord of it. The entrance of the Lord Jesus Christ into her heart led quickly to the enthronement of Christ over the same. Lydia readily submitted to Christian baptism, thereby publicly confessing the Lord Jesus before all. It is not important to know whether she was saved that particular Sabbath or not. The fact remains that she was truly brought to know Christ, and also her "household" (16:15), all taking their stand in the waters of baptism.

The Lord Jesus Christ had been placed on the throne of Lydia's life, not just on the threshold. To her, Christ was indeed Lord of all!

HER OPENED HOME

The lowliness which prompted it. Having willingly submitted to water baptism, this in itself being a token of her faithfulness to the Lord, Lydia asked Paul and his fellow-laborers to abide in her house, that is, if they had judged her to be faithful. She wanted her house to be used for the

glory of her Lord, knowing that it could serve as a splendid base of operations for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ. Actually, "if" in verse 15 should read "since," Lydia knowing that Paul and his companions had already judged her to be faithful, and so she made known her desire toward them.

The love which provided it. Note the closing words of verse 15: "And she constrained us" (the only other place in the New Testament where the word for "constrained" is used is in Luke 24:29). It is apparent that Paul at first demurred, preferring to be independent, burdening no one, not even a woman of wealth. However, as the New Testament scholar A. T. Robertson has said, Lydia "had her way as women usually do" (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 3, p. 254).

It was Christ-like love which provided a home for these pioneers of faith. Apart from such homes the early missionary movement would hardly have been possible. There is a continuing need for similar homes today. Is your home open to the Lord and His own?

The liberality which permeated it. What a haven of hospitality Lydia's home must have become (16:40)! Those of God's people needing shelter and comfort were afforded a warm welcome. Perhaps it became the meeting place of the first assembly established in Europe, just like the church in Philemon's house (Philem. 2). Though Lydia is not named, she is undoubtedly included in the women mentioned in Philippians 4:3. Furthermore, it is quite probable that she was used by the Lord to carry the gospel back to her native city of Thyatira, one of the very areas Paul and his companions had been forbidden by the Spirit to go (see 16:6-8).

It is significant that the gospel of Christ in Europe had its beginning in the hearts and lives of women and, in a sense, the Macedonian call was that of a woman—namely, Lydia. Have you ever heard such a call? Have you endeavored to go (16:10)?



the worship of God into the land of the stranger.

She was in trade—a seller of purple, not a wearer of purple; yet she gave a day out of seven to her Creator. Neither fatigue nor care held her away from the holy assembly by the riverside.

Still her heart was closed. Closed in what sense? Not against truth, for she had received it; nor against light, for she had hailed it; nor against the fear of God, for she feared and worshiped Him. Her heart was not closed against the gospel, which had not yet knocked for admission. From Paul she first heard of Christ the Crucified. Paul carried her first invitation to the feast of salvation. In immediate response, Lydia is one with the penitent thief, with Zacchaeus and Cornelius. Her heart yielded to the first knock of redeeming love, became an ear to hear the voice of grace, an eye to mirror Calvary.

While Paul conversed, Lydia ceased to hear the river lapping at its shore, ceased to see her companions, ceased to remember her warehouse and her purple. She only heard the voice of the wonderful stranger. She heard of love and sacrifice, of faith and righteousness, of peace with God and reigning grace, of deliverance from sin and of eternal life.


The things spoken by Paul were the grandest that the human ear can hear. The merchant found the precious pearl, the dealer in purple found her robe of righteousness. Her heart was opened for the King of Glory to come in, her understanding opened to receive divine

light, her will opened to receive the divine law, and her affections opened to receive divine love.

Lydia's conversion to the Jewish religion left her mind open to the faith of Christ. It was the spiritual element in Judaism that drew proselytes. They cared little for priest or temple. They thought much of sin. They welcomed the revelation of a God merciful, loving, and holy. They were in search of salvation. Nursed in the Hebrew faith and living in a Gentile town, Lydia would have experienced a deeper struggle in renouncing the religion of her fathers. This obstacle would have to be overcome before her heart could be won.

Besides, Lydia was a woman of genius, the genius of the heart—the inspired heart—perceptive and receptive. The Lord may have opened other hearts as He opened hers, but the language descriptive of the divine operation is applied in the New Testament to hers alone.

Christianity is the only belief that has laid siege to the heart; the only faith that has opened the heart, emptied the heart, purified the heart, and healed the heart.

Europe took its keynote from Paul, the most intellectual of the apostles; but in Paul's word of the cross there was no attempt to confine his message to the intellect alone. That is a message of love, and love appeals to the heart. The herald who calls to repentance must knock at the door of conscience. The preaching that assails the heart and moral sense of men is beyond all others in the succession of Paul and the company of the apostles. 



No second fiddles with God



No one likes to feel inferior. People use all kinds of methods to keep this from happening to themselves. But with God, we never need to waste our time evaluating our position in the world.

There are two identical phrases used in Luke 1 that illustrate this to us. This phrase is: "*He shall be great*" (in vv. 15 and 32). In our natural thinking, we would readily accept them both if describing two of a similar kind. But here, one describes a mere man and the other the Son of God. How could God be so gracious as to allow the same comment to be applied to one so infinitely inferior to Him? It was because God would dwell in that human vessel, who would also represent God in his life. Who would want the *self-esteem* that the world promotes, when we could actually have the *esteem of God* in our lives? Promoting self robs us of the greatness with which He longs to endow us.

Two women gave birth to these ones called "*great*."

Mary is respected and thought of more often, but because God was represented in both who were born to them, He would use this term for both. Some will be more famous in time, but that is only from the world's viewpoint. God is watching over the generations, marking out the "great ones" who are willing to let Him dwell in their human vessel so He can be seen through their lives.

Christ came into the world to glorify His Father. What a privilege to have the same ministry given to every believer! What a privilege for *every* mother, like Elisabeth, to have the opportunity to raise her children to love and consequently represent the Lord. There was no feeling of competition, or of lack. They had very different children, with different ministries, but both, though in different capacities, represented God, who only is pre-eminent. Living in Him, there are no second fiddles in His estimation, no matter what your lot.

—L. Nicholson

Martha, Martha

Jesus, engrave upon my heart—That Thou the one thing needful art.

As the two sisters of Bethany are always brought together in the Scriptures, we are doubtless intended to think of them together. Unfortunately, this has sometimes led to partiality. In endeavoring to consider them individually, it is hoped that we may be preserved from making unjust comparisons, and that we may learn needed lessons from each of them.

