

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

by Robert C. Chapman

Chapman's devotional exposition of Christ as the Good Shepherd, drawing from the pastoral imagery of Scripture to portray Christ's tender care, faithful guidance, and sacrificial love for His sheep.

3 Chapters

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02 - The Good Shepherd: 1-5

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP. The Gospel of John begins with Christ as "The Word" -not as the Shepherd. The Word tells out all the heart of God. The mysteries of His grace will take eternity to unfold them all. The Word becomes flesh: the Lamb is seen, and the Lamb becomes the Shepherd. This is illustrated in Psalms 23:1-6., where He is seen walking through the valley, the utmost sorrow of death.

"The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (verse 11). It is His life, and it is His as Son of God. But it must be laid down. We see the type in Genesis, chapter 22.-the Father and the Son are there. On Moriah, God said to Abraham-"Lay not thine hands upon the lad;" but at the Cross "He spared not" His Own Son (Romans 8:32). His only alternative was to sacrifice Him, or leave us in our sin. God had no way save one by which He could redeem us, that was by the blood of the Cross.

"The door" is redemption. By the death of Christ the door was opened.

"The sheep." This name is frequently given to believers in the Word: it denotes fellowship. The sheep first hear His voice for salvation, and after for obedience, to follow in His steps.

"I am come that they might have life." We have life out from Christ, as Eve from Adam. Our life is unspeakably above the highest angel, being derived from Christ in redemption.

"The porter openeth." God's satisfied justice now opens the way to life and endless glory with Christ.

"Other sheep," such as Cornelius and ourselves, not of the Jewish fold.

"Saved, and go in and out." Access to all the fullness of God. Angels deem it an honor to remain waiting on those who are heirs of such salvation. What obligations belong to those who have been so richly blessed, and brought into a place of such nearness to God. How deep the doom of all who despise such grace. Surely Satan is less guilty than man, for he never had the opportunity of rejecting God's salvation. And as we begin with the Lamb and the Shepherd (John 1:29), so we end (Revelation 7:14-17, Revelation 22:3). mod this is created by D. (0xmade by Dav1d C0x OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

Notes of Mr. Chapman's Last Reading.

Read Hebrews 7:1-28, Hebrews 8:1-13.

Mr. Chapman remarked, "There is a vast difference between saying "There is a Great High Priest," and " We have a Great High Priest.this is created by D. (0x Before the Cross, Christ could not take up the Melchisedec priesthood. He had not fulfilled the Aaronic. In eternity we shall not need His restoring grace: there will be no weakness, no wanderings there.

Here our wants are numberless, so are His supplies. If I thank God for my wants, He will not forget His supplies. I see a fellow-believer in perplexity, I make his wants my wants, but I do not stop there. I go to the Great High Priest, and draw from Him, for I know His resources are infinite.

I look at myself seventy years ago. I found I must conjoin the two: my wants, His supplies, His supplies need my wants. I search out my wants small and great, and match them with His supplies.

We need our Melchisedec less than He needs us. He feels our condition and need, more than we do. His need of us is so great. this is created by D. (0x Ever so little increase is a growth in fellowship. mod made by Dav1d C0x

I have been growing every day for seventy years. I have been happy ever since I knew my sonship first, yet every day I grow happier. this is created by D. (0x A tender conscience can only grow in communion with Christ. By unbelief and neglect, we make the Bible a much smaller book.

Christ is my Surety. I never use the word "substitution," I refer to my Friend who pays for me. On the Cross His act was much above a substitute: He raised us to oneness with Himself.

FAITH AND UNBELIEF.

Read Hebrews 11:1-40, Hebrews 12:1-29. The word "testament" throughout Hebrews should be read "covenant."

God's grace is seen in Hebrews xi., where no mention is made of any faults attaching to His people. The disposition to unbelief dishonors God: faith honors Him. Unbelief is the easily-besetting sin. The battle with unbelief is to be maintained every hour. The Word of God and Its Use: AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

Let us dwell a little on the words in John 17:8, John 17:14. "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me,"-" I have given them thy Word;" and in Colossians 3:16, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Remember, there is a certain measure of truth graven in the conscience of man as man. We shall not find a human being who has not some conviction of the existence of God in his conscience. This conviction may be corrupted, overlaid, almost buried under the delusions of Satan, and the unbelief of the carnal mind; but, still, there it is. See how the apostle, in preaching to the Athenians, profits by this. He does not begin by proving to the Athenians the existence of God; but he profits by that which was graven on all their hearts and consciences-a consciousness of their obligation to God, and a knowledge of His being. Why do I speak so? Because I am coming to what I judge to be of infinite importance to us all, particularly to young believers-that there is not naturally in the conscience of man any knowledge whatever of God as a Father-God, a God of grace and redemption, a God who can pardon sin-who acts in perfect justice, and yet justifies the sinner who believes. Not only is there not this knowledge naturally in man, but there is everything in guilty, defiled man, in his reasoning about God, against supposing that there is forgiveness with God. We find the human, corrupt heart, breaking out in the garden in Adam and Eve. They hid themselves from God, and then shifted the blame from themselves in reality on God. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me." It was Thy fault in giving the woman to be with me. It was Thy fault in allowing the serpent to tempt me.

Again, afterwards, it is striking if we take the marginal reading of what Cain said: "My sin is greater than can be forgiven." Here is the natural heart speaking out. He had had the accepted worshiper before him, his brother Abel, and had killed him. Now he speaks as if his hand had lain in his bosom, and he shows a lamentable ignorance of God as a God of grace in saying, "My sin is greater than can be forgiven." He determined to make the best of his existence by turning his back upon God, forgetting Him; and occupies himself in building, and such things. In speaking thus, I have a particular aim in view. The Bible is a self-proving book. If you see your elders taken away, and you younger ones attain old age, you will find that the world will boast itself more and more of its own wisdom and even of wisdom from God. The Bible runs entirely contrary to man's wisdom, and therefore it will be a settled matter with the world, that fools only hold the Bible to be a revelation from God. We find in the Bible the doctrine of God as Father running through it from beginning to end. No human being could ever have invented the doctrine of "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son;" or that God so loved the Church, that He chose it, that Christ might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Beloved, never read any book to prove that the Bible is true. It is only a waste of time, but it gives great advantage to the adversary of your souls. All books, more or less, I do not say in the same measure, allow the natural man (I) to be capable of judging the truth of Scripture; and, moreover, that such a revelation of Himself was to be expected from God.mod made by Dav1d C0x

They say the glories of the Scripture are self-evident; but to whom are they evident? To those whose eyes are opened, who see that God has given Christ and His Spirit to open the eyes of their understanding; just as a blind man cannot see the sun, though it is shining in the clearness of its noonday strength. So it is with a blind world.

