

No.  
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***"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH  
ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."***  
COL.3.1

**THE PARABLES OF THE LORD JESUS**

**contd.**

**JOHN 12.**

***An Address (revised)***

***At Forest Gate E.7,***

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***by***

***PERCY W. HEWARD***

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***Correspondence welcome: Scriptural literature for Believers  
Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1 – 74343 Sachsenheim – GERMANY***

J. O H N X I I.

We are graciously made conscious that this gospel again and again emphasizes eternal life, and God's loving provision for undeserving sinners in the finished work of His Beloved Son, so even in the parable of the sheep which we have noticed, the opening words of one section are, "I am come that they might have life", and the closing words, "I give unto them (My sheep) eternal life, and they shall never perish", and throughout this gospel our relationship to our Lord Jesus is suggested. All language of nearness is employed to show how close to Him, and more than close, His people have become. We find in chapter 3 He is the Bridegroom possessing the bride; we realise in the 6th chapter He is the Bread<sup>h</sup> nourishing the life; in the 8th chapter He is the Son Who brings into the house; in the 10th chapter He is the Shepherd Who owns, gives His life for, sustains the sheep and keeps them with more than a Shepherd's care, in His very hand; in the 11th chapter He is the Resurrection and the Life, and we shall go on to see in the 15th chapter that, as His people are brought into every possible relationship to Himself, they are the branches of Himself the Living Vine.

It is therefore not surprising that in chapter 12.24 we have the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit". Now we praise God for the simplicity of those words, and yet how far they fall short of the words the Holy Spirit used in the original. It is "THE corn". Furthermore, I question the English use of the word "die". You know the precious passage in Philippians 1, "To me to live is Christ, to die is gain" - I always feel that fails to give the beauty of the Holy Spirit's use of tenses. "To me to keep on living is Christ, to have died is gain". The process of living, not the process of dying, "To have died is gain". No thought that to have been raised is gain - there is no doubt about that - but in such a context "to have died is gain" is strong evidence of the consciousness of the redeemed after their death and of their happy restfulness. The tense has a marvellous power. "Except the corn of wheat have fallen into the ground and have died it abideth alone" - "Except it shall have died". It is not only "Except it die" but "Except it shall have died" The blessing is not without the completeness of the death, and then the

the fruit of that death comes afterwards. "Except it shall have died". The dying is not before us, but the "having died".

Then furthermore there is one emphatic word which should be impressed on our heart, - "IT abideth alone". The word "It" is masculine to agree with the word "corn", but by its emphasis it does more than agree with the word "corn". It can be strictly rendered "He Himself" and links with the other passages where Christ is the emphatic "He Himself" for example, "He Himself is the Saviour of the body", "He Himself is the Head of the body the church"; "He Himself" is thus before us, and just as in the second chapter He spake of the temple of His body, here He spake of Himself. We have therefore three important hints, - the corn; the completeness of the dying, the finished work; and He Himself as that glorious Centre of this brief one-verse parable.

We recollect how elsewhere the Holy Spirit uses wheat with reference to ~~his~~ people. We find it in Matthew 13. Moreover, the wheat has a reference to God's Word in Jeremiah 23, "What is the chaff to the wheat? but that is fitting, for those who are born of the Spirit are born of God's Word. But are they not also members of Christ? It is therefore appropriate that their life from Him should be described as wheat, and that He should be described as the corn of wheat. The figure thus is preserved throughout. The Corn of wheat is the Lord Jesus. ~~It~~ <sup>He</sup> alludes to Himself as the Bread of Life several times in the sixth chapter, ~~yet~~ He is not only the Bread of Life to sustain life, but also the Corn of Wheat from Whom we become living. The corn suggests Himself the Living One, the Seed. We realise the wonderful intention of His coming into the world. He became Man, He became the Living One here, and in wonderful love He came with a view to dying. What is the value of the seed? Its great value is if it dies. Give me a seed, it is <sup>individual</sup> ~~of little value~~. Let it die, it will have wondrously <sup>out from itself</sup> increased value. <sup>^</sup> We have therefore brought before us the glorious humanity of the Lord Jesus, for the seed does not remind us of His Deity; it is Himself Who became in love capable of dying. In His Deity He <sup>is glorious One whose</sup> ~~as~~ the Eternal Spirit is from everlasting to everlasting. <sup>But</sup> ~~The~~ Word became flesh; and He in mercy took upon Him the form of a Servant that He might be able to die, and the seed is intended by God to die, that there may be fruit through the death. Christ was born to die; He came with that great object in front of Him. We have

