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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

Lessons from John's Gospel

chapter seventeen

"And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13)

Our Lord is here amplifying His concern for those whom He is to leave *"in the world"*; He is about to depart to the Father, but His own will be left. He is fully aware of the dangers to which they will be exposed, hence His words, *"Now come I to Thee"* but **they** will remain in the world. At this point, Christ shows great earnestness as He prays that His own may know much consolation and **joy**; *"that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves"*, is His request to the Father. *"These things I speak in the world"*; this was audible prayer, spoken in the hearing of the disciples. Here is a sample, or an example of the manner in which our great High Priest now functions for us in heaven. In the upper room He prayed aloud with His own in order that they might know how He would pray for them after He had gone back to His Father. Prior to engaging in prayer, the Lord had mentioned this joy in His discourse; *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full"* (John 15:11). There are often a number of differing aspects of truth contained in one simple statement in Holy Scripture. This is the case here with respect to Christ's joy and that which He desires for His people.

There is an important statement in the New Testament concerning this joy, *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,*

despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1,2). There was a joy which was set before Christ as Mediator and this was the motivating factor in His life when here upon earth. His joy was to do the will of the Father, to be faithful to the charge given Him in anticipation of the ultimate glory which was to follow. In this Christ is setting a pattern for us to positively emulate, which involves personal responsibility. Through the apostle Paul, our Lord says, "*Fulfil ye My joy*" (Philippians 2:2). In our text He prays that **His** joy might be fulfilled in us. That joy which was His as the Mediator, was on account of His deference to His Father's will, therefore "*let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus*".

In the upper room Christ says, "*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full*" (John 15:10,11). If we are to know the joy of the Lord fulfilled in us, then it will only be in the pathway of obedience. The apostle John in particular, emphasizes this all-important truth. Writing of John the Baptist, the apostle states, "*The friend of the Bridegroom rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled*" (John 3:29) and later, he writes in his epistle, "*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full*" (1 John 1:3,4). What does "*fellowship .. with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ*" mean? "*That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death*" (Philippians 3:10) – the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, the sharing of His reproach. If Christ's joy is to be fulfilled in us, and our joy is to be full, then this is the way in which it will come. "*Whosoever*

*transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that **our** joy may be full"* (2 John v's 9-12). Exactly the same thought is expressed here: we must abide in the doctrine of Christ, all that He taught is to be observed, neither must we closely fellowship with those who do not teach and practice all the counsel of God. The words of Holy Scripture allow no degree of compromise whatsoever; if our joy in the Lord is to be full, it will only be as we walk uncompromisingly with the Lord in obedience to His Word.

"When we walk with the Lord, in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey!
Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey".

As He was about to leave His disciples, Christ said to them: *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love these things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full"* (John 15:10,11); having thus taught His own, He prays that it might be so for them. This is one aspect of the truth which is before us.

We now consider the nature of the joy of which Christ speaks. *"My joy"*, not a worldly joy but a heavenly, not material or physical but spiritual. The Word of God acknowledges that there is a certain pleasure in sin, there is a measure of fleshly joy in earthly things.

Moses was confronted with this in a very real way as a young man: *"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to **enjoy the pleasures** of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible"* (Hebrews 11:24-27). It ill-becomes the Christian to set his affections upon things of earth; they may bring a degree of fleeting pleasure, but it is only for a season. *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"* (Matthew 6:33), strive for uprightness of life, looking unto Jesus; **He** is the pattern; this perfectly harmonizes with what has already been said, *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 2:5). In the measure in which this is true of us, shall we know this lasting, spiritual joy, indeed it is a joy which is **everlasting**. Worldly joy is unstable, transient and precarious because it is **not** lasting. Take away the means or the cause of the pleasure and all the joy which those means bring, vanishes. In sharp contrast, this **spiritual** joy can never be destroyed. The believer rejoices in the Lord, he rejoices in the God of his salvation. The cause and means of our joy is the eternal, immutable God. Hence John writes, *"Your joy no man taketh from you"* (John 16:22) - they cannot, because our treasure is laid up in heaven; the source of our joy is in God and in His Christ. No moth or rust can corrupt in that realm, no thieves can break in and steal and so rob us of our joy. Peter says, we *"rejoice with **joy unspeakable and full of glory"*** (1 Peter 1:8). Charismatics loudly acclaim a book, "Joy Unspeakable", written by a late well-known reformed preacher; but the joy of the Lord of which the Scriptures speak is not frothy exuberant charismaticism.

