

Among You

John 1: 14; John 12: 35; John 13: 35; 1 Cor. 14: 25; Phil. 2: 15.

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The words variously given in the above Scriptures as — "among," "with," "one to another," "in you" — all stem from the same root — and are translated in the J.N.D. Version as "among" (amongst) in each case. The word implies something much more than a casual visit or appearance, and has rather the thought of a position definitely taken up.

John 1: 14 possesses a glory which is unique! The truth contained in it, and resulting from it, has affected the history of this world as nothing else ever did or could. The destiny of every individual and of every nation is involved; eternal issues have been determined for both blessing and condemnation. Above all else the secrets of eternity have been unlocked, the heart of God and its ocean of eternal love made manifest; immeasurable blessing for mankind both now and throughout the ages of ages established; a righteous basis laid for the outshining of God's glory and the vindicating of His ways in the world-to-come, and the full and complete satisfying of His great heart of love throughout the eternal day. In short, the fullness of eternal purpose has reached this scene in the One who is "the Word," and the consummation of that purpose will be displayed in a realm where God shall "be all in all." Thus with adoring hearts we hear John's opening words "The Word became flesh and dwelt (*tabernacled*) among us" and then almost at the close of the Scriptures — "Behold the *tabernacle* of God is with men . . . God Himself shall be with them, their God." Wondrous indeed, beyond all human ken, the mighty results of this most blessed truth — the Incarnate Son of God — our precious Lord.

Blessed indeed for our affections to be occupied with the *results* of this mighty stoop, but He who is "the Word" has been here *among* men that they might behold *His glory*. The word may be translated "contemplated" — to "look closely at." The suggestion is almost breath-taking in its import. Who is this glorious Person? Have we not time after time read and marvelled at the opening verses of this chapter? have we not listened, some of us for many years, to the oft-repeated words — "His existence eternal" — "His nature Divine" — "His Person distinct"? As fresh discoveries of the vastness and wonders of creation are made do we not, with worshipful spirits, say from glad hearts, "All things were made by *Him*; and without Him was not anything made that was made"? As believers life is *given* to us — blessed truth! but in Him life *was*! His "life was the light of men" — divine light expressed to *men* in Him who is the Eternal Word! This beloved brethren, is the One who has "dwelt among us" — that in holy nearness we may contemplate His glory. How great that glory is! We are indebted to J.N.D.'s "The Names of the Lord Jesus in the Epistles" for the information that from Romans 1 to Revelation 22 there are some 190 Names and Titles of Christ! What a field for our contemplation in time! What an Object for our adoration eternally! ". . . enough the mind and heart to fill."

And yet the world, made by Him, "knew Him not" — and His earthly people "received Him not." The traditions of men, which they "received to hold" (Mark 7: 4) were more to them than the glory of the "Word." Does not history repeat itself? Blessed indeed to be found, through sovereign mercy, among those who *have* received Him and are free to contemplate His glory. Such are found throughout John's gospel, John himself being perhaps outstanding. "In the bosom" of Jesus! What holy intimacy!! How precious a position from which to contemplate the glory of His love — so obviously appreciated and enjoyed by the Apostle. John Baptist "looking upon Jesus as He walked said, "Behold the Lamb of God." What meditation such words afford! The Holy Sufferer laying down His precious life in

unswerving devotion to the will of God, securing eternal glory to God and immeasurable blessing for man.

There glory bright and fair,
Shines with celestial beam;
For He who suffered once is there,
Its centre and its theme.

Andrew saw His glory as the Christ — the Messiah, One who answered to every prophetic word — God's Anointed Man. We do not wonder that Andrew is seen as introducing others to the One, a ray of whose glory had filled his vision. Nathaniel exclaimed "Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel;" Nicodemus saw in Him "a Teacher come from God;" the woman of John 4 perceived Him to be "a prophet." Ray after ray of His glories penetrated the mind of the erstwhile blind man of John 9 — "a Man that is called Jesus;" "a prophet;" "the Son of God." The multitude hailed Him as the "King of Israel;" Mary Magdalene as "Rabboni" — (*my Teacher*); Thomas, hitherto doubting, as he looked upon His hands and His side, expressed his thoughts as no one else is recorded as doing — "My Lord and my God."

