

The Guest of God

By Dr. J. Gregory Mantle

Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" This psalm is descriptive of a companion of God. Who is the guest of Jehovah? Who is he that shall commune with God as a child with his father? Who is he to whom that promise—which stands among the greatest in the Bible—shall be fulfilled: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make Our abode with him?" (John 14.23). The answer to these questions is given in this psalm.

THE GUEST OF GOD WALKS UPRIGHTLY

"He that walketh uprightly." (ver. 2). The man who is privileged to abide in God's tabernacle, and to dwell in his holy hill must be an "upright" man. There must be nothing crooked, wriggling or soft about his temperament. He must, like Daniel, be characterized by backbone. There must be a certain straitness and rigidity about him which is never absent in any of his relationships. "He walks uprightly." The word "walks" is descriptive of the movements of life. Our movements are determined by our motives. Our motives are our motors. Our motives must be strong and pure. There must be nothing limp or compromising about them. Uprightness and straightforwardness must characterize all our activities, or we can never abide in Jehovah's holy hill. There is no room for crookedness there.

THE GUEST OF GOD WORKS RIGHTEOUSNESS

"He worketh righteousness." (ver. 2). He must be marked not only by backbone and straightness, but by energy, and energy of a peculiar kind, energy rightly directed, making always for righteousness. It is said of the Divine Host into whose guest-chamber his privileged guests are permitted to abide that "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness." The word "worketh," it has been pointed out might with equal accuracy be translated "ordaineth." The guest of God inspects the purposes, wishes, and ambitions which appear in his life. He takes note of their tendency and aim. Some are suppressed and rejected, while others are selected and welcomed. The purposes that make for righteousness he ordains, and labours for their accomplishment. As one has said, "The companion of God is holding in his secret place a perpetual ordination service, where righteous suggestions and aspirations are being continually approved and ordained to the ministry of actual life and service." He deals fairly, justly, honestly, generously with others, letting his light so shine before men that others seeing his good works will glorify his Father who is in heaven.

THE GUEST OF GOD IS TRANSPARENT IN HIS SPEECH

"He speaketh the truth in his heart." (ver. 2). How many speak truth outwardly with the lips, but with a different meaning in his heart. The Guest of God knows nothing of prevarication. He is absolutely frank and candid with himself. He entertains the fair angel of truth, and he is careful not to defile her garments by any reservation or evasion. He is possessed of a sincerity which will not entertain even a shadow of that which is false.

When the Roman citizens beautified their mansions and grounds with Grecian statuary, the demand was at one time so great that the Grecian sculptors turned out very imperfect work. In their haste to complete a piece of sculpture the chisel often slipped, and an ugly flaw was the result. This was hidden from the eye by a cleverly prepared cera or cement. The sculptor's carelessness was not at first perceived, but under certain atmospheric conditions the cera became discolored and the fraud was immediately detected. Hence, a clause was inserted in all contracts for Grecian sculpture, "This statuary shall be sine cera," without cement. Hence the word "sincere" becomes a most suggestive word, and means in the case of those who subscribe themselves "Yours sincerely," "Yours without cement." That is to speak the truth, not with the lips only, but in the heart.

THE GUEST OF GOD IS CAREFUL ABOUT THE REPUTATION OF OTHERS

"He backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor." (ver. 3). "To bite with the tongue" is very expressive. The Hebrew word is even more suggestive. It means he walks along the way for the purpose of spying out another's fault and defect; then he presses them into his social intercourse endowing his words with teeth that are coated with venom. The poison of asps is under their lips." We talk of "picking a person to pieces." That is precisely the significance of the original word. When the late Dr. Joseph Parker was in the company of a number of preachers who were engaged in the ungenerous occupation of picking their absent brother ministers to pieces, the great preacher took no part in their cruel conversation, but quietly waited until there was a little lull in the talk and then asked: "Who shall we carve next?" There is no place in the Lord's holy hill for those who delight in breaking up a reputation, and leaving it like the bones of a poor bird picked to pieces by the destructive hawk. The speech of the guests of God is "always with grace seasoned"—not with mustard or vinegar, but "with salt." In other words it is never corrupt and insipid, but always sweet and wholesome. It is always "good for the use of edifying," always tending to the building up, and never to the pulling down of God's work in the soul. The Apostle in Ephesians 4:29-32 teaches us that the sins which grieve the Holy Spirit the oftenest, are sins of the lips.

We are forbidden not only to speak evil but to listen to it. If there were no evil listeners there would be no evil speakers. To "take up a reproach against our neighbor" is to incur as much guilt as if we originated the slander. There is a closing of the ears which will soon reduce the slanderer to silence. Refuse then to "take up" the reproach. All the evil speaker wants is attention and applause. The guest of God is ever generous in his thoughts and words; he puts the best and not the worst construction upon everything. He loves to hear eulogies, commendations and words of approval, and these he passes on. He puts into constant practice the Apostolic injunction: "Be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Prayer is Fundamental

By Dr. Warren C. McIntire

I am deeply distressed over the seeming lack of depth and lasting concern among many of our lay people in carrying a burden of prayer for our revivals. There are individual exceptions, but too many are of this class.

It is difficult, and in not a few places all but impossible, to get a burden of prayer on the hearts of the people. So few of the members will come to prayer meetings announced for the purpose of praying for the salvation of the lost.

Again, so few church families have family prayers, hence there is little or no prayer in the homes for the meetings. Children who do not hear their parents pray for the people to be saved are hard to reach for Christ.

After the revival closes so few CONTINUE to carry a burden of prayer for the new converts. This means so few DO anything to HELP the converts survive.

It is granted that in some churches a considerable number of the members attend the regular church prayer meeting, but their prayers lack passion, grip and power at the point of praying for the salvation of the church.

It seems to me that if we are to see a real movement of the Holy Spirit in revival power and salvation we must work to bring about a mighty revival among our Christian people that will get them under a burden of prayer concerning this matter. It will be effective in their individual Christian experience, in the salvation work of the church and result in our reaching many for Christ who will not be reached unless something is done about this matter.

The success of the Billy Graham campaigns is accounted for basically and largely on the fact that pastors and lay people have gathered in prayer meetings devoted solely to praying for the salvation of the lost. At times these prayer meetings are reported to have lasted a half night or all night. I understand that early morning prayer meetings were used for the convenience of some who wanted to pray.

I have proved that this emphasis on prayer is fundamental and I urge my brethren of the ministry and call on our lay people to give their first and best attention and efforts to bring about a reviving spirit and practice of earnest and believing prayer for our revivals. This has been the secret of great revivals in the past and will be again. Let us with holy zeal, make greater use of this important weapon. God will bless and help us to see many won for Christ and added to our churches.

THE GUEST OF GOD IS IMMUTABLE IN HIS COVENANTS

"He sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not. (ver. 4). His word is his bond. He redeems all his promises and he does it even "to his own hurt." Circumstances arise in which the fulfillment of a promise will mean considerable financial loss, but that does not deter him from keeping his word. "He that does these things shall never be moved." (ver. 5). When the tempest rages he will not be carried away by the storm; for hidden in the secret place of the Most High, and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, no evil can ever befall him. What seems to be evil will prove to contribute to his highest good.