Though left in the world, oftentimes experiencing much heaviness and divers temptations, yet the Christian has an inner peace and joy, as

stated in Holy Scripture: "*Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations*" (1 Peter 1:6). Humanly speaking this cannot be explained, it is defined in Holy Writ as '*unspeakable*', nevertheless true. One old saint said, "It is better felt than telt" and that is true; we cannot fully tell it, but we can wonderfully experience it, and what a strength and encouragement it is to us. When trouble assails, bereavement invades our family circle, sorrow well-nigh overwhelms us, yet still deep in our hearts there is a peace, a calm and a joy which has not been touched; in fact the tragic circumstances have deepened that peace and an inexplicable joy has come over us, such a joy can never be explained. It enables us to press on with patience and endurance in the path set before us. This is what is described by Nehemiah, "*The joy of the Lord is your strength*" (Nehemiah 8:10). The Puritans used to say 'It was the oil to the wheels'. Wheels which need oiling drag heavily, what is more they squeak and groan. Have we not met Christians of this type? They have little, if any, joy in their souls, they are always squeaking and groaning, their spiritual wheels are hard to turn, they make little progress in the King's Highway. They are like the squeak in a wheelbarrow; they make all the noise, but do not assist with the work.

Some people's idea of joy and enjoyment is leisure and recreation, but the Scriptures do not teach this; that is man's thinking. The Word of God speaks of a joy in service, to take pleasure in labour, which makes a man go about his work with zest and enthusiasm. Thomas Manton said on this point, "Christians are not to be like slow asses that have to be driven, but like generous horses that delight in their strength and swiftness". The New Testament church and pastoral epistles have much to say about serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the every day of life. Paul says, "*Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of*

God (Acts 20:24). Someone might say, 'Ah, that was full-time preaching, he was in the ministry, that was his work'. Paul **was** called to the ministry, that is true, but the inspired Word states, *"After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; and found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers"* (Acts 18:1-3). When this great man went to Corinth, he did not agree to preach there subject to certain financial arrangements being made, neither did he go in the expectation of ravens to feed him. No, he went to Corinth, secured work, settled among the people in the community, earning his living and preaching. He laboured, working with his own hands (cf 1 Corinthians 4:12). *"When I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself"* (2 Corinthians 11:9); there was a Godly independence with this man. *"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God"* (1 Thessalonians 2:9); *"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread"* (2 Thessalonians 3:7-12). The apostle Paul was a most

practical man, and this is how he lived, this is what he taught, and as an apostle directly inspired of the Holy Ghost, this is what he wrote. This is the Mandate of God for all time; *"That ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing"* (1 Thessalonians 4:11,12). Was not man created for this? Does not this bring fulfilment and contentment? When we fulfil our calling to the glory of God, we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ, following in His footsteps as did the great apostle to the Gentiles. For him it was not an easy pathway; Paul never spoke of leisure and recreation, it was work and labour; in this he rejoiced. Like his Lord and Master, he found **joy** in obedience to God's will. We too, shall only have that joy fulfilled in us as we follow in like manner.

W.H.Molland

The Peculiar and Unparalleled Character and Calling of the Church

by one, who being dead, yet speaketh.

With collected and solemnized spirits, we consider the Scriptures pertaining to this subject.

The Designations

Regenerate or re-born men, new-born babes, new creatures in Christ, children of the resurrection, spiritual men, sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, children of the light, of the day, of the truth, of the true God, imitators of God, household of God, Church of the living God, partakers of the Divine holiness and of the Divine nature, holy

brotherhood, partakers of the heavenly calling, habitation of God through the Spirit, members of Christ, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, one spirit with the Lord, living epistles of Christ, bearers of and reflectors of the image and the glory of Christ, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, heirs of the glory to be revealed, citizens of heaven, kings and priests unto God the Father, spiritual house, temple of the Holy Ghost, the light of the world, the salt of the earth, the city set upon a hill.

