

"My Lord"

Luke 1: 43; John 20: 13, 28; Philippians 3: 8.

F. A. Hughes.

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It is truly blessed to know Jesus personally as Lord; it is challenging as to how far that knowledge has affected one's practical walk. When David was in the cave of Adullam we read that "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt . . . gathered themselves unto him; and he became a *captain over them*". The word "captain" refers to one who *exercises dominion*, and that is the bearing of the word used extensively in the New Testament for "Lord" — one who has supreme authority. Philippians 2 refers to a coming day in which "every tongue" in heaven and in earth and under the earth shall "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." But how exceedingly happy it is for us to confess His supremacy *now*, anticipating thus that coming day, and experiencing in our daily pathways the practical salvation which follows the confession of Jesus as Lord. Such confession is the outcome of a work of God in the heart as we see from 1 Corinthians 12: 3, and is in direct contrast to the language of empty profession, "Lord, Lord," to which the Lord replies so solemnly, "I never knew you," (Matthew 7: 21-23).

In each of the four Scriptures we are considering we read of someone saying "My Lord;" one is speaking directly to Christ Himself, the others are speaking of Him, and we have the privilege of being marked by each of these features. In these days, when He is unwanted and His Name reproached, the heart of Christ is surely gladdened as He hears these words of reverential affection springing from those to whom He is precious; words addressed to Himself in holy adoration and praise, or spoken in testimony to those around. The knowledge of Christ's supremacy, filling our hearts and controlling our minds, would add substance to our praise and give us power in testimony to men. In Song of Solomon 4 the Beloved says of His spouse "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech comely." Scarlet in Scripture is indicative of dominical rights, and how jealously would the spouse, in her every word, guard the rights of her Beloved!

The verse we have read in Luke brings before us a scene of beauty and piety. Withdrawn from the world, in the moral elevation of which the "hill country" speaks, in "a city of Juda," these devoted women share a precious secret imparted to them by God Himself. Their whole conversation is marked by humility and contented lowliness, and the appreciation they have of the One who is the substance of the revelation which had been made to them is well expressed in the words of Elizabeth — "Whence is this to me, that the mother of *my Lord* should come to me?" *He* was the One who filled their vision, and it was through Him that the marvellous things of which Mary had spoken should be fulfilled. She herself is content to take the "low estate" of a "hand-maiden;" it was not in Mary that the mighty thoughts of God were to be consummated, "Jehovah's Christ" (v. 26) was in view, and in Him, and Him alone, would the eternal purpose of God and the establishment of universal blessing and glory be fulfilled. It has been well said of Mary by another — "she lost her place if she made anything of herself, but in truth she did not," a salutary word in the present day!

He of whom these women spake, the Babe of Bethlehem, will soon be owned as supreme in the universe, but *before His birth*, before He came into this scene in lowly Manhood, His supremacy was borne testimony to in the words of Elizabeth — "my Lord," and in her subsequent magnificent tribute of praise Mary also is able to embrace the wonderful promises of God, all of which would be fulfilled in the Babe she bore.

The whole attitude of Mary Magdalene in John 20 reveals the deep devotion of her heart to Christ. She had been the subject of a mighty deliverance, "from whom seven demons had gone out," (Luke 8: 2). She had thus experienced the supremacy of the Lord Jesus over the complete power of evil, and He was now the supreme Object of her affections. Thinking she had lost *Him*, the world to her was empty, and her heart completely bereft. Peter and John may find their homes still in this scene, and would go to them, but Mary was held in her affections to the place where she knew her Lord had been placed. Now the place is empty — *He* is not there, and her heart is broken with sorrow. She said to Peter and John, "They have taken away *the* Lord . . . and *we* know not where thy have laid Him," but later, as left alone with her sorrow and her loss, she says "They have taken away *my* Lord, and *I* know not where they have laid Him." The angels in verse 13 saw her sorrow and asked, "Woman, why weepest thou"? but the blessed Lord (v.15) saw not her sorrow only but knew the deep desires of her heart, and *He* asks, "Why weepest thou? *whom seekest thou?* He had heard that affectionate yet anguished cry, "*my* Lord," and in infinite love was about to reveal Himself to her heart as the Risen Lord, ascending to a realm in which He would associate her with Himself before His Father and His God.