The first occasion on which the sisters are mentioned is peculiar to Luke, and Martha is seen as the hostess (Lk. 10:38-42).

THE HOSTESS

That Martha was the daughter, or wife, or widow, of Simon the leper are pure conjectures. Her name means “lady” or “mistress.” She was, in fact, the lady of the house, on whom would devolve the management of household affairs, the reception of the guests, and the duties of hospitality.

As, on a later occasion, Zacchaeus received the Lord joyfully, so we may be sure when Martha received Him into her house she gave Him a royal welcome. Eager to entertain Him to the utmost of her ability, Martha was drawn this way and that, fretting and fussing over the multitude of things that seemed to require her attention, while her sister was seemingly content to sit at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word. Instead of being delighted that her sister should be so engrossed and absorbed, Martha was cumbered about much serving; she felt herself to be slighted and neglected.

That it is a great privilege to



serve the Lord, His own words declare: *“If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor”* (Jn. 12:26).

But it seems that Martha’s preoccupation with what she was doing caused her to forget, momentarily, that she was only a servant of the Lord, that it is He who directs. She became critical of her sister, and her words were lacking in respect to the Lord. Instead of quietly calling her sister to help, if Mary’s help was needed, she went to the Lord: *“Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.”*

Her words were a reflection on Him. Love *“doth not behave itself unseemly”* (1 Cor. 13:5); but, as someone has said, “Self is always captious, as well as important;” and on this occasion there seems to be

undue emphasis on the personal pronoun “me.”

The Lord loved Martha; and, being “full of goodness” (Rom. 15:14), reproved her very tenderly and gently. With the dignity that was proper to Him, He recalled her to herself by repeating her name; and yet He addressed her with an expression of affection and concern, as when He said: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem”* (Mt. 23:37), *“Simon, Simon”* (Lk. 22:31), and *“Saul, Saul”* (Acts 9:4). So now He said: *“Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”* The word “careful” refers to the inner unrest of her soul; the word “troubled” to her outward agitation.

Many people are anxious about the things of this life: *“What shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed?”* Martha was anxious how she might please the Lord; she felt that she could not do enough for Him. Experience teaches that those who are the most censorious are usually those who are by no means conspicuous for their much serving; but, while this is true, the lesson for us all to learn is that we should not be so engrossed with our work for the Lord that our minds become diverted from the Person whom we serve. He would, therefore, have His words to Martha sink down into our hearts: *“One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.”* That Martha profited by His words,

and by His loving tone, her subsequent history shows.

The second occasion on which the sisters are mentioned is peculiar to John; and Martha is seen as a mourner (Jn. 11).

THE MOURNER

We can imagine how busy Martha was when her brother Lazarus was sick; but she and her sister knew to whom to turn in their need. They had such unbounded confidence in the love of the Lord that they felt they had only to let Him know that he whom He loved was sick, and He would come immediately. But when Jesus heard, He said: *"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."* The sisters would naturally think of Lazarus, and of themselves. The Lord thought first of the glory of God. The sickness of Lazarus was the occasion for the glory of God being seen in a way in which it would not otherwise have been known.

So He remained two days longer in the place where He was. Did that seem like love? It seemed more like indifference. Yet it is precisely at this point in the narrative that we read: *"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."* He loved each one of them. Martha, whom many would have placed last, is mentioned first; and Mary, whom many would have placed first, is not even mentioned by name.

There are two words for love in these verses: the affection of a friend, and a stronger word. The sisters in verse 3 and the Jews in verse 36 used the weaker word; John in verse 5 used the stronger word. The sisters knew the Lord had affection for Lazarus, but did not know the strength of His love. The Jews said, *"Behold how He loved him,"* but they did not know the depth of it.

It is the Spirit of God through John who uses the stronger word, and that at the moment when His love might seem to be in question. It was not lack of love but the perfection of love, and the light of His Father's will, that detained the Lord. In the meantime, Lazarus died.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, instead of waiting in the house after the custom of mourners, she went to meet Him; in a place where she could tell Him all that was in her heart apart from the presence of the Jews and from the lamentations in the house. We can picture the scene as, with quivering lips Martha uttered the half-reproachful, yet half-hopeful words: *"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that, even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."* She meant it as an expression of her faith, but she failed to discern His true glory: for she used the word "ask" which the Lord never used Himself in speaking to His Father. The attitude of a suppliant, and a petitioner, is fit and proper for us when we ask of God (cp. Jn. 16:23-24; 1 Jn. 5:14-15); but our

Dorcas the disciple Acts 9:36-42

Dorcas was a woman marked by service for God. She lived in Joppa, the place where Jonah tried to run from doing service assigned to him by God. Though women are to respect the position of men, they need not let the poor service of men hinder them from doing their work for God. Women can still fulfill their personal ministries, in their own realms.

Dorcas was called a *"disciple,"* which is often thought to be a term describing men in the Bible. But here we see this title is available to women as well. The Lord taught that, denying self for the sake of the Lord, every follower of His could be a disciple. Obviously, being *"full"* of good works, she must have denied herself time and things that would, by most others, be spent on themselves.

Some may see it redundant to read *"which she did"* after saying she was full of good works, but how we need to be reminded to do less talking about things and more doing.

Her work was done *"while she was with them."*

This again may seem obvious, but all too often we wait until somebody leaves us to realize we didn't do what we should have done for that person for the Lord's sake. Let us learn by Dorcas' example to do for others, not only while we are with them, (meaning during our lifetime on this earth), but also while we are with them, arranged by God, in the same location.

Our ministries will vary as to how we serve others, but it is worthy of notice that her good works included taking care of the widows. James 1:27 tells us that *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."* Is there one of us that is exempt in knowing some of these?

Beauty is vain (Prov. 31:30), but not your labors in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). So how can we be full of good works like Dorcas? The Lord is good (Ps. 145:9); enjoy Him. He will give you all things richly to enjoy and then we cannot help but want to do good works for Him (1 Tim. 6:17-18). —**L. Nicholson**

Lord always addressed His Father on equal terms.