Prepared by designations so significant and indicative, let us contemplate:

Our Destination

God hath called us unto His kingdom and glory; God hath made us partakers of the heavenly calling; God hath chosen us and called us unto the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; God hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children to Himself; hath given us an inheritance in Christ; and hath sealed us with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance. God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places; He hath quickened us, raised us up, and made us sit in heavenly places together with Christ. We are of the household of God and our citizenship is in heaven. The Father hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. We are elect (at present or whilst on earth) unto obedience, and begotten (through resurrection) unto a living hope, an inheritance reserved in heaven; we are kept unto a salvation to be revealed in the last time, in that we rejoice, although now we are in heaviness through manifold trials. We bear love to all the saints on account of the hope which is laid up for us in heaven. We seek a city to come, and are receivers of a kingdom which cannot be moved; we stand in that faith in which all the elders died, not having received the promises, but desiring a better country, even a heavenly. Our **destination** then, or **calling unto** is **heaven**.

Our Calling

Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world. We are not of the world, but Christ hath chosen us out of the world. Love not the world, neither the things of the world. We are sons of God, but unknown by the world, and unmanifested - waiting for the manifestation of Christ. Being sons, we groan in this present creation, waiting for the adoption, i.e., our resurrection out of it. By Christ the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world. We are not to look at things which are seen but at things not seen. We are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth; we have here no continuing city; let us go forth therefore, without the camp, bearing the reproach of Christ. We are here, foreigners and sojourners, children of the promise, rejoicers in hope, walkers by faith, lookers for and waiters for the glory to come. Our **election** then is a **calling out of and away from** earth.

Our Description and Directory

Saints - elect, or called saints, elect of God through sanctification of the Spirit, chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, peculiar people, people of God, living stones, built up a spiritual house to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God.

Because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. We are not servants but sons and thus, heirs of God through Christ. We are saints, or separated ones unto God, and risen ones with Christ; therefore we are to set our affections on things above, not on the things of the earth. We have died, and our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we appear with Him in glory; therefore we are to mortify our members which are upon the earth. We have put off the old man, and have put on the new man, therefore we are to show mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing and forgiving one another in love.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness. Our loins are to be girded about and our lights burning, and we ourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. It is not to be among us as among the nations; we are not to exercise lordship or authority, but he that will be great must be a servant. We may not avenge ourselves; we are to recompense no man evil for evil, but overcome evil by good. We are to be patient in tribulation and instant in prayer, forasmuch as Christ has suffered in the flesh, we are to arm ourselves with the same mind. We are not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. We are not to be yoked together with unbelievers, for we are the temple of the living God, wherefore we are to come out from among them and be separate. They that are Christ's have set upon the cross the flesh with its affections and lusts. We may not be partakers with the children of disobedience, but are to walk as children of the light, and to hold no fellowship with the works of darkness.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the merciful, the persecuted for righteousness' sake. Suppress anger and all passion and lust in the very heart; swear not at all; give to every one that asketh; love and bless, and pray for all that hate and curse and despitefully use you, for your righteousness and your love is to excel that of men; ye are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Lay not up treasures upon earth, and take no thought for what ye shall eat or drink or put on; after all these things do the nations seek. He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself to walk even as He walked. This is our description and our directory - the lineaments and features of our character, and the laws and principles of our walk and life and being.

Our Present Portion and Expectation

All that is in the world is not of the Father; the world, the lust and its fashions pass away. Life on earth is even as a vapour; as the grass withereth, and as the grace of the fashion of it perisheth, so shall the rich man fade and pass away: for all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of life. Endure therefore hardness as good soldiers. The whole world lieth in the wicked one. Because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you; the world knoweth you not, because it knew Him not. If the world hate you, it before hated Christ Jesus; if it persecuted Him, it will also persecute you. Whoso killeth you will think that he doeth God's service. As then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him born after the spirit, so it is now.

If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath and hateth not even his own life, cannot be My disciple. Blessed are ye when men shall revile and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. When the Bridegroom is taken from them, then shall the children of the bridechamber fast and mourn. For the present ye shall weep and lament and be sorrowful. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in Me, peace. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad with exceeding joy. Now, ye are in heaviness through manifold trials, but rejoice in the salvation ready to be revealed. Ye are appointed unto afflictions and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Ye must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

May ye be strengthened with all might, unto all long-suffering and patience; and may God strengthen, stablish, settle you, after ye have suffered. For manfully running the race, for fighting the good fight and for keeping the faith, there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness. For hearty, diligent and self-denying labour in the Church, a crown of glory. For enduring temptation, and for faithfulness unto death, a crown of life.