Again, as the world cannot see Christ, because of its blindness, it cannot see itself. The Bible is the only book under heaven where the human heart, as it truly is in the sight of God, is set forth according to truth. Other books may have truth in them out of the Bible, but no book could or does declare, "The heart is deceitful above all things," but the Bible. Truly we need a revelation from God respecting our hearts, as much as respecting Christ.

It appears to me at the present time very clearly, that all the wise men of the world are saying there is some good in man, that man is destined to attain a glorious state of being, that there are capabilities in man to attain to greatness and glory. This is a universal doctrine. It was the doctrine of the old philosophers of Greece and Rome. There was one of them put to death, three hundred years before Christ for righteousness sake-that is to say, human righteousness-because he boldly rebuked the wickedness of the nation, when he sought to regenerate the people; but all his philosophy was, that there was goodness in the heart of man; he himself said that he had lived so that he could not possibly have lived better. He had no conscience of being a sinner going to hell, but he had been adjudged to take a draught of hemlock, and his last command to his friend was, "Offer a cock to Esculapius." It was as much as to say, "This cup is a cure of all ills, and therefore the honor of an offering is due to the God of medicine." Such was the human heart in one of the best men the world ever saw. At the present time, the great and wise are proceeding on the false principle that there is some good thing in man to be unfolded, which will raise him to a higher being, to a glorious state of exaltation. The Scripture counts this all folly. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Dear young friends, remember this book, the Bible, scorns all support from

man's reasoning. It is entirely self-proving. All the words of man's wisdom are folly to it, and its doctrines are and must be folly to the world's wisdom. Do not waste your time in proving the Bible to be true; read the Bible itself. After you have found the knowledge of Christ as your Saviour and Redeemer, and He has given you rest, you must, according to Matthew xi., take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him. . . . And you shall find rest unto your souls." The second rest is very distinct from the first. Every child of God has the first, and ought to attain to the second. What happiness! All wise, humble walk and service to Christ hang on it, yet, alas! few attain it. Very few, in truth, find rest from the restlessness of self-will and self-exalting pride: rest from the cravings after some portion to fill the heart, short of Christ.

It seems to me, that the Church is made up to a great degree of Lot's children. The world is made up of Cain's children. The Church of God is made up of Lot's children, when they ought to be Abraham's true sons and daughters. They begin to find friendship and happiness in the midst of the evil world around them; they do not seek happiness in Christ alone, though they have sought and found redemption, and, alas! care not to observe the commandment- Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. The day spent with God brings happiness and peace: this is the proper state of the Church of God, and if this were its condition, it would shine forth "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." It would be so separate from the world and its forbidden fellowships, so walking in the daylight of God's presence, that believers would naturally speak one thing, and walk in one way. We are wanting in fellowship, because we do not take the yoke of the Lord upon us. We do not seek rest from the restlessness of self-will and self-affection, and we are perpetually taking up some portion short of God and of Christ Himself. One mark of this Lot-like spirit is, that the Bible is not dealt with as it should be. The Lord says, "I have given them thy Word." That is, the whole of Scripture. The Scripture comes to us from a risen Christ, who has given us the Spirit to unfold it to us; and thus we have a spiritual, heavenly relation, entirely above everything even of what angels know of God. The best gift is ours. The Lord reckoned it to be a better thing than His continuance here after He was risen. When He conversed with His disciples, He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away," because He, unseen, is better known by faith, and by the Spirit in the Word, than He was or could have been when here in the days of His flesh.

Again, observe the first psalm; we see the blessed Son of God, as God's servant, delighting in God's Word: "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth He meditate day and night." While the blessed Lord was never anything lower than He is now, yet He was always, in the days of His flesh, a Learner. "He grew," "He increased," in wisdom and stature. He was wisdom-Himself the substance of Scripture testimony; yet, I suppose, when He was working as the carpenter, and the whole of His days were spent in labor, His nights were often sleepless -He, the carpenter, the Son of God, the Redeemer-in order that He might meditate on the word of Moses, of Samuel, of David, of Isaiah, and of Daniel. Oh, what a pattern is the Lord Jesus to us, meditating on the Scriptures! If we do take up with the Scriptures for the sake of being the friends of Christ, then let us observe the Word-" Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John xv. 14). We cannot know the will of the Lord, unless we meditate on His Word. If we desire to walk in the truth, and seek, in obedience to Christ, to meditate on His Word, we have the promise of the Spirit to guide us into all truth. But supposing a believer is not taking this path, has he the promise? Surely not; he is in a state of self-will, desiring earthly things to be his portion. He may be united to Christ,

but he does not get the promise, because the promise is coupled with, "if ye do whatsoever I command you." On the other hand, amid all our infirmities, and ways so contrary to Christ, let us be stirred up to settle in our minds to take His yoke upon us and learn of Him. He that walks in Lot's path does not know himself. He that walks in Abraham's path, follows the path of Hebrews -looking unto Jesus, the perfect Example of faith. Resistance to the flesh brings greater self-knowledge, but not discouragement, because we can say, "Christ is my great High Priest within the veil." Christ is there for me, in the presence of God, my power and advocate. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

What we want is obedience, to take the Scriptures as the daily food of the soul; exactly as we take food for the daily nourishment of the body. If we deal with our souls as well as we deal with our bodies, to nourish, adorn, and cleanse them, we shall certainly thrive, and shall be living not to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again. I cannot but say, that the great means of growth, taking the first psalm for my authority, is reading the Word of God in the closet for the sake of obedience to God. It is not the public assemblies for teaching (though may God increase them), and raise up men of wisdom, shepherds, and teachers. The Lord put a cry into the hearts of His children for them; we cannot value them too highly: still, everything must be in its proper place. Let the teachers have their place, and the Bible and the closet their place.

There are some very common habits among Christians, as to reading the Bible. I am accustomed to put the question, How do you read the Bible? And I frequently get the sorrowful answer- "I take up a chapter anywhere." When do you read the Bible? When all the house is quiet? Is that the best time? Did the Israelites gather the manna at nine o'clock in the evening? No one takes his breakfast at such an hour. If I read a letter from some one dear to me, I begin at the beginning, and read it through to the end. So we ought to deal with the Gospels, the Psalms, the Epistles; reading each in the order in which each is written. Begin, for instance, with the Gospel of John. If you have not half an hour, use the time that you have. If you have only five minutes for taking your breakfast, rather than starve your soul, spend the five minutes with your Bible, and let the body take care of itself. Order your conversation according to the Word of God. Let this be your settled resolve, to take the yoke of Christ upon you, to yield unreserved, unqualified obedience to the Word, that you may enjoy the friendship of the King of kings, the Son of God. The Unchangeable Priesthood of Christ.

Read Hebrews 13:8-21.