Jesus said to her, *"Thy brother shall rise again."* Martha believed in the resurrection of the dead, and had no hesitation in replying: *"I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection in the last day;"* but the prospect of resurrection seemed so remote that it could not heal the wound of bereavement. So it was Martha who first heard the words of the Lord, that have since been a comfort to many: *"I am the Resurrection, and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."* Although she answered, *"Yes, Lord,"* when He asked: *"Believest thou this?"* the full meaning of His words could hardly have been understood without the added light of the epistles. Martha's confession was a remarkable confession, in the hour of her grief and disappointment: *"I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world;"* but it was hardly an answer to His question. Martha evidently felt that His words were beyond her. She must have felt like most of us feel when we are taken out of our depth. Without staying for enlightenment, she called her sister secretly, to avoid attracting the attention of the Jews, and perhaps feeling that Mary would better understand, saying: *"The Master is come, and calleth for thee"* if anyone had been inclined to question the reality of the maid's death, or the death of the widow's son, there could be no doubt as to the death of Lazarus. When Jesus came, He found that Lazarus had been in the tomb four days already, having doubtless been buried on the day he died. We can understand, therefore, that when Jesus said: *"Take ye away the stone,"* Martha said to Him, *"Lord, by this time he stinketh."* She could not bear to think that the body of her brother, that must now have seen corruption, should be exposed to view. How tenderly the Lord answered her: *"Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"*

Tears have often been seen at the graveside, but when before was thanksgiving heard? Here was something new in the world's history. Jealous above all things for His Father's glory, Jesus lifted up His eyes and said: *"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me; and I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me."* Although He was the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4), He testified, in the presence of all who stood by that the power that raised Lazarus from the dead was exercised in dependence upon, and in fellowship and communion with, His Father.

"And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth; and he that was dead came forth," an earnest of the unfolding of His power which will call every sleeping saint from the tomb, and an earnest of the power which will later call forth the unsaved dead to appear before the great white throne.

Who can measure the effect of all these things on the heart of Martha or appreciate the insight thus given to her of His glory? She had proved His love, she had seen His tears, she had experienced His sympathy, she had heard His thanksgiving, she had witnessed His power; and life for Martha could never be the same.

THE SERVANT

The third incident is recorded in Matthew 26:6-13 and in Mark 14:3-9, but John is the only writer who connects it with the family of Martha and Mary, and who notes the service of Martha. On this occasion Martha is seen serving without distraction (Jn. 12:1-8).

On His way to Jerusalem for the last time, the Lord came to Bethany where Lazarus was whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and, in doing so, braved the wrath of the council who had given a commandment that, if anyone knew where He was, he should show it, that they might take Him. Their love for their Lord outweighed the threat of excommunication; and, in the case of Lazarus, the threat of death itself. How fitting that those who loved the Lord should make Him a supper, before the bitter cup was presented to His lips on the cross.

True to her character, Martha was serving. Probably her feet and hands moved more quickly than ever; but there is not a word about being "distracted" with much serving, nor of being anxious and troubled. No longer fretful and fussy, preoccupied with her own activities, Martha served in peace and restfulness of spirit. Her work was the same, but her spirit was changed. Love was the inspiration of her service, as it was on the first occasion, but she had learned the blessed secret of attending on the Lord without distraction (1 Cor. 7:35).

When Mary took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment, Martha did not join in the indignant cry of the disciples and say, *"To what purpose is this waste?"* (Mt. 26:8). Maybe she realized, better than the disciples, that the ointment served a very definite purpose; and she silently acquiesced in her sister's act of devotion and worship. One Person and one object alone filled the vision of Martha's soul, and the Lord's eye rested upon her in loving approval.



Mary of Bethany

She was not commended for sitting still but for sitting “at Jesus’ feet.”

The penalty which a great man lays upon the world,” said Hegel, “is to understand him.” The statement would be more accurate had he spoken not of a great man, but of a great saint. Saintliness always surprises. It baffles and vexes our common worldly minds. The men and women of deep and genuine holiness continually amaze us. They have kinder and wiser thoughts; they do more generous and self-sacrificing deeds; they are stronger and tenderer in character than we conceive; they are always rising to some new height of achievement and attaining some fresh triumph over themselves.

For this reason Mary of Bethany is not easy to understand. We sometimes picture her as a simple, almost unlesioned girl. But she was a great saint, a wonder to her household, a bewilderment to the whole village, a perplexity, almost a trial, to the disciples. In her spiritual beauty she was an offense to at least one of them. She rose into zones of faith and adoration and sacrifice in whose air others could not breathe.

Only One understood her. He had to defend her against Martha, had to become her advocate against the censure of His disciples. When we understand why Jesus sets Mary so high we shall know almost all that is worth knowing about saintliness.

Let us begin at the end of the record of her life, and go back to its beginning—from what may be called the outside and pass into its core. Let us begin with her gift of costly spikenard, and go back to the center and source of her moral loveliness.

We find ourselves face to face with three scenes that led to a secret.

The first scene is the breaking of the alabaster box of ointment. It is a scene of home. Mary of Bethany is a type of womanhood never found outside the distinctive people of God. She is in the great succession of Miriam and Deborah, Ruth and Hannah—the woman, who in spite of slips and falls, feared God above every other fear.

But this type of womanhood did not reach the bloom of its wisdom and insight and delicacy until it was touched by Jesus. It may be said with unassailable truth that it is in the soul of a woman like Mary that the word of Christ has free course and is glorified.

Christ can take the coarsest clay and fashion a vessel of honor. He can pluck a brand from the burning and make it bring forth the tender leaf again. But when a young, unstained soul, with a heritage of godliness stored in the heart, led from the earliest years into the house of God and taught His ways, gently nurtured in wise and restraining disciplines—when such a soul comes to Him He works, as a cunning workman will in precious material, His miracle of loveliness.

Mary of Bethany was the daughter of a home of wealth and refinement, as these were realized in the fashion of the time. The marks of its ease of circumstance are set in almost every sentence of the story. The lavish hospitality, the respect shown by sympathizing neighbors, the grave in the rock—a grave such as Joseph of Arimathea with his

riches had bought for himself—the costly box of spikenard of Mary’s own, all indicate the affluence of the family. The courtesies and reticence of speech, the instinctive acts of gentleness, the sense of taste which pervaded the story, reveal the grace of the home. When Christ is received by faith into the heart of a woman trained as Mary was, you may expect wondrously lovely deeds.

So on that night in which He was



Photo: John Nicholson III

Modern-day Bethany

looking forward to His death and burial, when Martha made Him a feast, Mary felt that it lacked something. When a king sat at a table, and men did him honor, not only were the viands rare and costly, not only did flowers lend their color and perfume, but his head was anointed with oil. Mary had only one King. Her eyes were fixed on Him. Her thoughts were busy with His honor. So she ran for her treasure, poured the oil on His head, and the house was filled with the aroma.

Now mark that this was an act of

the home. The house was filled with the odor.