The Divine Purpose

God sent forth His Son to redeem them that were under the Law, that they might receive the adoption of sons. I will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. God hath predestinated us to be conformed unto the image of His Son. We are the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works. We have fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Our old man is crucified that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth, we should not serve sin. Our light affliction worketh for us an exceeding weight of glory. We are to count it all joy when we fall into trials, for the trial of our faith worketh patience. The trial of our faith is in order to its being found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. God purgeth the branches which bear fruit, that they may bear more fruit. God chastens us to make us partakers of His holiness.

We are to love our enemies and persecutors, that we may be the children of our Father which is in heaven. In being reproached for the name of Christ, happy are we, for thus, the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us. God condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. God hath made us dead to the Law that we should be married to another, even to Christ raised; that we should bring forth fruit and that we should not serve in the oldness of the

letter, but in newness of spirit, respecting the reason of His wondrous precepts and directions unto us.

By the Church's serious overlooking or inadequate explanation of all these inspired facts, the grossest ignorance and most grievous misconceptions of her position and relationships have prevailed, with incalculable loss of spiritual power and blessedness being the consequence.

This article was published in the early part of the last century. The author was obviously dead, by the manner in which he is styled.

"We're not of the world which fadeth away,
We're not of the night, but children of day;
The chains that once bound us by Jesus are riven,
We're strangers on earth, and our home is in heaven.

Our path is most rugged and dangerous too,
A wide trackless waste our journey lies through;
But the pillar of cloud that shows us our way,
Is our sure light by night, and shades us by day.

Mid mightiest foes, most feeble are we,
Yet trembling in every conflict they flee;
The Lord is our banner; the battle is His;
The weakest of saints more than conqueror is.

Soon, soon shall we enter our own promised land,
Before the bright throne in glory shall stand;
Our song then forever and ever shall be -
'All glory and blessing Lord Jesus to Thee'".

Deck

The Believer's Heavenly Calling

What Saith the Scripture?

The question that today actuates the minds of many of God's saints is, 'What is to be our attitude towards the world in these days of new experience and new demands? Can we, as saved ones, as saints, partakers of the heavenly calling, members of the body of Christ, children of God, take part in the world's affairs, its politics and conflicts?'

Let us hear the answer of Holy Scripture. First of all remember that all the nations without exception, are only different and opposing systems of the one world that lies in the wicked one. Some may be more righteous in their moral actions than others, but they together form the same world that cast out Christ and maintains its rejection of Him, and that will shortly suffer the vengeance of God for the despite done to His Son.

Let us then with chastened hearts, owning our weakness and failure, approach with holy solemnity the Scriptures of Truth. May we have grace to write and grace to receive what He saith. That we may accurately know what we are, as distinct from what the world is. Let us consider briefly the Divine calling, character and description of the Church. In Romans 1:7 we are entitled, "*Beloved of God, called saints*". We are at once described as those set apart for God's holy use. He has loved us, we are His beloved ones. No human merit has made us saints, but the gracious and sovereign calling of God in the gospel concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. His henceforth we are, separated from all we were formerly a part of, and separated unto all that is in His mind for us.

"*Sons of God*" is His next designation of us in Romans 8:14, followed in the succeeding verses by the precious titles of "*Children heirs*

of God, and joint-heirs with Christ". What dignity is expressed in the first, and what wealth and glory follows! We are not merely saved from death and judgment, but exalted and enrobed with all the preciousness of Christ. No mere chance brought us into this blessedness, for in verses 28-30 we learn that we are the called according to the purpose of Him who from eternity had us foreknown and predestinated, and in time, called and justified and will yet glorify us by His grace. As He views the called ones, Divinely called and separated to Himself, He declares them to be "*one body in Christ*" (Romans 12:5), although they may by their first and natural birth belong to many nations. "*One body in Christ*" means that whatever marked them formerly, Christ is to mark them now. A common union to Christ means a common union in Him, so that the characteristics of Christ come out in them. Again in 1 Corinthians 1:2, the terms are "*called saints*", "*the Church of God*" and "*sanctified in Christ Jesus*". We dare not boast, it is the sovereign grace of God that called us. We are God's Church, not the church of a country or a creed, but God's called-out ones, those whom He has summoned forth out of the world to be gathered together for an especial object. To this end He has visited the nations of the world, Jew and Gentile, to take out from them a people unto His name. Note beloved, it is **out, out** - not **in**. It is separating them from the world, consequently from the nations that form the world; gathering them to Himself and giving them His Word and Spirit by which they live; setting them now fully equipped to do **His** will and to fulfil all **His** counsels, God now receiving from His Church that love and obedience that the world has failed to give through its rejection and murder of the Son of God.