thus brought before us THE Corn, for there were not two; there is but one Saviour, and no one else is like to Him. "THE Only Begotten Son of God"; "THE Bread of Life"; "THE Resurrection and THE Life"; "THE Way and THE Truth"; "Thou art THE Christ the Son of the Living God;" "Destroy this THE temple". Throughout the whole of the Scripture we find the stress on Christ's uniqueness, He stands alone, He is pointed out, He is emphasized, He is glorified. "THE Corn of Wheat". He grew up before the Father as a tender plant, as a root out of dry ground - dry ground that could support nothing, dry ground where no other life could be discovered, and as the Corn of Wheat is by itself the Corn of Wheat has come with a purpose. He must fall into the ground - wonderful words. "Except the Corn of Wheat have fallen into the ground".

We behold the Lord Jesus Christ first as the Corn, then we behold the purpose carried out, He falls into the ground. He was crucified through weakness, through the Divinely appointed weakness, it was the weakness of willingness, it was the purpose of His life that He should die, and when He fell He stood - wonderful words of grace, "He fell into the ground". It seemed as though the enemy had won a victory, but it was the reverse. At the appointed time He fell, He could have shown His might - when His enemies came upon Him and He spoke a word, they stumbled and fell back in Gethsemane's Garden, but after that He showed not His power, except to heal the cut-off ear. Withholding that power He fell. In Hebrews 12 we read, "He went under the cross, looking down upon the shame". At one <sup>and the same</sup> moment He was under it, ~~at the same time~~ <sup>yet</sup> He was looking down upon the shame, for in the glory of His realised fellowship with the Father, in the glory of His triumphant joy He looked down upon the shame. In like manner, in this chapter a few verses further on He says, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me". When He fell into the ground He was lifted up from the earth. At once He fulfilled the two types, or the two parables, shall I say. Lifted up and exalted when He was degraded and crushed and rejected. Lifted up on the cross between earth and heaven as Jacob's ladder. He fell into the ground, and He would not hesitate, He would go to the extreme, "fall into the ground and die". "Messiah shall be cut off, and there is nothing for Him". He must die. His blood was ~~needed~~ indeed precious, but it was not redemption by the pouring out of a few drops of blood. Sympathy never saved a soul, His life-blood must

be saved, He must die. Christ was more than a hero, heroism in its extremest form would never save a single soul. He was a Teacher whose teaching was unique, but His teaching will never save a soul. There are those who will refer to Christ in His earthly life, but in His earthly life He remained alone. Not only was there the grandeur of separation from sinners - "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" - but in another sense He remained alone. There is no living union with Christ the other side of Calvary. He had disciples, but He had not members - they could witness, but they could not become part of Himself. It is through His DEATH that there is union. This contains in it the key to dispensational teaching, as well as the unveiling of God's glorious eternal plan. He must DIE to have a saved people. The rib was in Adam potentially ere he slept that deep sleep, but it could not be presented to him as a living existing fruit of that deep sleep until that deep sleep was accomplished, and the deep sleep of death must belong to the Last Adam that there might be presented to Him those who were in Him by Divine purpose, for in the seed there was potentially the existence of that great number whom no man can number, for had not the Father given them to Him? They were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and was not He working out a complete obedience that should become their righteousness, and that they should become the righteousness of God? <sup>They were</sup> Potentially in Him, but they could not be viewed as living ones until He DIED. "That which thou sowest ... bare grain - naked grain (as 1 Cor, 15 says). but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him". The Lord Jesus was pleased to be sown as the naked grain; raised up from the dead He had the body that was appointed, but not only the body of His own resurrection glory, but God hath given Him a body, even the body of the redeemed, as it hath pleased Him, for it pleased God, through the work of Him Who was sown as the naked grain, and Who made naked His soul to the death, it pleased God that much fruit should be presented to Him.

And thus we see the blending together of the love of the Father and the Son. "God hath given it"; "It bringeth forth much fruit". It is the gift of the Father; it is the product of the work of His Beloved Son; it is the quickening of the Holy Spirit. For every saved soul is the creation of a Triune God.