The significance of that statement is clear. We need not range far afield to find the deeds which follow in a succession to Mary's gift, and fill our homes with fragrance. When a daughter pours out her youth and grace in the difficult ministries of the home; when she waits with patient care on the sick and aged, until the snow of her brow steals down and pales the blossom on her cheek; when a woman spends her thought and care in making her home a place of rest and peace for men who face the conflicts of the world; when she humbly accepts the narrow ways and constant humiliations of poverty and care; when she is quick to make the home the place of comfort and solace to those who are weary; when she makes a sacrifice in which she denies herself the dearest joy in life, she breaks something more costly than a box of alabaster—she breaks her woman's heart, that she may honor Christ. There, as she serves, in her great way, she takes rank with Mary.

There are homes into which we enter today where we may hear Mary's gentle footfall, see her pouring forth her ointment, and the whole house is filled with its odor. When you see a woman serving in the costly tasks of the household with this ineffable grace, you understand why Jesus set Mary in the place of honor.

The second scene is the act of adoration. We see Mary not far from her brother's grave. We see the depths within her broken up, and we have revealed the tenacity of her affections. Martha had gone to meet Jesus, and stands to speak with Him. *"But when Mary was come where Jesus was she fell down at His feet."*

An act like this where a human soul prostrates itself in adoration is almost too high for us to appreciate, and all that it means is difficult to grasp. With tender and sacred awe, Mary fell down at Jesus' feet. We have no hint in her of a mind that could reason out the mysteries of the faith. We have no word from her which sets either truth or grace in a phrase. The very words she utters seem to be echoes of what she heard on Martha's lips. The great words of Christ were too great for her. But to her, as to all who have entered into the heart of the Christian revelation, Jesus was all in all. Not what Christ said, not even what Christ did, but what Christ was. She beheld His glory. His declaration of God, His assurance of God's love, His embodiment of God's holiness, all that was pure and just and true and honorable, and lovely, and of good report was enshrined in Jesus. When she fell down at His feet, it was the posture which revealed the attitude of her soul.

There is a faith which is based on a sure-footed reason, and a clear apprehension of God's wisdom and

righteousness. That is the faith which ruled in the heart of Pascal and Edwards and Butler. There is a faith which serves itself heir to the promises of God and is saved by hope. Many of the holiest lives and most self-denying ministries find their dynamic here. All of these our Father, who is patient with His children, accepts and owns. But the faith which captivates the heart of God is that which longs, and reaches out, not so much through clear doctrine, or high obedience, or mystic feeling, or uplifting hopes, but through and for Himself. That sets Mary on high, with Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Peter, and John, and Paul. They were held not merely by His works or by His words. They were held by Himself, and all of them have fallen down in adoration at His feet.

O *serving soul, you must not only do
With Martha, but with Mary ponder too;
Happy's the home where these fair sisters vary,
But most, when Martha's reconciled to Mary.*

—FRANCIS QUARLES

The third scene is that of Mary sitting and hearing His word. This must not be thought of as describing the attitude of a single hour. It sets forth the habit of her life. As Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, learning his wisdom, entering into his ideals, so Mary was a scholar in the school of Christ. The strictest Pharisee could have declared, as they marked her ways, that she had been with Jesus, and had learned of Him.

Do you realize how high this habit of Mary's life is? There may be a certain suspicion of this seemingly idle posture. You are tempted to think that Mary was lacking in the more difficult activities of every day—a creature too wise and good for human nature's daily food. Or it may be the picture you cherish is that of some pale-faced nun such as you see her in the streets, bound about with the white napkin of her cloister tomb.

No. Mary had no idle hand. She was not a mere guest at life's feast. Martha would not have spoken so bitterly, and demanded that Mary be bidden to rise and serve, had service not been the custom of her days. The drudgery of household duties bent her back. The constancy of household tasks soiled and coarsened her hands, as much as Martha's. But she knew what was highest and best in life. She had heard Jesus say, *"The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment."* She had heard Him repeat, *"The words that I*

“speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” She had heard Him appeal, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.”

Why should it concern her to gain all that glittered before the eye. The whole world might cry, *“Who will show me any good?”* Her prayer was, *“Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me.”* That is the mind which men may deride. Jesus ranks it with the highest.

This, whatever may be your life and its fashion, you know to be highest. No man will think lightly of the daily toil and task. No man will sneer at honest success in his calling. But you know in your hearts that no such toil or gain is enough to satisfy a human soul. To sow and to reap, to buy and to sell, to plan and to build, to make the roads and dust the flaunty carpets of the world, is not the highest. What is it all for? What is it all to end in? Is it enough for a man to do some great work, to be a master of some high calling in the world’s estimate, and to win a name and a place among men? How brief is his glory! How vanishing is his work!

You find men who are immersed in this world’s care forming themselves into a club where they may escape from the treadmill of life and give their minds to things that lift their thoughts above the common passions. You find men hungry for a music, when, at the touch of some master, they may rise out of their sordid life, into a spiritual atmosphere. *“Man cannot live by bread alone.”* He must have the Word of God.

These are the souls who make it the habit and passion of their lives to learn His word, and to enter into His wisdom. These rank with Mary when they cast themselves at Jesus’ feet.


We have seen Mary at the feast in her act of grace. We have seen her falling down at Jesus’ feet in her adoration. We have seen her in the very habit of her life and passion of her heart, hearing Christ’s word. Now we come to the secret of it all, and it is set in a word of Jesus. He sets the deep motive of Mary’s deeds, and the true source of her grace, in the declaration, *“Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her.”* Mary had chosen. He takes us back to an hour of definite and determining choice.

The Gospels do not disclose the solemn hour of decision for Christ in many cases. With the delicacy they had learned of Christ, they rather veiled that experience, so unspeakably wonderful, that it is not always lawful to utter. Here we have only a hint of an event, which was the supreme decision in the history of Mary, as it is, and shall be, in the history of all believers.

It takes us back to a day which was the beginning of

all days. I venture to think that it was on that night when first Jesus became the Guest of the household of Bethany. When the evening lamp was lit, He spoke, as His manner was, of His heavenly Father and His care, of the easy yoke and light burden of His service, and of the Good Shepherd seeking His own.

The young, shy, silent girl sat and heard His words. Wonder and fear had long possessed her heart. Her thoughts about God and His ways were darkened by the family sorrow. She had endeavored to keep the commandments, but had to confess her failure with the shame that purity always feels. She felt at times even the desire to be holy fading within. She did not venture to tell out her troubled spirit to self-reliant, clear-minded Martha. She would not whisper her doubts and fears to Lazarus. But as Jesus spoke, she saw the truth of God and His grace. She heard the call to trust and obey, and in a single silent decision, she chose the good part.