It is well for us to call to mind the place in this epistle of the words, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" they occur in the last chapter, after the offering of Himself and His present priestly ministry have been dwelt upon.

We remember that when some boasted that they had Abraham to their father, the Lord replied, "Ye are of your father the devil;" and concerning Himself He added, "Before Abraham was, I AM." He had not then offered Himself on the cross, and though He had been anointed by the Spirit for Himself, He had not received that Spirit for us. But when He had, "through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God," and had been raised up as "Head over all things to the church," He was anointed as the great Melchizedek-the great High Priest of our profession, and through that anointing we receive the Spirit who now dwelleth in us. That Spirit bears witness to Him as the One who has been manifested and tested, declaring that He is "the same yesterday,

and to-day, and for ever." When we consider that these words are spoken of our Priest at God's right hand, what manner of persons ought we to be in point of trusting Him! Though we cannot see Him with the bodily eye till He shall come in His glory, yet we do see Him by faith; and though we may be called to walk through darkness-even thick darkness-we walk in the light of His priesthood, His intercessory power, His sympathy with us in every heartache, in every sigh of our souls, as well as in our joys and rejoicings-"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

We are called to reckon time as God reckons it, and to redeem and use it according to His estimate of it. We might surely say, that when Aaron went into the holiest on the day of atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, no one thought of going to his dwelling until the high priest came out again. We know that Christ is Aaron as well as Melchizedek, and that as Aaron He has entered into heaven itself, and the blessed word in this epistle, quoted from Habakkuk, is this: "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." The prophet thought the vision tarried; the Spirit by Paul omits the words "though it tarry," for He tarries not, He has not lost a moment. We speak as if it were a long course of time; but through all this time, He is preparing for coming glory. In the ninth chapter we learn that, as He once appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (v. 26), so He now appears in the presence of God for us (v. 24), while we have the assurance that "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (v. 28).

Beloved, how unspeakably precious is this waiting season, if we but turn it to good account!

We sing, and it is good to sing,

Hence, through all the changing seasons,

Trouble, sickness, sorrow, woe,

Nothing changeth God's affection,

Abba's love shall bring us through.

Let us remember that Christ is an eternal gainer, by His present rule as Head over all things to the church. We are very apt to think that the future joy only consists in two things-Christ Himself as seen by us, and our being with Him and like Him, according to the words in John's first epistle. Now, without these we know there could be no eternal joy. But, when we are brought into this glorious condition, Christ will be revealing Himself, unfolding the story of His love, unfolding to us all His steps in the days of His flesh, and expounding to us His grace in His dealings with us, as He cannot do now. We see now through a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known. The wisdom of God is as necessary to us as the love of God. Our love indeed will be perfect, but our reverence will be perfect also. And how? He will unfold to us the equity of His ways. And what is the equity of God, but the wisdom of His justice and the wisdom of His love? He will unfold the equity of these, and not only shall we confess, but foes as well shall confess that He who died on the cross is not only Lord in power, but Lord in the equity of the wisdom of God. And the foes under His feet, from the depths of hell, shall confess, that He is the rightful Lord of all. The wicked prophet Balaam said, "How goodly are thy tents, O Israel!" and, "I shall see Him, but not now." He confessed the beauty of the Lord then, but he will more perfectly confess it in that day of final reckoning.

Let us now turn to the prayer of the apostle: "The God of peace . . . make you perfect." "We know that, according to chapter 10, we have the perfection to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away. In verse 14 we read, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." In this epistle we have no mention of justification, but we have sanctification by the blood of Christ. The reason is, that in Romans and other Scriptures, the great matter of guilt is dealt with--the need of being justified is set forth, with God's way of justifying the sinner by faith in the blood of Christ. But here we are taught by the Spirit what the world never knows, even our natural unfitness for worship. Those who are not taught of God, never consider the guilt of sin, still less does it enter their thoughts to consider the unholiness that unfits them to worship God. It is because of this that people gather together and offer unto God Cain-like worship, which can only be a provocation to Him. But a child of God walking in any measure of obedience, and examining himself in God's presence, will chiefly lament the fact that there are in him checks and drawbacks to communion with God. It is God's Holy Spirit who gives us any sense of the uncleanness of sin, as well as of the holiness of God. But we are sanctified to God as His priests, and the sanctification is accomplished once for all. To it nothing can be added, and from it nothing can be taken away. All who are born of God are His priests, not one less and not one more; and such draw near to God in the name of Jesus, and by the blood of Jesus. The Lord Jesus is a Saviour for the world, but He is the High Priest for those who are sanctified by faith in His blood. Only such can truly worship God; but they should ever remember what they are called unto. Their office is everlastingly theirs, and their fitness for the worship pertaining to their office is according to God Himself. We are told that God sought worshipers (John 4:23), and He has found them through the work of His beloved Son. By the blood of Christ they are cleansed from sin, and as a result, they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and now God looks for constant worship from all His royal priesthood. Not that our thoughts can be always immediately directed upwards, but whatever our hands find to do we should do as worshipers. We should ever be acting and walking in a spirit worthy of the royal priesthood. The word in Hebrews 10:1-39 -"By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"-has nothing to do with attainment ; but denotes a perfection that belongs to every new-born child of God. The prayer in the last chapter, that God will make them perfect has a somewhat different meaning. In Php 3:1-21., Paul tells us how he himself sought that he "might attain to the resurrection from among the dead," adding, "not as though I had already attained." He sought to be a man perfectly one with the risen Saviour, and perfectly one with the mind of the suffering Saviour-a mirror of the mind of Christ. He always looked onward to the goal in the race, and never measured the distance between the starting point and any point he had reached. He looked back for godly purposes, to beget thankfulness and to confirm his apostleship; but never to rest with satisfaction upon any attainment. He forgot the distance already traversed, and thought only of what lay before him. He could say to Timothy, "Thou hast known my . . . purpose;" even as Barnabas, having the mind of Christ, exhorted the saints to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. Let it be our aim-our settled aim-thus to cleave to God and His Word.

O, how much God makes of the new creation in every child of His love! He can look upon the hosts of angels and behold the creation of His power and will; but He looks not on one of them as having life springing from the blood of Christ. Every child of God, whatever age or time he lived in, has spiritual, eternal life from Christ and the blood of His atonement. He Himself was raised from the dead through the power of His death, and now He gives us to know that the life is in the blood. Our eyes do not see all the features of Christ in the new-born child of God; but He does not fail to

discern every feature of His beloved Son, in every new-born soul. And what delight the purpose to please God gives to Him! I should regard as perfect the believer whose aim-the business of whose life-is to please God according to His Word, and according to the obligations that lie upon us because of Christ within the veil.