It was to this devoted woman that the Lord gave the message (v.17) which gathered the disciples together to enjoy the peace and blessing of the Lord's own presence in their midst. Mary Magdalene was thus a true descendant of Naphthali (Magdala is in Naphtali's portion), "Satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord," (Deuteronomy 33: 23), she is seen as "a hind let loose . . . giving goodly words," (Genesis 49, 21).

In John 20: 28 we have the incident in which Thomas speaks directly to Christ, calling Him, "My Lord and my God." John's first reference to Thomas (John 11: 16) indicates that there is a good measure of affection for Christ in his heart; the next mention of him in chapter 14 shows how completely he had failed to recognize the greatness of the One whose disciple he was. In chapter 20 he seems in his disappointment, to have fallen into a state of unbelief and incredulity, and it is at that moment that the grace and tenderness of Christ is manifested. "Behold My hands; and . . . My side; and be not faithless, but believing." Those precious marks of suffering love made their impact on Thomas, his affections were moved and his mind enlightened, and his fervent response "My Lord and my God" both rejoiced the heart of Christ and indicated at the same time the full measure of Thomas's recovery.

Whilst this incident has in view a future day in the history of God's earthly people, is there not a lesson for us to learn in our day? Disappointments, failures, frustrations, lack of energy in seeking to be "with the disciples," may all tend to a spirit of unbelief. As coming into the presence of the Lord we are confronted with the evidences of His precious, unceasing love, and as this affects our hearts we too are moved in responsive adoration to Himself. Truly He is worthy of the supreme place in our affections *now*, as He will yet have the supreme place in the hearts of His earthly people in a coming day.

Finally, we have the words of the apostle Paul in Philippians 3, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus *my Lord*". Paul, as Saul of Tarsus, had moved in the most influential circles of his day, and in his own person he excelled among his fellows. Regarding himself he could say that he "advanced in Judaism beyond many my contemporaries in my nation, being exceedingly zealous of the doctrines of my fathers," (Galatians 1: 14, New Trans.). As to his associations he was "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;" he was a citizen of "no mean city" (Acts 21: 39); he was "free-born" — a coveted position (see Acts 22: 28); he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, who was "a doctor of the law, had in reputation *among all the people*", (Acts 5: 34); and he was the greatest linguist of his associates (1 Corinthians 14: 18). Truly a record of which the flesh could be proud! Yet

it was *all this*, and more — "all things" — which the beloved apostle had counted and did still count as "but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus " his Lord.

The glory of that blessed Man, the mighty blaze of which had shone across his self-righteous pathway on the Damascus road, had penetrated into the recesses of his affections, eclipsing all else. Christ, the erstwhile rejected and persecuted Jesus, now filled and dominated his heart and ways. His life, his desires, his ministry were all to be bound up, completely and irrevocably, with the glorious Person he delights to speak of as "my Lord."

In Acts 2: 33 Peter speaks of Jesus, "being by the right hand of God exalted," and in Acts 5: 29-31 the "other apostles" join in the same blessed theme — "Him hath God exalted." Our affections are truly touched, and touched deeply, when we realize that this word "exalted" used by Peter as describing the Lord's present position is the word also used in John chapters 3, 8 and 12, to describe the "lifting up" of the Son of Man! He who endured the cross with all its shame and ignominy has been "highly exalted" by God, and we understand that the expression "highly exalted" is used in this one place only, the Holy Spirit of God thus using a word which is unique to express God's appreciation of His blessed Son. How great a tribute to the One who so rightly claims the supreme place as Lord in our hearts now.

Endless praises to the Lord,

Ever be His Name adored!

Hallelujah!

He is worthy — praise His Name!