Here we have brought before us the glory of grace, "He bringeth forth much fruit". He would not remain alone, It was not good for a man to be alone - it was not good for Him Who became Man to be alone. There was to be the blessedness of that wondrous unity, but it was a complex unity, His redeemed were to be with Him. Awhile He was alone, but He came that He might say the words, "I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me". He would not remain alone, He would have us with Him, those for whom He loved to pour out His life-blood. And thus He brought forth much fruit. "Other sheep I have which are not out of this fold" He said in chapter 10, "them also I must bring" - for every nation and every tribe must contribute its quota, - yea, every tongue, and some of us thank God for the nigh countless languages of earth, for they only tell us of the quota that must be contributed when He "shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied". The handful of corn on the top of the mountain shall have fruit that shakes like Lebanon, but grace excels nature, and who can tell the fulness of His "much fruit"? They will come from the east and the west and the north and the south - the "much fruit". Nought can be compared with the precious blood of Christ in its purchasing power - "a great number whom no man can number". The seed may be sown to produce 30-fold and 60-fold and 100-fold, but who can tell the manifold fruit of the manifold grace of God in the finished work of the Lord Jesus? And we are His fruit - it is a wonderful thought. The life that we now live is His life, and without Him we were dead. As the branches in the olive depend on the root, so the much fruit of the corn of wheat is all because He came to die. Had He not died, we should not be here. He did die, and He rose, and His resurrection-life has become ours. "Much fruit". Nothing in earth could have provided us with eternal salvation, but He came to fall into the earth and to die; and every redeemed one is not an evolution or a product of self's activity. We are not His because we were better than others, but because we are His "much fruit", and all the "much fruit" is on the one stem, and all the redeemed have a unity which grace WILL secure, and which love to Him should seek to-day, for the responsibility of the sheep is to hear the Shepherd, and the response of the living fruit is to realise they are all united to one Saviour. Our Beloved Lord has not made a number of companies, but He brings His people into

one company. There is always unity - "There shall be one flock", and here it is all on one stem, and in the vine of the 15th chapter we have all the branches belonging to the one Lord Jesus. And so He calls upon His people to bring forth much fruit, for, redeemed by Him, they are to represent Him, and to express to the world what He is. Truly this simple passage exalts Him, but it is vain if we ~~simply~~<sup>merely</sup> read it. O for grace to realise it!

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11/9/32.

We saw that our Beloved Lord was the Centre of this, as of other parables. Verse 24 is regarding Himself THE Corn of Wheat. We saw not only His uniqueness and His aloneness in His life, but His purpose of coming into the World was to die that He might not be alone, but that those who were in Him as given to Him by Divine grace might become living ones, depending on Him, the body which God gave Him as He was raised from the dead. We realised that their life is His life, inasmuch as they are raised together with Christ, - because He lives they live also. Valuing all His teaching intensely, we were made conscious that the power of redemption is by His blood - "IF IT DIE", or more literally, "If it have died it bringeth forth much fruit". There may be little fruit with regard to some plants, but THE Corn of Wheat must have much fruit.

And having thus seen the glory of Christ, we come to realise that where He emphasizes Himself He shows us the privilege of His people. Is He the One Who is the Way and the Truth and the Life? - we are to come by that way unto the Father. Is He the Bread of Life? - graciously He feeds His people that they may go in the strength of that meat. Is He in the parallel passage of John 15 the True Vine? so that His people receive their life from Him? - then they too are to bring forth much fruit, for this expression "much fruit" is found of them, even as it is here first found of Him.

And that leads us to the practical interpretation of John 12 with regard to His beloved people. They do NOT bear the judgment of God - delivered for ever by His finished/work, they have no participation in death, under wrath, but there is a wonderful responsibility for redeemed ones, not to count their lives dear unto themselves. "He that willeth to save his life shall lose it" - this Divine principle is in front of us, and verse 25 shows that this is intended here. "He that loveth his soul