It is very important that we never divorce the Word of God and the Spirit of God. If we neglect the Scriptures we are sure to go wrong; but if we deal aright with God's Word, remembering that the Spirit of God is the continual Reviver of thought and purpose and desire through the Word, we shall perfectly please our Father, and shall have His testimony that we do so. To this end we must take heed to the whole of the Scriptures, seeking to put every truth in its own place and to use it truthfully, according to the design for which God has given it. We cannot speak of attainment, for Paul said, "Not as though I had already attained." The one attainment he had reached was to count himself "less than the least of all saints," and we may well seek the same mind.

If we be worshipers within the veil, we shall always find reason for both thanksgiving and praise. Speaking to God, and admiring Him in Christ, we shall offer this sacrifice continually. People of the world know nothing of the reality of worship, and many Christians little consider the blessedness of worshiping within the veil. Let us remember that God delights to be praised by His children.

There are two sides to the mournful state of the church of God; on the one hand, the sin of the church, and on the other, God's Fatherly judgment. We are as much bound to be one in heart and spirit and speech as were the saints at Pentecost. Indeed, our larger knowledge of Scripture, lays us under stronger obligations; and yet not only is the church of God divided, but these divisions are even gloried in. It behooves us to lay this to heart, and to take the part of God and justify Him in His judgment because of our grievous ways, for the state of schism and division in the church is one of the heaviest judgments that is to be seen. But, in spite of this, Christ has all the church in His heart, and cares for us according to our present condition.

We long to see the fulfillment of Psalms 132:1-18 and Psalms 133:1-3, and behold all the countless multitude of Israel as if they were but one: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" With such a happy prospect let us "pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." And let us indeed seek to have the bowels of Christ towards all the children of God. Let us beware lest we be ensnared into the habit of harshly judging others, remembering the word concerning all who are Christ's, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me."

If we humbled ourselves aright before God, nothing would interrupt that song of thanksgiving and praise which God should have from us every moment, not only for what He is, but also for what He does. Then, even though He might lead us in a path of darkness, we should walk in the light shed on us by our High Priest within the veil, and in our personal matters nothing would discourage us. We should be joyful according to Christ, we should be sorrowful according to Christ, and we should always have a heart of tender sympathy for all the family of God.

03 - The Good Shepherd: 6-11

Conscience: Its Use and Abuse.

Assuredly, conscience is the mightiest weapon of the devil, as it is the most powerful instrument of the Spirit of Christ. Mised, defiled, hardened, it is Satan's mightiest weapon of destruction; but cleansed, purged (according to Hebrews 9:14) by the blood of Christ, instructed by the Scriptures of truth, guarded, strengthened, and raised by the Spirit of Christ, it is all in all in regard to the believer's walking with God, his running his race well to the end, ever growing up into Christ: such is the true business here on earth of every child of God. As we have been hearing, purely innocent beings (as were the first man and woman in paradise), could not possibly be aware of this faculty till it was called into exercise. They could not judge of what was good or evil; they naturally went right; they had an assured testimony, not by force of reason; but just as their bodily eye saw the light, so their understanding saw God their Creator (not as their Redeemer or Father), and His will touching them as creature most excellent; and they had perfect delight in doing His will. There was no struggle, no warfare, no conscience of evil-there was no possibility of their knowing what conscience of evil was, though they had the faculties which were afterwards unfolded; but conscience, as it signifies judgment of evil, they could not possibly have, till they chose for themselves, made choice against God's will, and had a will of their own. Ever since that time, Satan has laid hold of man's guilty conscience, and it has ever been his mighty weapon of destruction in the seed of Adam.

Let us first trace how Satan uses conscience to lead men while he hides his intent from them, and makes them his tools and dupes. Let us begin with Judges 17:1-5: "The man Micah had a house of gods." Mark, one token of conscience misled in this-it is always crying out, "What lack I yet?" Guided by the Spirit of God, it never asks that question, at least as touching sacrifice and the pardon of sin, because it rests on Christ, on God, and on His Word. A house of gods did not satisfy Micah (verses 7, 13). A Levite seeking a living, comes to his house and consents to be his priest; and Micah says, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good," &c. He had been uncertain before that Jehovah would do him good; but now he says he is sure of it, seeing he has a Levite for his priest. His restlessness of conscience is banished for a season; but mark, there is no turning to the law of God, the Scriptures of truth. If he had not substituted conscience for the guidance of the revelation of God-the five books of Moses-what would he have said to the house of gods, and a Levite ministering to idols? See the peril of a lack of proving and sifting one's ways by the Word of the living God. In passing, let me say, God holds natural men responsible for following His revealed will. If He has given them the Scriptures, He holds them responsible for making a right use of them. Though He does not hold Ammonites, and Egyptians, and Edomites as He holds Israel, yet Israel, though they were a people, carnal, uncircumcised, in heart, had the marvelous light of the law-the books of Moses, and God held them accountable for them. He showed longsuffering indeed; but afterwards, the curses of Leviticus and Deuteronomy were poured out, and rest upon them to this day, and they are not yet expended; for Antichrist must come to fulfill what has begun. Natural men all around us are accountable to God for all the abominations under

cover of which they shelter themselves, about which they so proudly talk-their "holy" this, and "holy" that. They do not suspect that by-and-by God will bring them to the plumb-line of His Word, and then what will become of all the priestly assumptions and national establishments under heaven? It is good for us who know something better to remember, when we see men going quietly to their cathedrals and synagogues, and practicing all kinds of the devil's devices in the way of religion, speaking and acting proudly, that God and Christ will say to them at last, "You had my Word; you were bound to follow it."this is created by D. (0x

Another instance, perhaps still more terrible, of the power of Satan, through a misled, defiled, corrupted conscience, to keep his tools in his employ, is in I Samuel xiv. We have the record of Saul's rash oath- "Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day." Jonathan, ignorant of the oath, put forth the end of his rod, and "dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth." The next day Saul asked counsel of God, and God did not answer him. (Read verses 38-44,) Here was a man of faith. Jonathan, by faith raised above the law (faith always raises a man above law) ; yet his own father, through ignorance and a perverted conscience, would have this man, high in God's favor, to be put to death! Yet Saul, we must remember, whatever he was at last, desired to be a religious king, as well as a valiant one, delivering Israel with sword and spear. Having respect at the beginning of his reign to the law of Moses, he said, "I will do God's will;" and he put away wizards out of the land.this is created by D. (0x A yet more awful instance of Satan's power to work by a perverted conscience: "What think ye? Ye have heard His blasphemy. He is guilty of death." They-priests, scribes, rulers-condemned Him, With the deep conviction on their consciences that they ought to do so. They condemned the Son of God to die (Mark 14:64); that is, they all pronounced their judgment, that according to the Scriptures He could not be spared-He must die. As they dealt with the man in Leviticus 24:10-16, who blasphemed, so they thought they ought to deal with the Son of the Blessed-the Lord Jesus Christ: conscience directed them to do so. Another instance we find in Acts 7:55-60, Acts 8:1, Acts 9:1-2. "As concerning zeal, persecuting the Church." Let us all, for not only young believers, but all of us need to consider afresh how, if we watch not, and have not a conscience void of offense, cleansed by the blood, guided by the Word, sanctified by the Spirit, Satan will take hold of it to draw us into evil. When once conscience comes to a wrong conclusion, pride comes in and drives us on; and nothing but the power that arrested persecuting Saul, can arrest the man with a mistaken conscience. He has a will of his own; his principles are not able to bear the test of the Word; and there is no knowing whither he will go: only the power of Him who said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" can turn him from his dangerous course.mod made by Dav1d C0x