The contemplation of His glorious Person has nerved the warrior in the fight of faith; succoured the martyrs from Stephen onward; sustained the heralds of the Word; lightened the cell of the prisoner and illumined the bed of death. The recorded glories of His precious pathway — His triumphant death, His resurrection and ascension; the Spirit-given impressions of His glory at the right hand of God and the hope of His glorious appearing have been the spiritual food which has strengthened the footsteps of countless numbers of pilgrims in their journey heavenward. Blessed glorious Man! In Him the fulness *dwelt*; in Him the fulness *dwells now* — a glorified *Man* in heaven (Colossians 2: 9). He abides a Man for ever — our joy for time and eternity is to "contemplate" Him!

Brief comments on the other Scriptures must suffice. Never has such light entered this world as that which came in the Person of God's beloved Son. Never was such darkness apparent. Men could quote the law (John 12: 34) but failed to discern the One who gave it. Hiding Himself from them, He yet speaks of "sons of light" (v 36, New Trans.), envisaging those to whom the light would be precious and who would intelligently respond to it. Beloved brethren, He who was "the light of the world" has been rejected and cast out, but the light still streams from His blessed face in glory — it has reached us (and is among us) by the "radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ" (2 Corinthians 4: 4, New trans.). The light which shone among His earthly people was unappreciated and refused. Today we see the gross darkness of apostasy and unbelief on every hand; even in spheres where the light once shone in its brilliance intense darkness now prevails. "The night is far spent, and the day is near; . . . let us put on the armour of light . . . let us walk becomingly" (Romans 13: 12, 13). Precious indeed are the words of Christ in John 8. She who had trodden a path of darkness and sin is told to "go, and sin no more." But go where! "Then spake Jesus again . . . I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

In John 13 the Lord was going away from His disciples — He was going "to the Father." But "He loved them to the end," and beloved, that love is to remain *among* His own (v. 34). *His* love, which continued unaltered through all — through death itself — is to be among us as the substance and strength of our testimony now. "Love is of God" (1 John 4: 7), manifested to us in Christ, and as flooded into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (who abides with us during the absence of Christ) is the power which alone can unite the saints. The free movement and enjoyment of Divine love affords the

solution to every difficulty — whether as moving together in the interests of Christ, or presenting those interests in testimony to others. Outstandingly precious (and yet withal challenging) is the content of 1 John 4: 7-14.

"God is light" — "God is love." We are exhorted to "walk in the light" and to "walk in love." That which is the very nature of God Himself to be seen in the demeanour of His people! This is something more than "brotherly love" (see 2 Peter 1: 7); it is the first ingredient in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22). In no other circle and by no other power can this love be expressed. It is beyond human kindness and philanthropy — important as these features are — it is dependent upon the presence and activity of God's Holy Spirit, and it is the most powerful testimony that God Himself is in (among) His people.

In 1 Corinthians 13, we have what *love is in itself*, and then the apostle exhorts "Follow after love." Love thus expresses itself in a practical way, the mind of God in prophecy is made known and the happy results of verses 24 and 25 made possible.

This theme of testimony is continued in Philippians 2. Verses 1 to 4 show what is internal, the base for unity; verse 5 is the *mind of Christ* so perfectly expressed in the movements of the following verses. We are to "let this mind be in us." As having received the "Spirit which is of God" we have, from the Divine side, the "mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2: 16), but here in Philippians 2 the matter is intensely practical. It has in view our ability to move as Christ moved here in holy Manhood, harmless, sincere, irreproachable, "lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." Beloved brethren, may we esteem the privilege and face the challenge of these verses as perhaps never before. The power of darkness and corruption, with its consequence of moral death lies like a pall over the world today, every aspect of society is affected by its foulness — and we find ourselves "in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation; *among* whom" we are to shine as lights. The word used here is that in Revelation 21 (*and only there*) which describes the shining of the heavenly Jerusalem in a coming day. The light of that day of manifested glory is to be the character of our walk and testimony in the "present evil world."

As we contemplate the glory of Christ, and appreciate the light and love which abide in Him, may those features be continually seen in us, binding us together in love one to another, and giving us increased power in testimony to men. Thus may we, as the apostle, look forward with gladsome anticipation to "the day of Christ" — "not having laboured in vain."