

LOVE UNDYING

REV. E. G. LOOSLEY, B.D.

When using a modern translation, one is sometimes impressed by a new rendering of a familiar phrase. Its freshness or beauty suggests a line of thought that leads to new vistas of truth and experience. At the end of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is a greeting which has had a wide variety of treatment at the hands of translators.

Let us imagine ourselves to be overhearing a discussion at the committee of the Revised Standard Version which is dealing with the epistle. The chairman says with a feeling of relief: "Now we have only the closing sentence to consider. In King James's version it was rendered, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity"—an appropriate ending, except for the fact that the word Paul uses does not mean sincerity."

"Yes," says Mr. A., "and they showed their doubt about it by adding a marginal alternative 'with incorruption'—which is a more correct translation, but somehow does not sound right."

"No," says Mr. B., "and the revisers of 1881 did not improve matters by putting the margin into the text, and reading 'who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptness.' The idea of corruption is associated with material bodies rather than with love."

"True," says the Chairman, "for this same word is used in Paul's great passage about the resurrection, where the long-familiar rendering is 'incorruption.' But when we were translating it, we followed Dr. Moffatt by using the word 'imperishable.'"

"But even that," says Mr. A., "is scarcely the word we want to go with love."

There is a pause; and then a member who has not previously spoken, but who is known by the others to be quiet and resourceful, brings forward his solution. "May I suggest that we drop all these long words, and render the greeting in this way: 'Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love undying.'"

"That's it!" they all say, "we shan't improve upon that. It's a good rendering of the apostle's word, and is just the right way to describe the love of which he is thinking."

Perhaps in some such way the R.S.V. committee was led to provide us with one of the most beautiful endings to Paul's letters.

His for ever, only His:

Who the Lord and me shall part?

Ah, with what a rest of bliss

Christ can fill the loving heart!

Heaven and earth may fade and flee,

First-born light in gloom decline;

But, whole God and I shall be,

I am His, and He is mine.

REV. GEORGE ALLEN ON THE

Sunday School Lesson

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30th, 1958

Topic:

CRUSADERS FOR CHRIST.

(3) WESLEY'S CRUSADE FOR GOD.

Lesson Verses: John 3. 16-21; Rom.

8. 1, 2, 14-17; and John Wesley.

Key Verse: I Thess. 1. 5a.

"What's that roll of paper or parchment that's strung round your neck?"

The secret? There was One unseen, behind the fire Who was always pouring oil upon it. That One was Christ, pouring His Spirit into the life of His servant.

God sent Jesus, Paul tells us, not only to be with us, but to be in us by His Spirit, and that Indwelling Presence makes us able to do what God asks. Imagine you are driving a carriage

A Brown Bread Preacher

BY FRANK BAKER.

Spiritual nourishment, like domestic catering, is not chiefly a matter of providing highly decorative titbits; witness one of Wesley's early preachers.

Few knew his name then, just as few know his name now. There are still thousands like him, loyal preachers of the gospel who never "hit the headlines," are never keenly sought after for special services, but who faithfully dispense the bread of life, leaving the provision of the more popular delicacies (often rather wistfully) to the select few. Such a man was Thomas Hanson. Not many preachers in Wesley's day thought less highly of themselves; few were more highly regarded by those who *knew* men, as did John Wesley.

Those were the days when travelling preachers really did travel, and seldom remained in one circuit for more than a year at a time. Wherever in the United Kingdom Hanson went, however, at least after his first two or three years in the itinerant ministry, Wesley sent him as the "Assistant" or superintendent preacher, even to exacting and influential circuits such as Hull, York, and Huddersfield. One of the polite ladies of Beverley doubted Wesley's wisdom in sending Hanson and another homespun companion to Kingston-upon-Hull, but Wesley's reply silenced her doubts: "It is certain both T. Hanson and James Hudson are workmen that need not be ashamed. They are

God!" Yet never was anyone more timorous: I thought the work so great, and my abilities so small. I cried, "I am not fit!" I wept, and kept it to myself for months." Actually this long period of heart-searching occupied two years. Then the people of Ossett, in Yorkshire, persuaded him to pray in public. His prayer led to conversions. He was pressed to deliver a brief exhortation. More conversions followed. Soon he was answering many such calls, sometimes preaching as often as five times a week in the area of the West Riding of Yorkshire between Dewsbury and Wakefield. Eventually thousands of people traced their membership of the Methodist Societies to the influence of this humble lay preacher.

