

## "The thread of scarlet"

F. A. Hughes.

JULY/AUG 1956

There is firmly implanted in the hearts of those who truly love God the blessed fact that good must triumph over evil. The evidence of this is not to be found in the world around us, neither is it to be found in the ranks of professing religion; it is found in a blessed Man at God's right hand, the place of supreme power; it is found in Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ.

He it is of Whom it is written, "When He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15: 24, 25). He also is the One in Whom God will "head up all things" (Eph. 1: 10. N.T.). Every hostile power will be subjugated by Him, and everything for God's eternal pleasure gathered together *in* Him.

Throughout Scripture God has given testimony to the fact that dominical rights belong to Christ, and that He must be supreme. Those rights may be at present usurped, but the usurper must and shall be dispossessed and "He (Christ) alone shall be exalted."

The colour "scarlet" represents dominical rights, and it is at once remarkable and instructive to see how the thought of supremacy in relation to Christ runs through Scripture like a "thread of scarlet." This beautiful thought is introduced in what is perhaps one of the darkest chapters in the Old Testament, Genesis 38. In dark, sordid circumstances an element which has power to "break through" and "rise up" (as the names of the twins suggest) is in evidence, and this culminates in a generation from which David springs (Ruth 4: 18-22). Thus God's king, the man after His own heart, to whom the throne and its rights can be entrusted, comes to light. In that beautiful passage Isaiah 60: 1-7 the same thought is in view. Sin, darkness, departure from God has marked His people, gross darkness covers the people; but the Lord arises upon them, His glory shines forth, and nations and kings are brought to the acknowledgment of the "rising" (Zerah) which has broken forth upon the darkness and brought into evidence His supremacy over all.

The light and power of that day, beloved brethren, is already known in our hearts as the Holy Spirit attracts us to the blessed Man in resurrection, the Lord of glory; what a "breaking forth" and a "rising up" has come into evidence in Him, and He is morally worthy of universal dominion.

In Joshua 2 the thread of scarlet is seen again. The great city Jericho stood in opposition to the people of God. We often refer to Jericho but perhaps overlook the Spirit of God's reference to the "King of Jericho" (vv. 2, 3). There was a direct personal challenge to the rights of the Lord in His people, a challenge to the divine right of way. Again there comes to light, in perhaps the most unlikely place (emphasising the sovereignty of mercy), one whose eyes have been opened to see that dominical rights belong not to the king of Jericho, but to the Lord. "The LORD your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (v.11). The scarlet thread was there! Hebrews chapter 11 and James chapter 2 tell us of Rahab's faith and of her works. Twice she said "We heard." Faith cometh by hearing and her works prove that the report she received produced in her fidelity to the Lord. The Spirit of God delights to bring her name forward in Matthew 1 as the mother of the mighty man of wealth, he who was in turn the father of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. Thus again a generation is secured in whose hearts and movements the dominical rights of the Lord are treasured. It is evident from the narrative that the scarlet thread was in her window during the *absence* of the messengers. Is there not a similar thought in 1 Cor. 11: 26? As we come together in a scene which is hostile to Christ

we break bread and drink the cup; we thus acknowledge our loyalty to our absent Lord and we "show the Lord's death (or it might read, "announce the death of the Lord") till He come." I believe this precious remembrance of Him has gone right through like a scarlet thread, all through the church's history, through the so-called dark ages until now and will continue until He comes again; loyal hearts who say in effect, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

In the Song of Solomon the Beloved says of His spouse, among other things, "Thy lips are as a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely (Cant. 4: 3). What a commendation this is, how beautiful too in His sight; but beloved, what a challenge to our hearts. Would it not suggest that every word we say, our whole conversation, should jealously guard His precious rights. The features which commend the virtuous woman, the "woman of worth," include, "the heart of her husband confideth in her, *and he shall have no lack of spoil*" (Prov. 31: 11. N.T.). She labours that not only herself but all her household might be marked by this precious feature of acknowledging the rights of an absent Lord, "all her household are clothed with scarlet." One greatly desires dear brethren, that all labour and ministry might have this blessedly grand objective in view.

In Matthew 27: 28 the rude soldiery of Herod "stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe." Mockingly, ironically they insulted His kingly rights; and the spirit of this world is still marked by its rejection and derision of the One to Whom all dominion rightly belongs.

The usurpation of the rights of Christ has forced its awful way into the mass of profession, with terrible results as shown in Revelation 17. The "scarlet woman's" association with the "scarlet beast" brings about the most frightful attack upon that which belongs by right to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ten kings merge their forces under this evil influence and make war against the Lamb. How blessed to read "The Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings" (v.14). It is the One Who has suffered, the Lamb of God, Who will reign; "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet."

As we await the day of His public vindication and exaltation may we be kept in the blessed current which the "scarlet thread" indicates; may the darkness and apostasy of the day in which we live only serve to stimulate us in faith and by the Holy Spirit's power to "break through" and "arise," and to be found here saying from full hearts,

"Thine are we David and on thy side thou son of Jesse."