shall destroy it, and he that hateth his soul in this world shall guard it unto life eternal". This passage is parallel with Luke 14 where we have the ~~hating~~ <sup>hating</sup> one's own soul also. The language is strong, and misunderstood by those who know not the Lord. By experience the humble believer learns something of the meaning. "He that loveth his soul shall destroy it". We are not particularly studying this verse to-day in itself, but we must read it in connection with the parable of verse 24. True, the Lord Jesus was primarily the Corn of Wheat, but the principle of blessing via death is stamped on nature for a purpose. It is a Divine principle. We cannot bring forth fruit ~~unless there is~~ <sup>unless there is</sup> death. Romans 6 illustrates from another standpoint a similar thought, and Romans 8 has a like message. Colossians 3 bears a similar testimony. Indeed, throughout Scripture there is a wonderful parallel, and the Holy Spirit brings before us the principle of blessing in Christian service. Paul delighted to "spend and be spent". The strength that he had was not his own strength, the blessing was not in his own human energy or in the power of his great intellect. The blessing was via death, "I die daily" he says. "We are always delivered unto death for Jesus's sake". The path of glory, the path of success in man's esteem is far different. It attracts, but there is a path that God has marked out from which we all naturally shrink. Blessing is through trial. John the Baptist ministered with living power, but first he must be in the desert until the time of his showing. There is a fulness in the principle here. "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it have died it bringeth forth much fruit". This law of nature is imprinted by the One Who has made nature. It is a parable, not only of grace in our redemption, but of fruitfulness in our service. We desire fruit often some other way, but it is by falling into the ground. It is by the laying low of that which would be naturally sought, and in our case, unlike our Lord<sup>s</sup>, it involves a realisation of the death judgment against our sinful self. It is thus with a special application to us when we know our own unworthiness - He was the Worthy One, His death stands alone in being ~~under~~ <sup>under</sup> the wrath of God in our place. Our view of death~~s~~ is a separation from His in the point that we view ourselves as dead, to quote from Romans 6, "Reckon ye yourselves indeed to be dead" because of our own unworthiness and failure. The parallel between His

experience and ours is in the rejection by a ruined world. Thus both by contrast and by parallel this brings before us the path of fruitfulness and blessing in this world. "If it have died it bringeth forth much fruit". "To have died" suggests humiliation, ~~part~~ rejection, and thus there is much fruit. Our hindrance is not the closed doors in front of us, circumstances can never rob us of fruit, self is the only hindrance. Our problems are not without, but within, Though we persuade ourselves they are in our surroundings. The difficulty is here, the only real difficulty. There is nothing between a believer and much fruit, except self, <sup>*The principle is clear and impressive.*</sup> "but if it die it hath brought forth much fruit".

"He that loveth". Activities are not the only fruit, activities express affections. It is not only a question of doing this or that, it is loving and hating. We have here thus brought before us the true service which is unto the Lord, as verse 28 continues, "If any man serve Me let him follow Me". The path must be similar to that which the Lord trod, for the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. He was called Beelzebub. <sup>*as it were,*</sup> "Reproach broke His heart". The reproaches of those that reproached God fell upon Him. "Despised and rejected of men". "A Man of sorrows". The path of the Lord's people is not to be a path of human glory. Oftentimes we mistake altogether that which God has set in front of His people. He does not call them to drudgery, nor to task-service, He would not have their unwilling surrender. The giving up is to be willing, or it is vain. But though the gladness which He is graciously willing to bestow is meant to be real, and to remove the bitterness of natural sorrow, it is not meant to remove that pathway of pain and of problems, through which the "much fruit" alone can be brought unto Him. To be without chastisement is to be without a sense of sonship, and without the afterward of fruit. Our beloved Lord knew "strong cryings". Obedience is to be experienced by the things that we suffer. It is a Divinely marked out path. Why is it there is little fruit? Because there is little consciousness of what death means. It is not death without resurrection, but there is no resurrection without death. We often would desire to have blessings and benefits without the strain and the pain, but what God has united we dare not sever. To ourselves and one another we minister these

but how we all fail in speaking of them, drawing back from that

which is so graciously set before us. To the Hebrews God's servant set forth the path in the same chapter which speaks of chastisement - the words ring out, "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 ... Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin". The apostle spoke of wrestling and buffeting. He referred to the experiences through which he passed, and on one occasion the words are quoted with striking force, "Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God". The Address on the mount lays a stress on joy, but it is joy when there is the suffering of tribulation and persecution, it is not a joy because of the absence of trial, but a spiritual joy in the presence of trial. That joy <sup>which</sup> ~~that~~ only flourishes when circumstances promote it, is natural, it is not from above. God desires that we should be independent of circumstances because we are dependent on Him. Thus the Holy Spirit sets forth in the epistles the same life as our beloved Lord here hints, and <sup>acts</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>through</sup> ~~in~~ the fulness of that unique work which He accomplished, He graciously gave victory and an example that we should follow His steps, that, having been redeemed by Him, we too, to His glory should bring forth much fruit, for little fruit, as little faith, is a dishonour when He has graciously done so much for us.

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