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His hardships took their toll

Week by Week with

John Wesley—No. 46

part of that's strung round your neck ?

The question was asked by an American settler into whose encampment had come a Red Indian, almost naked and starving, begging for help.

"No, no! please don't touch it: don't open it: it's my charm" was the reply.

But at last kindness prevailed, and the Indian let them unfold the "charm."

It was a message written by President Lincoln, telling of great service rendered and commending the man to the grateful help of lovers of their President.

What a tragedy that there had been no interpreter of the President's message for the man in such dire need.

Our lesson to-day tells of the greatest love in the world, the Best Life to be lived because of that Greatest Love, and the human Interpreter of that Message of Life to men in direst need.

I. THE GREATEST LOVE (John 3. 16-21).

Every word in the six verses is precious, but surely John 3. 16 is the best loved text in the Bible. No wonder it has been called "the little Gospel" and "the Bible in miniature," for it tells of the Father's Love, the Saviour's Sacrifice, and the World's Salvation.

When the world's Sunday School Convention was held in Zurich, it included workers of almost every country and every principal language in the world.

At one point in the meetings they all rose together and repeated in their own language the words of John 3. 16 "On one side of me," says a delegate, "was a Swede, and on the other side a Jap. I could not understand a word that either said, but it was wonderful to feel that all that great assembly, so diverse in almost every respect, were one in Christ Jesus."

It was this great Love that inspired David Livingstone. "God had only one Son," he said, "and He made Him a missionary and a physician." So the mill-worker of Blantyre had to become the missionary and the physician of Darkest Africa.

"It is the way the Master went: Should not the servant tread it still?"

II. THE BEST LIFE (Romans 8 1, 2, 14-17).

You remember Bunyan's picture of the fire on which water was being poured continually, yet it blazed ever higher and hotter.

12 PAGES AGAIN!

For the second time in a year we shall have a 12-pages issue of *JOYFUL NEWS*. Note the date, please—DECEMBER 11th. It will be our first 12-pages CHRISTMAS NUMBER for nearly 20 years!

We hope you will want to order extra copies to pass on to friends. PLEASE DO SO AT ONCE to ensure that your newsgent can obtain them.

Here's an idea for you! Why not have your Christmas Greetings printed in a special column of Classified Adverts. It will ensure that all your friends who are readers of *JOYFUL NEWS* will see your message. For 36 words the charge is only 5/-. SEND YOUR Greetings this way. SEND IMMEDIATELY, PLEASE, to "Greetings Adverts," *Joyful News*, Cliff College, CALVER, via SHEFFIELD.

And another suggestion! Why not arrange for your friends to have *Joyful News* every week for a year—as your Christmas Gift? Send £1/1/ for 52 weeks or 10/6 for 26 weeks, or 5/6 for 13 weeks, together with the addresses of your friends and we will post the copy every week.

makes us able to do what God asks. Imagine you are driving a carriage drawn by strong horses that will not be controlled: they carry you on and on, and you are helpless. Suddenly strong arms are round you, strong hands take the reins, the fiery horses are in his control and you are safe.

That is how the Spirit of God helps us to do right.

Dr. Jowett tells of his drawing master, a brilliant artist, who adorned the walls of the schoolroom with masterpieces. The boy didn't remember these, but he remembered how one day the master came and looked at the scholar's drawing, a poor imperfect thing. But the master touched and re-touched it till the half-ugly drawing became a thing of beauty.

So by His Spirit Christ our Master and Lord transforms the poor lives that He claims for His service.

Yes! The Greatest Love and the Best Life: it was a wonderful message God sent to a needy, sinful world.

But who was to carry that message? God had His messenger, John Wesley, ready for England in the eighteenth century, and if ever that message was needed it was there and then.

III. THE WIDEST PARISH.

"I look upon the whole world as my parish," said John Wesley; he gave himself whole-heartedly to the work, and very wonderfully God blessed and used him.

You must read that life, for you and I are among the forty million who to-day, in the whole world, proudly acknowledge him as their father in God.

I see him in Epworth Rectory, one of a big family in a Christian home.

I see him in Charterhouse School, unconsciously preparing for that life of consecrated scholarship.

I see him at Oxford University, Student and tutor, member of the "Holy Club" called "Methodists" because they planned their lives by the "method" they felt God required.

I see him in Georgia, faithful, but stern and unpopular.