Then there is the blessedness of a "good conscience" in a spiritual sense. I doubt not Paul, in saying, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day," looked back through all his life when his conscience was good in his natural state, and also when he had the assurance that he had a good conscience, in a heavenly sense, when it was so in the eye of God Himself.

Nothing commends the gospel like the joy or the Holy Ghost: it speaks for itself. If I am happy in the love of God, the world will see it and talk about it. "See how happy so-and-so is." This ought to be the common mark of all the saints, as of old. "The disciples, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." It ought to be our proper natural state. If it is not so, we ought to inquire the reason; for happiness, through the joy of the Lord, is the chief thing that enables us to commend the gospel. It makes us wise as serpents, harmless as doves; it is the

great secret of wise walking to be happy, to keep ourselves in the love of God, and by the very force of the happiness we possess, we are enabled to devise good for those around. If others are doing wrong, our souls will be able to rise above the wrong, and consider how he may overcome the evil with good. If I am very happy in the Lord, I cannot be overcome with evil; my joy in the Lord is more than my necessary food, my meat and drink, and I shall be certain to overcome with good, if I have joy in the Lord. Why is a good conscience to be sought? Because take it away, and you take away my joy in the Lord. I may have a scrupulous conscience, and yet not be happy; I may have an upright one, and not be happy in the love of God; I may have a determined purpose to do good, and yet not be happy. There must be something like that of which Hebrews 9:1-28, speaks: "How much more shall the blood of Christ. . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Remember, it is living service in living love to a living God, whose name is Love. You must begin with that secret. When the conscience of the first man and woman was defiled, we see the first scruple and first operation of law on the conscience. What is law? In 1 Corinthians 15:56 we have one of the most wonderful sentences in God's most wonderful book: "The strength of sin is the law." What aggravated the sin of the man and woman was- "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me," &c.-" The serpent beguiled me," &c. As much as to say, It was Thy fault. All this was the fruit of law working in the conscience. Though the law of Sinai was given long after, yet the law natural was there; and "the strength of sin is the law." Mark, how the apostle treats the matter in Romans vii. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me," &c. ; and, throughout the chapter, we see how the law in its own nature would work in the conscience. I will repeat what was said about the world. Before the shop of finery is before your eyes, and before thoughts of wasting money upon finery are in our minds, let our consciences be at the mercy-seat, listening above to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; then our thoughts will be, Have I a sixpence---Lord, what shall I do with it? Tell me, Lord, of some poor and needy one who will find it useful. The conscience that listens to the blood of sprinkling is a good one, and will make an unworldly heart; and the state of the affections will be exactly according as the conscience is right or wrong, according as it is cleansed by the blood of Christ or not.

Again, I say, do not let us think that we do not need further light on our consciences through the Scriptures. It is a necessary mark of a truly good conscience, to be always inquiring of the Lord for further guidance, inquiring in the tenderness of love what my unwitting evil might be. The apostle Paul said (1 Corinthians 4:4), "I know nothing by"-i.e., against "myself, yet am I not hereby justified;" as much as to say, I am always presenting myself as the Lord's servant before Him, asking Him to guide me; and if in anything I be otherwise minded from what I ought to be, I ask Him to reveal even this to me. One evil discovered leads to the discovery of many others. The greater part of the sins we are guilty of, are sins of ignorance. We have already mentioned one. "What think ye? He is guilty of death." The greater part of the sins of mankind at large, and of the children of God, by which they grieve the Spirit, are of this description; and the guilt lies often not so much in the thing itself, as in our ignorance of it. If the Israelites had not set up tradition in the days of the Judges, how could they have allowed idolatry? If they afterwards had not set aside the Scriptures, how could they have failed to see that Christ was the Christ of God? Their blindness was a judgment from God; their sins of ignorance were a judgment from God, because they were turning their backs upon the light. If we are walking in the light, dwelling within the veil, we should look around with astonishment, and marvel at the multitude of evils. Now we pass them by, or say,

perhaps, What a pity! They do not shock us as they shocked Christ. Witness the one single evil, with its accompaniments, of God's people not being one. Who are in the dust? Who put on sackcloth? Because the conscience is not exercised as it should be by the Scriptures. Let me call to mind the blessedness of a quick ear, which we get not in a day, to distinguish the voice of God. It was natural to Christ, but not to us. The Lord never needed the Spirit of God to speak any other than in a whisper; He never needed to be called as Samuel. Samuel was a blessed type of Christ, but he was not Christ. Christ never needed to be called; He was always nigh. When Elijah was out of the way, God spoke to Him in a whirlwind, by an earthquake, and by fire. He never spoke so to Christ; when the Lord was baptized, the Spirit, like a dove, rested upon Him; and this may indicate how the Lord never needed to be spoken to loudly by God. He was ever listening for the whispers of the Spirit. This is the kind of conscience we ought to seek. How much greater the gain than the loss! The things we lose are nothing but dung; the things we gain are treasures indeed--walking with God, the joy of His countenance, the approval of the Lord, the hope of meeting Him in glory, and being not ashamed before Him.

