

"Why do you carry your sheep uphill in this heat?"

"Why," said the shepherd in surprise, "He is my sheep. He was tired from the long journey."

The shepherd walked on—carrying the sheep.

Christ, the Good Shepherd, cares when His sheep are worn by the journey. Let Him help you carry the load.

ALIENS FIND A HOME

June 26, 1960

Scripture: *Ephesians 2:11-22*

There's a story that a man went down a street in Rome past a building site. Amidst the rubble left over from the building, he saw a great piece of marble. From out of the piece of marble there came the words, "glory, glory, glory." He was very strangely impressed that from a block of marble, there should come this word, "glory."

Said he to the piece of marble, "Why do you cry 'glory'? The building is finished. You are left in the midst of the rubble of the building site. Why 'glory'?"

The legend goes that the block of marble replied, "Michelangelo passed by and said, 'I see an angel in that block of marble,' and he's gone now for his chisels and mallets. Glory, glory."

This legend wonderfully illustrates what Jesus Christ saw in the aliens and strangers who were to the Jews, the Gentiles and dogs. In the down and out, the forsaken, the ignored, the lost people of the world, others saw simply trash. Christ saw in them death, yes, but with the death there was hope. Seeing the Gentile dogs dead in trespasses and in sin, He loved them with a desperate love. His compassion the very heart of God revealed. God loved these people who were the outcasts from the rest of the world, and in the Person of Jesus Christ, He broke down the walls that separated the Gentiles and the others from the face of the eternal God. Said

He, "For as many as received Him, to them gave He the privilege of becoming the sons of God." (John 1:12) Perhaps they were dogs to the others, but to God they were the greatly beloved creatures of His hand.

Christ came into the world to seek and save that which was lost. He made possible, according to Paul, peace with God. It was the work of Christ to

reconcile the mind of man to God. When we were born again by faith in Jesus Christ, we were changed creatures. Our spirits no longer desired to be outside the will of God. Our stubborn minds, though sometimes wayward, still long to be completely surrendered to God. Our spirits that had been at enmity with Christ now desire to be submissive to Him. Our imprisonment to sin is now over because we have been set free. We have had made possible for us peace with God, the enmity of our souls is fading, sweet fellowship with God has become a possibility for every person upon this earth. No longer does the mind of the saved person react with fear and dread at the thought or at the sound of the name of God but, rather, he may very well say, "God is my Heavenly Father and the best Friend that I ever knew." Paul said, "though we are afar from God, though we had strayed far from the Heavenly fold, though we were dead in our trespasses and sin, and though we were classified by the Jews and others as Gentile dogs, God loved us, and gave His Son for us,

and made it possible for us to have peace with God.”

CHRIST OUR ACCESS

He also made it possible for us to have access in one Spirit to the Father. In the temple of the Jews, there was a Gentile court, sections of the temple into which the Gentiles could go, but there was a place beyond which they could not go. They could not go into the holy place. There only the priest went. The priests could not go into the holy of holy places. Here, the high priest went, and he only once a year.

Many years ago in Japan I stood in a Buddhist temple. There was a shrine that I desired to examine more carefully, and as I approached the rail that guarded the shrine from the rest of the temple, there stood a Buddhist priest, hand upraised, speaking perfect English with an Oxford accent, who said, “You cannot come here. This is holy ground.”

I remember a mosque in Cairo. Before we were allowed to go into the holy place, we were required to pull off our shoes, for this was holy ground. I can remember a giant temple in Honolulu. Many of us desired to see the treasures that were doubtless contained therein. But the signs made very clear, and the personnel even clearer, that it was not possible for us who were not initiated into the light of that faith to enter into that place.

But the Bible says that Jesus Christ has provided for us one access to God, making it altogether possible for us to enter His very presence. Ours is not a God who is far off in the other world, but a God who is accessible to the least of His children. Not the God to whom you have to go through secretaries and assistants, not a God that is accessible only to the elite. But a God that Christ made possible for us to have access to, by His sacrificial work on Calvary. Rather than being shut out from the very presence of God, separated even by a veil in the temple, Jesus made possible a broad highway into the throne-room of God, a wide-open door to the very heart of

God. We are the invited, the welcomed. All of the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ, the Intercessor, is to assist the people into an audience with the Father. Jesus made possible one access, by the Spirit, unto the Heavenly Father. It is not necessary to be initiated into a particular type of religion, but Christ, breaking down the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, also broke down any walls that might have existed between God and man, and made it possible for any man to come to God any time he chooses to do so. He gave to us access, in one Spirit, to the Father.

NO LONGER FOREIGNERS

The marvelous, matchless works of the Son of God upon the cross, Who made possible all those spiritual desires of the human soul! Not only did He give us peace with God and access to the Heavenly Father, but He made us fellow-citizens with the saints. We were once aliens from God. But now, we who have believed are foreigners no longer.

Once, when the occupation troops were first going into Japan, an officer from the USS Dutchess and I became separated from the rest of the company. We were standing on a hill outside Wakayama, Japan, when we suddenly discovered that we were surrounded by people who, a little while before, had been our mortal enemies. We noticed they gesticulated excitedly. They pointed to us. They examined us as best they could from a distance, very carefully and keenly. We were unable to understand their language. We were alone in a foreign country, and that day I learned what it means to be a foreigner. Alone, with no guide, no gun, in the midst of people who had been our enemies, the meaning of the word “foreigner” became personally pertinent to me.