I see him learning of the perfect love of God, and entering into his full inheritance of blessing.

And then I see him, travelling, preaching, writing, organizing for over fifty years, fearless and tireless, and the secret of it all, "The best of all is, God is with us."

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Hanson found his most congenial sphere of service, however, among the rugged, hearty, devout Methodists of Cornwall. In 1769 Wesley sent him as superintendent of the West Cornwall Circuit, which embraced half the county. He was then thirty-six. Such good reports reached Wesley's ears that he retained him there for a second year. Not only so, but four years later Hanson was sent once more to Cornwall West, and again remained for a second year. Then an almost unique thing happened. Two years later he was sent to the same circuit for a third term, which once again extended to two years.

Thomas Hanson was certainly a man to be reckoned with, though he might not have all the outward polish that some folk would desire.

First and foremost he was an evangelist. His comment about the results of his own conversion on 16th July, 1757, is revealing:

"From this night I could not hold my tongue from speaking of the things of God." Yet he felt unworthy to become a preacher. True, he had enjoyed some hardwon education during his apprenticeship as a tailor, and had even gained a smattering of Latin and Greek while working at Netherthong in Yorkshire. All this had been thrown on one side in his quest for "the one thing needful." Now he recommenced his studies, apparently with the unformulated thought that he might thus be fitted to proclaim the Gospel more worthily. He waded through most of the fifty volumes of John Wesley's *Christian Library*, as well as other Methodist works.

Insistently came the inner call to preach. Just as insistently he stifled its demands. As he himself described the conflict: "The same Spirit that witnessed my adoption cried in me night and day, "Spend and be spent for

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"Barely by not "going on to perfection" all believers will grow dead and cold; and then they are just ripe for levity, tattling, and evil-speaking, which will soon destroy all the life of God out of their souls. Therefore you have need on this very account to preach perfection in the most strong and explicit manner possible. Without this you can never lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees."

D.J.B.

John Wesley about this greatly used young man. On Wesley's authority Olivers wrote to Hanson informing him that he had been accepted as a travelling preacher, and appointed to serve under Olivers' own superintendency in the York Circuit. (No long series of written examinations and trial sermons and committees for Candidates for the Ministry in those days, such as British Candidates must now undergo).

In proposing Hanson's name without first asking his consent Thomas Olivers knew what he was doing. He was attempting to by-pass a certain refusal on account of unworthiness. Even as it was, however, the reply he received from Hanson was a refusal, in these terms: "I have no doubt of my call to preach; but have no desire to be a travelling preacher. I am not fit for it. I cannot come."

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His hardships took their toll of him, as they did of many of Wesley's horseback preachers on both sides of the Atlantic, so that they became in very truth "worn out." In 1785, after twenty-five years of unstinting service, Thomas Hanson was compelled to retire from the itinerancy, with a "little stipend" from the Preachers' Fund to preserve him from absolute destitution. He continued to preach a little in and around Horbury until his death in 1804. His obituary in the *Minutes of Conference* characterises him as "a plain, honest, faithful, zealous man." An even better epitaph is to be found in words that he spoke of himself in 1780: "I have from my beginning thought myself the poor man's preacher; having nothing of politeness in my language, address, or anything else. I am but a brown-bread preacher, that seeks to help all I can to heaven, in the best manner I can."

Lovely phrase! "A brown-bread preacher"! Unrefined, perhaps, but nourishing and wholesome. Hanson's success as a Methodist preacher lay in that very quality. He made no attempt to ape the learning and the rhetoric of others, but stuck to the simple Gospel verities of the Bible and his own experience, and spoke of them in honest, homely words. He was content to be himself, or rather he was content that he himself should be forgotten, through his rough-hewn speech might sound the saving Word of God.

LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS

One of the liveliest and most constructive Government organizations in Central Africa is the Publications Bureau of Northern Rhodesia, with which the United Society for Christian Literature works in close co-operation.

The Bureau is now pioneering in a series of rural libraries in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland by sending out boxes of books on loan to rural areas. Each box will contain a selection of books on a variety of subjects. Most of the books will be in English but some will be in African languages.

In this way the Bureau hopes to encourage and assist the establishment of rural libraries and so gradually help Africans in these areas to build up small libraries of their own.

“A Brown Bread Preacher (Thomas Hanson).” *Joyful News* (Nov. 20, 1958), p 6.

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By Frank Baker