**BROOKS BY THE TRAVELLER'S WAY - ADDRESSES BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**01. MAN'S SETTING AND GOD'S SETTING by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"I have set."*

*Psalm 16:8*

*"He set."*

*Psalm 40:2*

The Bible abounds in figures representing spiritual attitudes and the Father's gracious response. Man assumes a certain posture of soul, and the grace of the Lord falls upon him like a soft and inspiring light. How shall I dispose my life? At what angle shall I incline it that I may receive this glorious baptism? I find the requisite suggestion in a verse of the Psalmist,--"I have set the Lord always before me." That is a "setting" on my part, which will issue in a responsive "setting" on the part of God. I determine the direction of gaze; He will determine the character of my life. I "set the Lord always before me"; He will "set my feet upon a rock." He will "set my feet in a large place." He will "set before me an open door." Let us consider both sides of the wondrous fellowship, the steady contemplation, and its inevitable results.

**I. Man's Setting.**

"I have set the Lord always before me" (Psalm 14:8).

You are away from home, and in the far-away city; before you retire to rest you take out of your pocket a photograph, and gaze upon the likeness of your wife or child. How calming and steadying is the influence of the picture as you set it before you! One of Robertson's congregation at Brighton used to keep a portrait of the great preacher in the room behind his shop, and when he was tempted to any mean device, he would set the likeness before him, and its influence determined his inclination in the way of truth. But it is not the figure of any earthly personality, however noble and ennobling, which is the object of the Psalmist's contemplation. He "sets" before him the august and holy presence of God, and in the glory of His most searching light all the Psalmist's affairs are determined.

"I have set the Lord always before me." It is not a temporary vision; it is a fixed outlook. It is not a Sabbath contemplation; it is the permanent background of the week. If the Lord is "always before me," then everything else which may obtrude into the line of sight will be seen in relationship to God. I shall see nothing by itself; everything will be seen in divine company. Everything that emerges into my regard, and which demands my contemplation, will be seen against the great white background of the Almighty. I will judge everything by its appearance in this most revealing light. How does a thing look with God in the background? My suggestions, my desires, my pleasures, my ambitions, my conversations, my business, my prayers, shall all be seen in this heavenly relationship, and by its revelation shall their true quality be judged and determined. But to "set the Lord always before me," not only implies the possession of revealing light; it also implies a disposition of reverent and righteous choice. The man who "sets the Lord always before him" not only discerns the real nature of things; he chooses the worthy and repels the base. To "set the Lord always before me" implies another "setting" which is expressed by the prophet Isaiah, "I have set my face like a flint." That which is unveiled as unworthy I spurn with holy contempt; the revelation creates a revulsion. So that to "set the Lord" before one expresses a two-fold attribute of character--the attribute of clear discernment and of wise and sanctified choice.

**II. God's Setting.**

The man who steadily contemplates God as the abiding background of all his affection will find a spiritual ministry operating in his life with most gracious response. Let us gather up two or three of the "settings" which are the happy experiences of those who set their mind upon God.

**(1) "He set my feet upon a rock."**

The shake and tremble shall go out of life. Timidity shall be changed into a sense of firmness and security. The loose, uncertain sand and gravel shall be consolidated into rock. Loose ideas about the right shall be changed into strong perceptions. Loose principles shall be converted into immovable convictions. Vagrant affection shall be transfigured into steady and unwavering love. Weak will shall be energised into mighty powers of righteousness. There shall be about the entire life a firmness, a decisiveness, a sense of strength and "go" and security, analagous to the feelings of a man who has stepped from wet slippery clay to firm and solid rock.

**(2) "Thou hast set my feet in a large place."**

The life of the man whose gaze is fixed upon God shall not only be firm but roomy. Everything about his spirit shall receive enrichment. The consecrated life is not lived in the dark, dank surroundings of a narrow cell. Our feet are set in a "large place." Our affections, which were dwarfed and petty, become spacious and inclusive. Our pleasures have larger skies and more remote horizons. The enjoyments of the unconsecrated life were only as the uncertain pools and puddles of the common way. "Thou shalt make us to drink of the river of Thy pleasures." The only pleasures that are denied us are the bewitching and destructive delights of the flesh. But why should we mourn that they are gone? It would be like mourning for the return of the beclouding steam that dimmed the window-pane. The steam has gone, the blinding carnality is removed. We have now an outlook over the large and beautiful realm of the spirit. Our feet are "set in a large place." Our possibilities are enlarged. There are no limits to the power of our becoming, no confines to the bounds of our optimism. Peak upon peak rises before us, and we cheerfully entertain the hope of standing at last upon the ultimate summit "in the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

**(3) "I have set before thee an open door."**

The life that is lived in steady contemplation of God is not only firm and roomy, but is characterised by daily enlargement. Every day the Lord opens doors to the consecrated life. Words that hitherto had no meaning throw open their doors and unveil their wealth. Promises that have hitherto been under lock and key fling their doors ajar, and invite us to partake of their treasure. We don't know just where we shall find the open door. Sometimes a lowly service confronts us. We discharge the humble task, and in the act of obedience we find we have passed through an open door into an enlarged conception of "the inheritance of the saints in light." In the old castle at Edinburgh, the way to the Crown Jewels leads through a very humble doorway and through a very dingy and circuitous passage. The humble doorways of common duties are frequently the way to the room where God keeps His jewels. The Lord is ever giving us new opportunities, fresh chances, that day by day we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him. It is His will that we should grow daily in finer discernment, richer affection, and more brilliant hope.

Let us "set the Lord" always before us, and life in its inmost depths shall be wondrously transfigured. We shall step upon rock, we shall live in a large place, and life will be abundant in opportunities for moral and spiritual growth.