The quality of our lives depends upon our choices. The man whose days are full of shame, whose character is daily becoming more degraded, has made his choices, time and time again. The man whose faith and zeal are withering has ceased to make that succession of fresh decisions which shall turn his feet, with every morning light, anew to God’s testimonies. The man whose heart is becoming purer, whose life is becoming nobler, has also made his choice. Even now, if you will have your life abound in deeds which will fill your house with fragrance, and call forth Christ’s high encomium, choose, in an act of faith and of reverence, and your new obedience will be gladdening in the Master’s eyes. 

*Do we ever labor at serving
Till voices grow fretful and shrill,
Forgetting how to be loving,
Forgetting how to be still?
Do we strive for “things” and possessions,
And toil for the perishing meat,
Neglecting the one thing needful—
Sitting at Jesus’ feet?*

*Service is good when He asks it,
Labor is right in its place,
But there is one thing better—
Looking up into His face;
There is so much He would tell us,
Truths that are precious and deep;
This is the place where He wants us,
These are the things we can keep.*

—ANNIE JOHNSON FLINT

The woman's touch

A classic gospel message from a renowned servant of God.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the crowd and said, *Who touched My clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?*" (Mk. 5:30-31)

From the three cases given in Mark 5, this chapter of incurables, Jesus proved Himself Lord over devils, disease, and death. Then we turn the jewel round and catch another flash of its beauty. We see that Jesus is the man's Christ, the woman's Christ, and the child's Christ.

Now I want to speak about the middle case, this woman who had suffered many things of many physicians and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. So Mark says. When Luke tells the story he leaves that bit about the doctors out, but then he was a doctor himself.

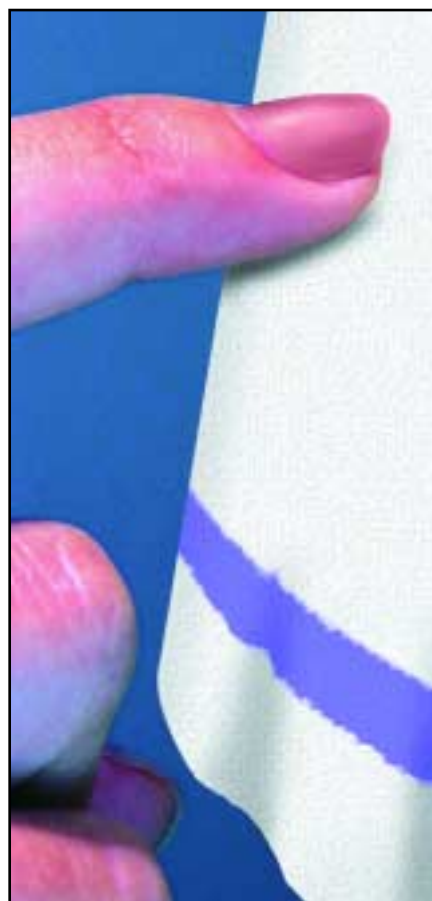
Mark has no scruple; and he says that all her attempts merely aggravated the problem and excited hopes that only ended in despair. She was worse when they finished their attempts than before they started.

That woman represents multitudes. Perhaps you are longing for spiritual healing, for soul satisfaction, you are groping for light. You are trying to climb up out of the slough of your despond; you desire to get your chains broken and your fetters snapped. You say you want the assurance of sins forgiven, to be in possession of peace with God. You believe there is something for you that Christians talk about, and that the Bible describes in the death

and resurrection of the Son of God. Somehow you believe it is for you, but you never get it, hunting after but never finding, always thirsty and never getting a drink of the living stream. Oh, how many fakes some of you have consulted! Some of you spend all your time in hunting up religious quacks. There has not been a preacher in town for twenty years that you have not heard. You boast that there has not been a mission held within reach but you have been there. You are front-seaters, bench-warmers, religious tramps.

Don't smile—I want you to see yourselves. You have been prepared to listen to any fad, any big person, any sensational story, any man-made message, any new thing. But you have not got healing that way; and if I could see you as God sees you, I should see you worse today than you were ten years ago, with all your attempts at redemption.

Now you have come to hear this preacher. But at the beginning let me be plain with you. I cannot save you. That is beyond me. But I know One who can, and there is none like Him. He is the most wonderful Physician. He is never baffled; He can diagnose every case. He goes to the root of the mischief. He never makes a blunder. But He must have His way. All the poor, broken-down attempts at social, religious, and spiritual reform, and all the backsliding, and the falls, and the blunders that you have seen around you, have all come about because Christ has



not had His way. Give Christ His way, and He will heal completely.

My friends, your cure is the same as the woman's. Her cure came on the heels of everybody else's failure. Christ's cure always comes there. When people get to the end of things, then Jesus Christ bares His arm and shows His omnipotence, declaring Himself the mighty Saviour. He is a wonderful Jesus.

It is not a quack you want, it is a specialist. It is not the preacher you want, it is not the beautiful hymns

we sing, it is not hearing some great orator, it is not being familiar with books or schools; it is Jesus. It is not even the Bible, for *"the letter killeth."* You may be familiar with it, you may have gone through it I do not know how many times, but till it goes through you, you will not be any better. It is not in tramping to and from church. It is not in performance or ritual. Healing is in Jesus.

Soon after my father's conversion, our tents were just outside Cambridge. My father could not read the Bible in those days. He was only a rough gipsy man, but he was saved, and he did the next best with his motherless children before he went to bed. He used to sing and pray every night. And when he and five children started to sing, you could hear us a few fields away on those dark, winter nights. I can see my father now; he would say, "Before we go to bed, my dears, we will have a hymn or two," and he would strike off.

We had no idea that the people in the cottages across the fields heard the songs and came a little nearer to catch the words, or that they stopped while he prayed. It was a strange thing to hear a gipsy man pray in his tent. These people never expected it.

One woman was smitten in her conscience about her sin. She said, "Here is a rough gipsy man praying, and he is not praying for me to hear him, for he does not know I am here. How is it? I was brought up in a Sunday school, my mother was a good woman, I came from a Christian home. I am a mother but I never pray for my children." The arrow of conviction pierced her soul, and it did not come out easily. For some time she said nothing about it, but she suffered something of the agony that David must have felt when he said, *"While I kept silence my bones waxed old...for day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer."* And I tell you, when the light of God's holiness shines into a guilty soul, it blisters it.