We were once aliens and foreigners from the Kingdom of God. But Christ came, died upon the cross to make possible the forgiveness of our sins. And once we have become members of the family of God by faith in Christ, we

are also fellow-citizens with the saints of God. Our citizenship is in the land, our fellowship is in the family of God Almighty. We can say with certainty, "This is my spiritual country." We have citizenship in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and we have the same privileges of citizenship as all the other citizens in the Kingdom of Christ who have gone before. "Fellow-citizens with the saints," Paul says. I think he felt a keen kinship with Abraham, and Elijah, and Jacob, and all the rest of those grand old saints of God who had made, by their faith, such marvelous provision for their eternal life. "God counted their faith unto them for righteousness," the Scripture says. Paul understood that expression, for again and again he would say, "By grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8-9)

He also made us members of the household of God. In Christ, we became members of a different spiritual family. What a wonderful family! The Heavenly Father, God Almighty, Himself; our Older Brother, Jesus Christ, the Saviour; the members of our spiritual family, all of the saints of God of all the ages who have gone home to be with God in glory. What a magnificent provision that we have found at last a spiritual family with whom we may be absolutely at home; with whom there is no tension, from whom there is no separation, with whom there are no problems; and there is eternal fellowship in the Kingdom of Christ, made possible by God's matchless provision in His Son.

God's family, a place of provision, provision for every one of our needs, a place of affection, a place bound by the cords of love, a place where there is eternal fellowship with the saints of God, a place where we are alone no more, members of the family of God. Paul believed that Christ, because of His sacrifice, made us to be members of the household of God.

Paul also said that God builds the individual experience on the foundation cornerstone of Christ. Not that pretty cornerstone that we put up on a Sunday afternoon and carve our names on, but the cornerstone far down in the bowels of the earth set on bedrock upon which the remainder of the building rests and depends. This is the cornerstone of Christ. This is He of whom the prophets spoke eternal and unchanging, the foundation cornerstone of Christ.

There are so many shifting sands in this world in which we live. The other day I looked at a beach, and as I looked, the winds were blowing, the sands were shifting, and I realized all over again that you could not, even as the Saviour put it, build a house upon those shifting sands. You can't build a life on the shifting sands of this world, either. Governments have changed; how they have changed in my lifetime. Society is constantly changing. Never, perhaps, in the history of man have there been so many sociological changes as are going on right now. Schools of psychology change. Week by week, new writers appear with new ideas. And this changing psychology of our age makes us wonder if it is a science at all. The science of today is the ignorance of tomorrow. The unachievable today may well be a routine accomplishment tomorrow. Educational systems change. Whole philosophies of education have changed in our lifetime. Systems of philosophy change, and they have changed in our lifetime. Everything man has thought he can depend on changes. But the Scripture says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8) Paul said that "He hath built us on the foundation cornerstone of Jesus Christ. Not on the shifting sands of this world that change day by day, not upon the ideas of men that one day are one way and another day another way, but upon Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and

forever. Our sins, in Him, are gone. He said, "I will put them far behind my back and I will remember them no more." He said, "I will put your sins as far away from me as the east is from the west."

So, our status with God is built upon the Person of Jesus Christ. I may fail, but He will never fail. My ideas may change, but my redemption is secure in Him. The world may be destroyed by hydrogen explosion, but still, the child of God has eternal security in the Son of God. He says, "Where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:3) He has not failed. He will not fail. And those who hear His words and do them are like unto the man who built his house upon the rock, and the rains descended, and the floods came, and beat upon it, but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock.

Upon what is your life founded? If it is upon Him, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and you have a security that is eternal. If you don't know that security, won't you trust Him for it and trust Him now?

Baptist Hour Sermon Topics for July

Dr. Grady C. Cothen

- July 3—A Prophet Looks At Our World (Isa. 1:15)
- July 10—Religion Or Christianity? (II Tim. 3:1-5)
- July 17—The Greatest Factor In Your Life (Titus 2:1-8)
- July 24—The Soul Away From God (Isa. 1:18)
- July 31—What's Right With The Church (Matt. 16:18)

Hear them on

THE BAPTIST HOUR

Read them in

THE BEAM

HOLLYWOOD SEPARATION

(Continued from Page 2)

fact that the Lord God Almighty had saved you. From then on the life of Christ must be lived in two dirty places: (1) in the flesh (Gal. 2:20) and (2) in the world (John 17:11). Nothing is ever settled by making rules. If you try to be separated from the world by cutting yourself off from the world, you are embarking on the old idea of monasticism. This is never the answer.

What we must teach our children is that we live in a world that crucified Christ, that we are to have the Holy Spirit lead us day by day in what we read and what we see, where we go, what we do, what we eat and what we drink.

Our friend's letter concludes, "I am personally satisfied that God's call is to His own to come out from among the world and be separated. You have long since convinced us that this separation is not along doctrinal lines. Now let's not throw that verse out altogether."

And most certainly we do not want to throw it out. But the coming out was a religious separation from the pagan temples. Separation is to be in the heart. It is wrong to interpret it to mean that we are to separate from a Christian denomination and it is also wrong to interpret it to mean that we are to establish Christian life as an ascetic monasticism.

Christ lived his life in such low haunts that the Pharisees of His day condemned Him for keeping company with publicans and harlots. We may be quite sure that on the day of Pentecost some of these were among the 3,000 who passed out of Judaism into the Church of Jesus Christ. Separation is a matter of the heart and that only.