God has intense interest in His Church, for in 1 Corinthians 3:9, we learn that we "*are God's husbandry*" or tillage to produce fruit unto Him, and God's building to declare the glory of Jesus Christ, the alone foundation. Christ's ownership is also set forth in the emphatic words of verse 23: "*Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's*".

Precious is the truth found in 1 Corinthians 6:11&19: "*But ye are washed sanctified justified*", and "*ye are not your own*". All sin and defilement washed away for ever, sin separated from us and we separated to God, before whom we stand as righteous "*in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*". While this is all blessedly true, our God insists that the fact of such blessing being ours, produces a corresponding attitude of soul, so that in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, we have the practical effect of the truth emphasised in a direct call to **come out**, to reject alliances with the ungodly, to refuse identification with them in their aims and purposes. The glaring incompatibility of righteousness with unrighteousness, of light with darkness, of Christ with Belial, of the believer with the unbeliever, constitute a fourfold call from God to come out from among them and be separate. Thus only can He manifest the heart of the Father towards them and they their filial love and obedience to Him; He will not be content with mere words and protestations of affection. Love to Him will alone be known by its separation from all that He Himself is separated from. He that loves the Father will love what He loves and abhor what He abhors.

The apostle Paul is in great exercise of soul for the Church of God in Corinth, and in chapter eleven of his second epistle, verses 2&3, he tells them that he has espoused them to one husband, "*that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ*". The Church is the betrothed of Christ and her love must be for Him alone. The bridal day is coming, and the apostle's concern is that she may be kept from unchastity, from loving the world, or anything of the world; for all that is in the world is opposed to the interests of her Lord. Not as a roaring lion, but with the subtlety of that old serpent, will the enemy seek to detach the Church from her allegiance to

Christ. Alas! we today have to say, "How far he has succeeded". We look in vain for the chaste virgin espoused to Christ.

We behold instead a brazen woman who says, "I sit a queen and am no widow", who is unconscious of her Lord's absence, and who is deeply and constantly engaged in the affairs of the present evil age. She regards herself as having part in the world's politics and conflicts, ranges herself on the side of governments and parties, and is occupied in a vain attempt to secure stability here in a scene whereof God hath said, *"Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire"* (Hebrews 12:26-29). What a shaking is coming soon, as the fig tree casting her untimely figs (cf Revelation 6:13). What unsettling, what falls of kingdoms that thought themselves secure and invulnerable, what blasting of men's hopes and ideals and confounding of all their plans to set up another Babel that will exclude God and His Son!

Woe to the harlot church! Woe to those who subscribe themselves by the name of Christ, but engage themselves with the world, His enemy. Woe to those who say, "Lord, Lord" but do not His sayings for *"the hypocrite's hope shall perish"*. And surely as judgment shall fall upon the *"Mother of Harlots"* (Revelation 17:5), so surely will the harlot daughters, the sister churches of Christendom be involved in the wrath of the Son of God when He comes to take vengeance on those who have sided with His enemies, who professed heavenliness in creed, but are of the world in character, spots in the love feasts, clouds without water, twice dead, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever (cf Jude v's 12,13).

Thank God for every true saint who cleaves to the unshakeable kingdom, rejecting the claims and demands of all the other kingdoms that would entice him to swerve a hairbreadth from the most absolute loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Hunter Beattie

Editorial

Two articles appear in this edition of 'The Link' which deal with a teaching which must be the most misunderstood in the whole of Scripture; namely that of the believer's heavenly citizenship and the peculiar character and position of the Church of Jesus Christ in this fallen world.

The New Testament is impregnated with the truth that the Church is a peculiar treasure unto God; she consists of a body of individuals who have been called **out** of all nations to form a unique company, styled as a 'holy temple'. These individuals are, in their respective generations, called out of the kingdoms of this world and translated into the kingdom of God. Although they live out their allotted life-span in this world, the Word of God clearly states they are not of it, their citizenship is in heaven. They are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, having no continuing city. Earthly nationality by natural birth is negated by spiritual birth and enrolment into the 'holy nation' consisting of every redeemed sinner regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit by virtue of the work of Christ the Mediator.

The amazing thing is that the people of God have paid lip service to this teaching throughout the New Testament age, but apart from a small minority, they have denied in practice the truth they profess. From early centuries A.D., Christians in the countries of their natural

birth, have continued in a state of patriotism, being nationalistic in their outlook and practice; it could well be said that they were wrapped in their particular national flag at birth and it was their shroud at death.