One night her husband came home from work, and he saw there was something the matter. He had noticed it for some days, and he said, "Mary, what is the trouble?" She did not answer. "Mary, are you ill?" Still she kept quiet. "Very well," he said. "I will fetch the doctor," and away he went.

As soon as he had got outside the door, she sent her boy to our old tent, and when he got to the tent he said to my father, "Sir, my mother heard you pray some weeks ago and she has never been happy since. She wants to know if you will come and pray with her."

Father replied, "Of course I will," and away he went.

When he got there, he found the poor woman crying for mercy. It was not long before the plan of salvation

had been pointed out to her and she was rejoicing in Christ. She had met the condition, and her burden had rolled away. Her tears had become telescopes through which she could see Jesus.

Presently the doctor came with the husband. She looked up at the doctor and she said, "Doctor, I have found Him, I have found Him!"

He said, "My good woman, whom have you found?"

"Oh, sir," she said, "My poor soul has been hungry for Jesus, and I have found Him."

"Well," said the doctor, "You don't need me, for you have the best Physician the world ever saw."

That is what I want to say to you: it is not a minister you want, it is Jesus. We are only fingers pointing, we are only voices crying; but, blessed be God, we do point and we do cry and we tell you in one concentrated voice: Only Jesus can do helpless sinners good. Five minutes' honest, definite, intelligent dealing with Jesus Christ will cure your grief, and nothing else will. That is the first thing I want to say.

The second is this, that there is a tremendous difference between thronging Jesus and touching Jesus. There were at least six hundred thousand people who left Egypt for the Promised Land who never reached it. Two men out of the crowd reached it. They were touchers, the others were throngers; the others bleached their bones in the wilderness.

Here is a multitude of people at this very moment crowding Jesus, speculating about Jesus, excited about Him, criticizing Him, elbowing Him, but one woman touched Him, and that made all the difference.

Which are you? Have you touched Him, or are you a thronger? In the name of God I tell you—and I tell you to startle you—church-goer, you are a thronger; you have never touched Him yet, multitudes of you. If you had, your life would be different, for whatever Jesus touches is glorified.

Which are you now? You know deep in your heart. Don't make any excuse, don't shuffle; don't, I beg you, get away from the main issue. Have you come into living, vital, saving contact with the Son of God? Because you will know if you have.

You must not tell me that a man can be born again and made a new creature, have his chains broken, his night turned into day and his blindness to sight, his hell into heaven, and not know it. Listen. This woman knew, so will you when you have touched Him. This is one of the surest things in God's world, for a man that can look up into the face of Jesus, and say by faith, "Thou art my Saviour," has got in his soul the joy that will some day make heaven pulsate with hallelujahs. The man that

could look up into the face of Jesus and say, "Thou art my light and my song; my sins are put away; my chains are broken, my Lord and my God," is sitting in the twilight of the coming glory. If he is not in heaven, he is in the ante-room, and he is as safe as though he had been there a thousand years. For when God gets hold of a man He does not let go His grip. The Lord God Almighty take hold of you!

Have you touched Him? Do you know this? I am not asking what else you know—are you sure about this thing? Blessed assurance is the ground, the indestructible rock beneath a man's feet upon which he can stand and say to the world, "Rage on, toss on, howl on, ye storms, and peal, ye thunders, and flash, ye lightnings, but it will be but the rocking of an infant's cradle as it lulls me to rest in the arms of Him who saves me, and keeps me by His grace." Have you got it? "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!" Do you know it? Are you sure of it? Because that is what He calls you to.

You say, "Are you not forcing something that is not in the story?" No, it is all here. The woman came in the crowd behind, and I can hear her as she comes limping, stooping, catching her breath, hardly voice enough to speak out loud, saying in a whisper, but saying it, "*If I can only touch the hem of His garment I shall be healed*"; as much as to say, There is power enough in the threads of His coat to save an old woman. That is the faith that conquered Deity. "Only let me get to Him, and I shall be a new woman." Listen. She knew she was not healed, yet she says, "*I shall be*," and she touched, and was made whole.

The next verse says, "*And Jesus, knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned in the crowd.*" What does that teach? His Spirit answers to my spirit, and tells me I am born of God. Jesus knew, and the woman knew; and Jesus will know and you will know, when you plow your way through the crowd—whatever the crowd may be for you—and insist on touching Him.

Have you touched Him? You are a professor, but are you a possessor?

*"Amazing grace, 'tis heaven below
To feel the blood applied,
And Jesus, only Jesus, knows,
My Jesus crucified."*

Is that your experience? Have you touched Him? And if you have touched Him, that leads me to the next thing. If you have touched Him you must confess Him. There is no such thing as getting healed and then being ashamed of the doctor. But there is no such thing as being a smuggler here; there is no such thing as playing

hide-and-seek. You must confess Him; He will see to that. If you are to get all He wants you to have, He will see you meet the conditions. She began in the crowd behind, she ended up on her knees in front of Him, where all grateful souls end. He said, "*Where is she that touched Me?*" and He looked round about to see her that had done this thing; and mark, He turned round, and when He turned round she was there.


Don't you see, it was not as difficult as she thought. She thought she would get at His back; He gave her His face, and she knelt at His feet, and they made a ring there on the highway. That was the inquiry room, and she told Him all the truth. Nobody hindered her, nobody checked her. She poured out her heart and her tears, and she told Him everything. He listened patiently, and when she had told all, He said, "*Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*"

If you want to have peace as a friend and companion, peace as the bloom and blossom of things, the music ineffable sounding in the life, let Jesus Christ come in and take the throne, and you will get peace.

Men and women, come out of hiding. Never mind the crowd; Christ is here, and you can touch Him if you will. You can get where there is always room for another in His presence, at His feet. He will make room if nobody else does. He will see that you get a place right in front of Him, if you only will come to Him.

"But," you say, "what can I do?" What could she do? She seized her opportunity. Will you? Here was the Christ passing by. She had only to touch the hem of His garment, but there was more in that touch than you think. The Lord help you to touch Him the same way, and you too will be made whole. Your night will break into lovely dawn, your misery into music, your tears will be kissed into jewels, your heartache into soul rapture, your lifelong agony will end in the joy of the presence of the risen Christ.

Oh, touch Him! Do not throng Him longer. It ends all one way—it spells failure, it spells loss, it spells agony. But touching means life. Oh, how I thank God I have touched Him! I do not know as much as some of you, but I know this—I let nobody cheat me out of my opportunity—and I shall never forget how I knelt as a gipsy boy and said, "O God, I want to love Thee, I want to be saved, I want to be good, and I will be saved, and I will follow Thee." I do not know how, but I touched Him at that moment, and He accepted me.