We will turn to 2 Samuel 23:15, an action of three mighty men twice recorded. "David longed, and said," &c. He did not command the three mighty men; he did not say, Who will go? He did not even look around and cast a glance at anyone; he merely said, "Oh that one would give me!" The wish of David was law to those men; they counted not their lives only dear for David's sake. We should thus listen to the Word of God. We must read it as a whole, in the order in which it is written. I will give you one great reason for this. If I read the Scriptures, dipping in here and there, not taking them as a whole in order, be sure that Satan will take advantage of my neglect of honoring the wisdom of God respecting this order, and he will find my mind and conscience with imaginations of my own. If I read the Word patiently, esteeming it as I ought to do, reading it as regularly as I feed or cleanse my body, and make it my meat, wine, and water, then by little and by little, if to-day I have a wrong judgment, tomorrow, or the day after, God will deliver me from it, meeting me in reading the Scriptures with the truth in opposition to my mistake. If we were all Bible readers and lovers, instead of having contrary judgments, it would be natural to us to speak the same thing; we should be perfectly knit together in one mind and judgment. This more would I say as to the path of the believer, who is more like Lot than Abraham. It is smooth at first, but not always so; the path of selfishness is always rough at the end; the path of cross-bearing, self-denying, following Jesus is rough at first, but what by-and-by? "Them that honor me I will honor, and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." This passage is the more instructive, because it is not spoken as the contrast between the world and the people of God, but between the believer wholly following the Lord, and those more like Eli, than Christ or Samuel (1 Samuel 2:30). Eli was unquestionably a child of God, but an unstable one in his ways. God said He would raise up a faithful priest; this was fulfilled in Zadok, in the days of Solomon; and the faithfulness of Zadok, and the unfaithfulness of Eli, will be brought to mind when Israel is set again in the land (Ezekiel 43:1-9). The contrast, then, lies not between a world that despises God, and the people of God; but between believers that are not faithful, and those that are. The notion of all young people, and which can scarcely be got rid of except by grace is, that happiness depends on circumstances, on what they are, on what they possess, and what relationships they have. But truly, happiness depends on no circumstances whatever, but purely and solely does it depend on honoring God, on walking with God, on knowing and doing His will from the heart. The moment this truth is settled in the mind, that your happiness does not in the least depend on your station,

your circumstances, your relationships, but purely on the state of your soul Godward, you possess a secret of wisdom in going through this evil world which once had a paradise, but can never have another, except we bring down into our hearts the paradise of God.

Tried in the Fire.

THOU art the only wise;

How good Thy discipline!

Thy saints, so precious in Thine eyes, As gold thou dost refine.

My heart-Thy dwelling-keep

Pure and all undefiled;

Ever with Thee in fellowship, With all Thy fullness filled.

Thy Spirit gives me might;

The Bridegroom with me dwells,mod made by Dav1d C0x

My strength, my glory, my delight;

Thy mysteries He reveals.

My faith which, through the gloom

Of trial, keeps Thy word,

Shall be my praise when He shall come, The Lamb, the glorious Lord!

Triumphant, I my crown

Shall cast at Jesus' feet,

When we shall know as we are known, And all in glory meet.

Christ in the Psalms.

I WOULD ask you, beloved, to consider Christ as I presented to us in the first Psalm-Christ the learner, Christ the lover of the Scriptures, and Christ always prospering. In the first verse of the Psalm we have the past, the present, and the future of the world, that is of all who are not born of the Spirit. The world is going on to its destruction, as the swine, into which the demons expelled by the Lord from the poor sufferer were permitted to enter, ran violently down a steep place and were choked in the sea The last stage of the world's course is sitting in "the seat of the scornful." God never executes judgment upon the children of Adam without patience to the uttermost, but that patience is always abused by man. In verse 4, we have both the judgment set forth and the character of those upon whom it is executed. The one word "chaff" includes those of all nations and all ranks who are not reckoned amongst the people of God. The wind drives it away, clearing it as it were out of the floor. That is its doom, and its sentence is passed already. When the world least thinks of the execution of that sentence, when they say "Peace and safety," then will sudden destruction come upon them, and they will not escape. In consideration of this, how it becomes us

to be so living, so as to have Christ in us, as to rebuke the world's sleep of death. This we cannot do, save as the commandment in Colossians is obeyed, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." It is a marvelous thing when the sinner discovers that he is lost, and a still more marvelous revelation when the lost sinner meets the Saviour of the lost. That is the first step in the ladder, and you all know it; but we all need reminding of it. The next step is to know by the witness of the Spirit that I am God's child.

While the world is as chaff, we have to do with certainties-- the certainties of God's Word, His truth, His commandments, and His promises. We have not to do with uncertainties save as to committing them to Him with whom nothing is uncertain, and who will show how pleased He is when we trust Him for the morrow. And how shall we have the heart of faith worthy of God? Not by neglecting His Word, or dealing lightly with the conscience; but by copying the Lord Jesus as the Learner, according to the Word, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth He meditate day and night." This is the secret of growth. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water." The tree thus planted grows, and its growth is very sure. In Luke ii. we see the Lord as the Learner, "Sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." The same passage gives evidence of His growth, for "all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. . . . And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

These words remind us of Isaiah 1:1-31. "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not My face from shame and spitting." Concerning the words that follow these, let us observe that in Romans 8:1-39. Paul takes them out of the mouth of Christ, and puts them into the mouth of every believer. The reason of this is, that the justification of the Head on the ground of atonement, declared by resurrection, is our justification. Does not the statement, "Whatsoever He doeth shall prosper" answer to Psalms 91:1-16? There we read, "There shall no evil befall Thee, neither shall any plague come nigh Thy dwelling Because He hath set His love upon Me, therefore will I deliver Him. I will set Him on High, because He hath known My name. He shall call upon Me and I will answer Him. I will be with Him in trouble; I will deliver Him and honor Him." Does not this express the mind of God towards Christ the Learner of Psalms 1:1-6?

There was never a moment, but the blessed Lord, even upon His mother's breast, was looking onward to the glory, and to the pathway to the glory, even the death of the cross. Very plain is this from Psalms 22:1-31. "He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver him: let Him deliver Him, seeing he delighted in Him. But Thou art He that took me out of the womb. Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breast. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou art my God from my mother's belly." There was no way in the eye of God, no way in the thought and mind of Christ, for prosperity, but by the death of the cross. It was not merely God's choice that by the gate of death heaven should be opened to Christ our Priest and Head, and so to us; but I humbly affirm, according to Romans iii. that God only had choice between this, and leaving us as He left the angels that sinned. If He would have us as sons and daughters, there was no other way to bring it about. Only thus, could He "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Christ

prospered by death and resurrection, and as He trod the path toward the cross, He never thought of the one without the other. He never looked at the glory apart from the way in which He would earn it, and never looked at the cross without its fruit.

We are to follow according to this pattern. Our chief cause of stumbling in the path of faith is, not beginning with its glorious end. At the judgment seat of Christ, there will be no labor unrequited, no work without its wages; but the wages will be a marvel, and we shall only see the riches of our Lord and Master's love and grace in giving such recompense for such work. Whatever service we render, small or great as it may be in the account of men, it must have its prosperous issue in the day of the Lord. We shall never faint when we are serving, if only we aim high enough, as did Christ. He always found His recompense in God. His constant testimony, according to John 8:1-59. was, "I do always those things that please Him." I always accomplish my own intent. Let it be our aim to have the same testimony.