From the days of Constantine, this nationalistic approach to Christianity escalated, reaching gigantic proportions through the centuries. Neither was it rooted out nor in any way suppressed at the Protestant Reformation; indeed politics and nationalism became the more established at that period. Sadly, the many sections of non-conformity have never been seriously exercised over this all-important matter. Throughout the centuries, very few Christians have realised that at regeneration, they come under an entirely different banner. With few exceptions, all have **continued** by life and lip to fly the national standard, some foolishly endeavouring to fly both. This has resulted in a confused situation; how can a person be a citizen of two realms? Men and women of true faith are to openly confess and **declare plainly** their heavenly citizenship (cf Hebrews 11:13,14). God has provided His own ensign for such clear identification; "*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth*" (Psalm 60:4). Almighty God requires this unmistakable identity, "***because of the truth***".

The nations of this planet are **all** constantly in conflict with one another in various ways; politically, commercially, financially and militarily. Over the generations, deception, exploitation, unjust dealings and open conflict have been the norm and Christians who are nationalistic in their outlook and practice have been blinded to the implications of all this by the great Adversary. By failing to heed the Divine Mandate and **actively** and **positively** separating themselves from the fallen nations, (all of which are under sentence of final judgment), and openly declaring themselves to be strangers and sojourners on the earth, the people of God have destroyed the very hallmark by which they should be identified.

Occasionally one reads an article, or less frequently, hears an address on the subject of '**Separation from the World**'. These invariably deal with matters such as theatres, dance halls, gambling dens, betting shops, public houses, night clubs and the like. Additionally they may include the need to keep good company, and above all never to marry an unconverted person. Such ministry is excellent and much needed, but of itself sadly deficient for it misses out the very **core** of the matter. These are the things which are **in** the world. It is from the world **itself** that God has brought out His elect. This is the indispensable aspect of doctrine of which the believer must be made aware; he will then cease to love (be attracted) to the world; in consequence the things which are **in** the world will have no appeal (cf 1 John 2:15). When this basic truth is appreciated, then will he see that to become entangled with an earthly nation is at total variance with his pilgrim character.

It is blatant denial of a fundamental tenet of the faith for the Church, in any way, to link itself with a country, or for Christians to be nationalistic in speech or practice. However, generally speaking, throughout the New Covenant age, believers have **not** separated themselves nationally. This must surely be the most shameful indictment which can be levelled against a people professing to be citizens of heaven. Has that chosen generation, the elect of God, really considered how the King Eternal, who has called us **out** of the world to His kingdom and glory, views this? It is absurd to suggest that the Church of the redeemed on earth is segregated by reason of natural birth? Such a concept and attitude is totally at variance with the whole plan of God concerning His **holy nation**. If every child of God in every country of the world and in every generation, had acted according to Scripture, then would they have been seen as **true sojourners** on the earth. Each pilgrim should quietly carry out their daily work, obeying the powers that be (provided there is no conflict with God's Law), and pay all relevant taxes. They should in no way

become involved with respective countries or their politics and affairs, but simply live a life separated unto God, endeavouring to manifest the glory of His grace by an obviously transformed life - a redeemed people **out** of every kindred, tribe and nation. This is the 'separation' of which the Scriptures treat.

How **identifiable** the Church would have been in the world had she not lost sight of this cardinal truth! What a testimony to the transforming, translating power of the gospel, if in her generations she had marched through the many countries of this earth as a separated people on their way to that better country; then would she have indeed been seen as "*Terrible as an army with banners*" (Song of Solomon 6:4,10).

Alas, nationalistic Christianity, which is **not** Biblical Christianity, has destroyed this basic tenet of the faith which should have been the great **distinguishing mark** of the Church of Jesus Christ. One day, account of stewardship has to be given. In the light of this appalling failure, can anything be more mortifying, or present a greater challenge to the true people of God?

We who assert the Divine inspiration of the very words of Scripture, accept above all others, the obligation to conform to the least hint therein given of the mind of God. We deny to ourselves the slightest right to neglect a jot or tittle of His Word, or to sanction the least thing not sanctioned thereby. It is our duty, wisdom and privilege to act in all things upon the holy resolution of the Psalmist: "*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy commandments*" (Psalm 119:59,60).

G.H.Lang