God help you to touch Him in the same way, and the grace that turned the gipsy-tent into a palace will change your life from the poor miserable thing it has been into a thing of beauty and praise forever. 

The women at the cross

Cursing soldiers. Mocking prelates. Dying criminals. And these women.

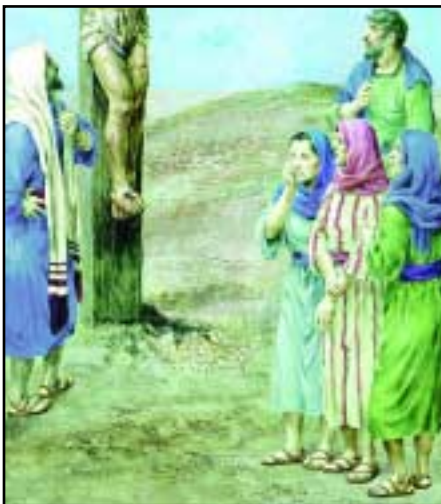
It is interesting to observe that of the various groups of people who stood by the cross no personal names are given except those of three or four women.

Even the apostle John is not referred to by name, only in an indirect way. No mention is made of the presence of Annas or Caiaphas. If they had accompanied the dolorous procession on the way to Calvary, in all probability they had soon gone back to their palace to enjoy their success. The centurion who superintended the crucifixion remains for us anonymous. The names of disciples are not given: the last fact recorded about them is that they all forsook their Master and fled. Where they had gone is discreetly not disclosed.

Peter certainly had recovered from the panic, and with doubtful courage had followed at a distance, had gone into the courtyard, and after his thrice repeated denial had made a hasty retreat into the night. He must have joined the other disciples after the crucifixion, for the band did not disintegrate, but ultimately reassembled in some well-known rendezvous. There they were with others on the morning of the resurrection (Jn. 20).

Women, however, are mentioned by name. Matthew informs us that many women had *"followed Jesus from Galilee...ministering unto Him."* From those women he singles out *"Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children"* (27:55-56).

Mark's list is slightly different: *"Mary Magdalene, and Mary the*



mother of James the less and Joses, and Salome" (Mk. 15:40).

Luke specifies no individuals, simply stating: *"all His acquaintance and the women that followed Him from Galilee stood afar off, beholding these things"* (Lk. 23:49).

John gives the names as follows: *"There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene..."* (Jn. 19:25-26).

Who were the acquaintances referred to by Luke? Were they members of the apostolic band who had rallied and returned to watch the end? Thomas knew some of the intimate facts about the crucifixion—about the print of the nails in the hands, and the spear wound.

Either he had seen these for himself, or had been informed about them by someone who had been present at the crucifixion. Did John tell him? Peter stated years afterwards that he had been *"a witness of the sufferings of Christ,"* a statement which, in the context of his epistle,

may in all probability refer to what he had seen at Calvary when Jesus was *"put to death in the flesh"* (1 Pet. 5:1; 3:18). To what else could he refer?

Are we to conclude that some at least of the apostles had recovered from their panic and followed at a distance to the cross? In a large crowd such as evidently gathered to witness the public execution, the presence of a few Galileans would hardly be noticed. As on one occasion Thomas had protested to his fellow disciples, *"Let us go, that we may die with Him"* (Jn. 11:16), he may have been present.

Is it possible that among the acquaintances were some of the brethren of Jesus, the sons of Mary, the mother of our Lord? Luke informs us that on the day of Pentecost there were in Jerusalem, meeting with the apostles, *"Mary the mother of Jesus and His brethren"* (Acts 1:14). According to John's account, the brothers of Jesus had not believed on Him and could not understand why, if He really were the Messiah, He did not give demonstrable proof of the fact (Jn. 7:2-5).

Further, we learn from the Apostle Paul that James, the Lord's brother, was given a private interview with the Lord after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7). It is commonly accepted, however, that, so far as accounts have been preserved, Jesus did not appear after His resurrection to any but those who were already believers. Does Luke's reference to the presence at Pentecost of the Lord's brethren imply that they had

been converted either at the time of the crucifixion or by the witness of the eldest brother James who had? If James was present in Jerusalem for the Passover, it is not unlikely that he was drawn to Calvary in the company of his mother.

Mary the mother of Jesus was there. Now a middle-aged woman, it would appear that she had been a widow for a number of years. The reasonable interpretation of Mark 6:3 is that Joseph had died and Mary had been left with the responsibility of a large family of whom Jesus was the eldest, and James next in age.

It must have been a trying day for her when at the

age of about thirty her Firstborn left the home to begin that public ministry which meant the doing of the will of His Father. Perhaps it was from personal experience that James wrote later: *"Pure religion in the sight of God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction..."* (Jas. 1:27).

Now Simeon's prediction made when Joseph and Mary presented the child Jesus in the Temple was being fulfilled: *"Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed"* (Lk. 2:34, 35). What sorrow must have been hers as she watched the sad spectacle, helpless,



In Matthew 27:55, we have pictured the many women who had chosen to follow Jesus and minister to Him. It is a wonderful thing that there have been, and are today, many women who choose to do this. They choose to be a follower of Christ and they find ways to serve Him by serving others for His sake. But there have always been some who stand out from among these many women.

Verse 56 mentions some of these women at the cross. Though many stood beholding *"afar off"* (v. 55), there were some that got close enough to hear Him speak (Jn. 19:25-26). Here we see what made the difference in these women—the courage to be identified with Christ in His rejection. This is what Jesus meant when He taught His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him.

In Luke 24:1, there are several women who came to the tomb of Jesus, but only some from among them who brought spices (see Mk. 16:1 for those named). Spices speak of **personal appreciation**, and in this case with the Lord, it would speak of **personal wor-**

ship. Many women can enjoy what the men say in a remembrance meeting, but there are some women who bring their own worship to offer up silently, with no outward appreciation, but only to God.

Was the extra effort worth it? Imagine being there at the cross, hearing the words of tenderness and triumph just before Christ died. Imagine seeing the angels at the tomb and being commissioned to be the first ones to tell about the resurrection.

But even from that special group of women that stand out from among the many, there are those who stand alone in the spotlight of God's Word.