Then we shall form a true estimate of our many imperfections, if we consider ourselves as justified persons sent down into this world to be witnesses of Christ. We sprang out of the earth in our first head; but now we are sent down into the world, as God the Father sent Christ, missionaries everyone in the highest sense, and if we aim at the great success of pleasing God, we shall always succeed and never fail. Let us not be disturbed by uncertainties; but leaving the events of tomorrow with God, let us pursue the pathway of service for God, by taking heed unto His Word. The Lord dealt with the whole Word of God in complete obedience; let me aim at unswerving obedience, in all that He gives me to know of it, and while I find out the faults of my own work, He hides them from His eyes by His own blood, while He gives me the testimony that I walk holily and blamelessly before men.

Confession of Sin.

Read Daniel 9:1-27.

Let us consider the chapter we have been reading. First, we will observe that one of the chief demands God makes, and a demand He never forgoes is, the confession, full and complete, of the sin whereof forgiveness is sought. We remember the great law of His grace, given us by the Apostle John, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Now, on the one hand, it is not possible for God to seal forgiveness of sins upon the heart and conscience unless there be a confession; and on the other hand, it is not possible for Him to withhold the pardon, and all that follows, viz., life eternal, sonship, if there be that confession. I say this, because in this company there may be some who have never considered this at all; there may be others that have consciences troubling, accusing, and shutting out the Gospel from the soul. To such I would say, that we have been reading one amongst the many patterns in Scripture of the confession of sin. You will observe there are two great marks of right and acceptable confession, acceptable to God. One is that the sin is always regarded as against Him committed. Now, the natural conscience never has this rule, and measure, and scales, and weights. The natural conscience is like that man in Luke, "I thank Thee I am not as other men." It is damage done to the creature, and the judgment of the creature and neighbor, that rules the conscience of the mere natural man. When the Spirit of God instructs the conscience, damage done to the man or a neighbor is out of sight; the majesty of God, and His excellency, alone is the rule of judgment, and as the act is against Him so is the guilt of the sin.

Now, whenever a sinner comes to this conclusion, "Against Thee only have I sinned;" when God's holiness is the measure of the guilt, thank God, he is in the path of life. A step further-he will make no excuses. Instead of making excuses and finding fault with God, which is the course that the mere natural conscience takes, it will be the opposite of this; he will be without excuse before God; he will entirely justify God, and loathe and condemn himself. Why so? Because, "blessed is the poor in spirit." It is God's delight as well as glory to forgive.

Man thinks it is left to himself, and that forgiveness must be extorted from God. Ah! it is God's delight to forgive. Forgiveness must not be extorted from God; but confession must be wrung out from the obstinate heart of the sinner. It is hard for the sinner to confess, but easy for God to forgive. I would remind you how the confessions which you find in Daniel, in Nehemiah, in Ezra, and the Book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah bear marks of confession acceptable to God, if you will observe them and compare them together. The times that have passed in the wisdom of God over this world, are all favorable to faith in God; each period, each age, each country will supply to faith peculiar occasions of glorifying God. Now, in this present time, there are beyond question growing difficulties in the pathway of the people of God; their hearts feel it; but this would I say, that commonly the thoughts and feelings of God's people about the matter, rather bespeak looking to the difficulty than to the occasion furnished by the difficulty for pleasing the Living God.

Now, for a moment, compare this servant of God, Daniel, with some others that have gone before. Take Moses, who brought Israel, the one people of Jehovah, out of Egypt. He had occasions that Abraham had not for trusting God, which is the great secret of pleasing Him, and we know how that great servant of God did profit by those occasions, and how God's character, and Moses' acquaintance with God are brought out, for we see him to be a man of like passions with ourselves; here and there the flesh appears; but we find how that in his course he fully glorified God.

If we take up Joshua in like manner, when all Israel was one; if we go to David (passing others by) we see one peculiarly glorifying God (in times in a great measure differing from those of Moses), when he was persecuted by the king, King Saul. He profited by his occasions. But we see Daniel in captivity giving honor to God, as having an occasion that none had before him. The captivity to the end seemed hopeless; but we observe that Daniel is so acquainted with God, that while he says (4th verse)-"The curse of the Lord is upon Israel," he rises, and herein is the great secret of faith-he rises above all the law of Moses to the God of all grace, that made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. It is the rather to be observed, beloved, because, whereas Daniel did this, so did Moses before him at the foot of Mount Sinai; and we see how far Moses excels his forefather, Abraham, as an intercessor. You will remember that Abraham says (making a kind of bargain with the Lord)- "I will speak only this once. Let not the Lord be angry, if there be but ten righteous." He has the promise, and, we observe, Abraham left off asking before the Lord left off granting. But worse than Sodom by far, was the guilt of Israel in making a golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai. After the redemption out of Egypt by the passage of the Red Sea, after they had made their vow to keep God's law, how far greater their provocation of God than all the sins of Sodom! Yet Moses betakes himself to God's care as the God of all grace. Let us refer to it in Exodus 32:13. You will observe at the foot of Mount Sinai he rises upon eagle's wings above all its thunders, and he deals with the character of God as the God of all grace that made such promises to Abraham. Now, precisely so with Daniel. He knows the righteousness of the judgment; he perfectly justifies God in

that judgment; and then he rises far above the law of Moses.

Now we should not go wrong in our affections, in our consciences, in our judgments, in our faith, in earthly things amidst the world, if we always kept before us the name, mind, and character of God as revealed to us in Christ Jesus. The great success that Satan obtains over the natural man is-he slanders the character of God (the word "devil" means slanderer), and the poor fool believes the lie, and deals with God as a hard person; he wishes to be out of God's presence-to be without Him. And in like manner does Satan seek to hinder the ways and darken the mind of the child of God; but he cannot root out the root of living faith. Do not let us think that when Daniel says "by books" it means books of human wisdom; it is the height of folly to think that; it is the books of Scripture he refers to, but especially the particular revelation of the "seventy years" of Jeremiah in his prophecy.