Mary Magdalene was among the women who came *"very early"* in the morning, but what was her difference? She stayed on, when the rest left. **One thing she desired**, and that was to behold her Lord (Ps. 27:4) The consequence? She was the one there to first see Him after His resurrection.

What would you do to see Him? Get up very early in the morning, and have the desire not to leave until you have seen Him? It's still available today. He is ready and waiting to show you His beauty, through His Word, a beauty that will more and more be reflected in you as you meet with Him.

There is another that stands alone from this group bearing their spices, even though she wasn't there—Mary of Bethany. She had her perfume to anoint His body for His burial (Mt. 26:12), but had already poured hers out—the only one actually able to do it. Why? Because she had chosen the **one thing that is needful** (Lk. 10:42) and that was humbly listening to His Word. He spoke about His death to the disciples. Why was she the only one that understood? The others had tried to figure things out—she just listened.

—L. Nicholson

stunned, brokenhearted! Had woman ever grief like hers?

What memories would rise up almost unbidden! What unusual experiences had crowded in on her life! Her early years had been happy beyond description. The days of her unspoiled maidenhood had been enriched by the thoughtful companionship and the loving care of pious Joseph, carpenter of Nazareth. He had been so understanding in most trying circumstances.

How could she ever forget that momentous occasion when by an angelic visitor she had been informed of the unique favor which was about to be bestowed upon her? To her had been granted the privilege and joy which every Jewish maiden hoped might be hers. She had become the virgin mother of the long expected Messiah.

How she recalled the words which filled her with hope and anticipation, *"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob; and of His kingdom there shall be no end"* (Lk. 1:32-33). What expectations such words had provoked!

Some years passed, and it seemed as if the predictions were about to be fulfilled. A sensation had been caused when His cousin, John, son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, had attracted crowds to the country where he announced that the King was on His way. Then came the day when Jesus was baptized by John, had the divine commendation spoken upon Him, and He set out to preach the Good News of the Kingdom. What amazing scenes had followed! Well could she remember the marriage at Cana of Galilee, when Jesus performed His first miracle, and how reports came crowding in about His incessant labors. Wherever He went multitudes gathered, and blessing flowed from Him. But a few days ago He had ridden into the Holy City amidst the acclamations of a tumultuous throng. Surely He had arrived to claim His Kingdom!

Now her hopes were shattered. The sword was piercing her soul. Grief-stricken, she gazed in silence at her Son whom she loved with the tender love of a mother's heart. She, who with others had looked for redemption in Israel, had been disappointed beyond expression. Never again could there be a scene like this: *"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"* publicly dying between two thieves, on a cross, the place of a curse.

Beside her stood other women. One of them was Mary Magdalene. She is often, although erroneously, identified with the woman who is described as *"a sinner"* who anointed Jesus with ointment in the house of Simon (Lk. 7:46). There is not the slightest indication

of such an association. No biblical support can be given for the supposition that Mary of Magdala was a woman of immoral character or of weak mental disposition. The fact that she was found weeping at the empty tomb on the morning of the resurrection gives no foundation for the popular opinion that she possessed a sentimental nature. Rather does it suggest that her devotion to her Deliverer was so strong and active that it broke through the barriers of natural reserve, that it had enabled her to stand before the cross and watch the agonizing death of the Person to whom she owed a life-long debt. Out of her the Lord had cast seven demons (Lk. 8:2), and that fact is sufficient for us to conclude that the early part of her life had been one of conflict, disappointment and unhappiness. The act of dispossession had been the turning point in her experience, and she showed her devotion to her Benefactor by joining a company of women who had had similar blessing, and who, out of gratitude, had ministered of their substance to the divine Healer. In that group was *"Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward"* (Lk. 8:3).

If the lists of names of the women present at the cross are again scrutinized these will be noticed: *"the mother of Zebedee's children," "Salome,"* and *"His mother's sister,"* that is the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Those women with others stood by Mary as the last act of the mournful drama of trial and crucifixion was being carried through. Whatever difficulties may be attached to the identification of some of them, this much is certain that they displayed an almost superhuman devotion and loyalty to a Friend such as was absent in some of the men who had companied with Jesus during the years of His public ministry.

Since that scene, many a Christian woman has nobly followed their example and demonstrated a loyalty and courage which entitle them to have their names emblazoned on the scroll of fame of those who have been worthy followers of the Lamb. Never have there been lacking since the days of the martyrdoms in Carthage and Lyons brave women who have been willing to seal their testimony of love and devotion to Christ by yielding their own lives for the honor of His name.

*They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane;
They bowed their necks the death to feel:
Who follows in their train?*

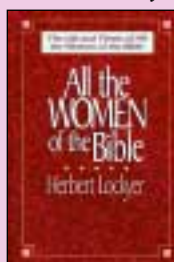
*They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Through peril, toil, and pain:
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.*



All the Women of the Bible

Herbert Lockyer

X-1512

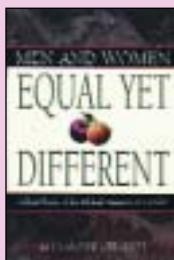


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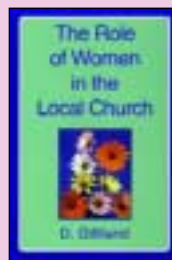


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The treasure

J. BOYD NICHOLSON

I had a precious treasure
In a box of figured stone,
'Twas costly and its value
Across the years had grown.

Then came the Man of Sorrows
To sup with me one day,
I knew His heart was asking
To give my wealth away.
I went and brought my treasure:

“I offer it to Thee.”

But, “No,” He said with sadness,
“The box must broken be.”

“May I not give these riches still in the box to Thee
Of such exquisite beauty? 'Twould please Thine eye to see.”

“No, break it—break it open,” the still voice said to me,
“For ne’er another treasure must there contained be.”
In that decisive moment my box I broke apart,
Yet knew that as I did so, the breaking broke my heart.

I poured it all on Jesus, upon His regal head,
For soon 'twould wear the thorn-crown
And lie among the dead.

The devil said, “’Tis wasted;
The common folk need thee,”
But nothing to Him given
Could ever common be.

I bowed myself before Him,
Anointing those blest feet,
Full well I know He’s worthy;
My offering was complete.

And then—a strange thing happened:

He gave it back to me;

Not as before contained, but shed so fragrantly.
The fragrance on His Person was on my lowly hand;
What once the box imprisoned now spread in every land.

And so I learn the lesson: To get, then we must give. And joy demands we suffer; we die to self—to live.
He does not steal our treasures nor rob what we hold dear. He takes, but to enrich us; rebukes, to draw us near.