Oh! my dear friends, there is every day a need that we renew, through the Word of God, our apprehensions of our God and Father in Christ Jesus; and those who neglect the Scriptures, and do not thus renew their right apprehensions of God, think God wrong, and do not perceive, do not feel it, do not consider it. Now, you will observe also, that as this servant of God (very lovely to see it), grows more importunate and fervid; not a whit less is his reverence in spirit and speech. I say, not less reverent, because in the 19th verse, again and again he uses the word "Lord;" Sovereign Lord, which means that God has a right to do what He will. It is very good, indeed, to bear in mind the peculiar significance of the threefold meaning of the words Sovereign Lord. One is-He has a right to do what He will ; He is the potter and has a right to fashion the clay as He pleases; He cannot do wrong, because He wills His deeds; secondly, Jehovah, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; and thirdly, God the Almighty One, able to do all that He has said. Now, then, Daniel having these three titles in his heart and upon His lips, says-" O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not; for Thine own sake, O my God; for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name." Oh! my dear friends, as faith grows, it becomes one with God in His purpose to please Him. Strictly speaking, God has but one business to do, and that is to do His own will. But what a will is that! A will of infinite wisdom, of infinite love. Oh beloved, let us fall in with that purpose; let there be no will of ours, no will but His, then we shall, as it were, nestle nearer the bosom of God in Christ, and we then shall be more and more trusting, more and more fervid in intercessions and prayers, and yet our reverence will grow for the God with whom we are so familiar. In these days, you often find such words as these from the lips of Christians-"O Lord, we are unworthy dust." Now, that does not come from humility, but from ignorance of God. Daniel was worthy to be heard, and he knew it. But how came he by that worthiness? Acquaintance with God. Every man that does justice to God is worthy to be heard. God accounts him worthy; and He tells Daniel so in sending Gabriel, the mighty one of God, and causing him to fly swiftly. And you will observe that before the revelation of the seventy weeks is made, what is said to Daniel-" O man, greatly beloved." There are two modes (if I may so speak) which God takes of answering prayer. The first is the answer within us; the other is the answer without us. Now, the first answer was given to Daniel by the messenger Gabriel. What a stir was made in the heavens by the prayer of this captive! If the praises of Job were sounded in heaven in the presence of the host of the angels of Satan (a marvelous chaos in that place of glory), well, so Gabriel had his message; he heard it in the heaven of heavens, he delivered it on earth. Here was a man by nature just like the rest of mankind, and, worse than that, just like the rest of wretched Israel who had corrupted themselves

more than Gentiles by nature, and yet by grace wrapping and laying up God's Word in his heart, cleansing himself by the Spirit and by the Word, he knew how to take advantage of all the terrible judgments of God upon Israel, and by their sins to speak to the heart of God, pledging God's name and character as the great reason why He should have mercy upon Israel.

Let us, beloved, consider what this has to do with the present times. We remember the commandment, "Pray for kings and for governors, and for all that be in authority." My dear brethren and sisters in Christ, God looks to us who love His name, (us means the whole family of God) to be intercessors in prayer with Him for the world. The world continues for the sake of the Church of God; heaven and earth are kept in their course for the sake of the family of God; but the world does not know it. Our prayers are very much shut up to this-The salvation of son and daughter, father and mother, husband and wife, and the salvation, perhaps, of our neighbors; but it is rather the advantage to the creature that occupies us than the honor and joy brought to God by the petition of His Church, and by the salvation of sinners. "Thy Name," says Daniel. Oh, we should never flag in faith, never flag in prayer, if we considered that the great intent of the Gospel is to be pleasing God rather than the creature; and we should never faint in our service if we began and ended where God begins and ends. But if we are swallowed up in the creature's advantage, and the pleasing of God last, we shall not be like Moses interceding at Sinai, nor like Daniel interceding for the captives in Babylon, but we shall be like that man who fled from Jezebel and laid himself down under a juniper-tree, and requested that he might die, because he was no better than his fathers. What made that great man so small? He rose, no doubt, far above it before he was taken up into heaven without seeing death, and God rebuked him by not answering his unbelieving, fretful prayer. But what was the cause of his fainting? He made the advantage to Israel his first care and God's glory his last, and when he found he could not obtain what was dearest to his heart-the restitution of Israel to God-well, then, his all was gone, and he fretted against God. We shall never be weary ill well-doing, if we begin and end with pleasing the living God.

Let me just observe, there is a remarkable difference between the revelation of the time of Christ's first coming and the Scripture speaking of His second coming. You will observe, to Daniel was revealed the precise time of the cutting off of the Messiah. No one in that day could possibly doubt about the period, and hence even the enemies of the Lord were expecting Christ to come. They did not know the Christ of God; they had turned the Christ of God into a Christ of their own imaginations and hearts; but still, even as to the time, the ungodly Jew knew when He would come. Now, beloved, the word is remarkably used by Paul and Peter, touching the second coming, "due time." Paul says-If you remember "due time?" That God had made it manifest that what Christ did, none but Christ could do-make atonement for sin. Let us turn to the last chapter of Colossians, 7th verse--" Due season;" surely carrying us on to the final harvest, where "in due season" we shall reap if we faint not. Peter says- "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He shall exalt you in due season." Now, beloved, why should not the time in the latter case (that of the second coming) be revealed, as in the case of the coming to do the work of redemption? Beloved, God's rule is this-wherever he gives a revelation of Himself, and makes known His character more and more, He makes a demand upon us for faith. Now, here He has so revealed Himself in Christ, "in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" that, to speak with reverence, all that God can do is to reveal what He has already done. Having made this

perfect revelation He makes this demand upon us, and we should trust Him for the time. But this I would also say-He expects us to reckon time as He does, and as Christ does Himself. Just turn to Hebrews 10:37. You remember a verse in Habakkuk, "Though it tarry wait for it." It is very significant to see the Spirit by Paul dropping the words that before Christ did come are put into the mouth of the prophet Habakkuk- "though the vision tarry," and saying, "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." "A little while" not worth counting! Oh, my dear friends, methinks that while it becomes us with longing hearts to pray for the coming of the Lord Jesus, it becomes us equally to be thankful for the occasions we have of magnifying His Name; but it will come to an end with Him. Daniel profited by his occasions in captivity; let us profit by our occasions, furnished to faith in the midst of the Church of God, grievously carnal and shamefully divided. Let us take occasion, beloved, to please God according to that which His own Word and character demands, and to please God also in respect of the world, which is pictured by the herd of swine running violently down the steep place into destruction. There are dreams in the people's minds of the world becoming better and better. Oh! my dear friends, how terrible the delusion, and how hurtful, too! a setting aside of the Scriptures of truth; the world is going on to judgment, and the proudest nations must have the heaviest strokes. Why? Because they are setting up the wisdom of man, and have crucified the Son of God, who is the Wisdom of God, and whose weakness is the power of God. In 2nd Corinthians chap. v. we have these words-" God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made "-what? "the righteousness of God." What is the righteousness of God? Surely the meaning is something more than a righteousness by the hand of God, wrought when the first man was created in uprightness. His righteousness was the creation of God in one sense, i.e., a righteousness worked out by God, but it was not as given in the deep sense of this passage before us. The righteousness of God is that wherein all the glory of the Godhead has set forth its perfections-wherein all its glories at once and together shine out; everlasting righteousness-one that never can contract spot or stain. What follows? That a poor sinner may make a confession of his sin to God, and have nothing but Christ to plead-nothing but Christ to trust in; and if seeing himself to be such, what does he become? A child of the living God-a co-heir with Christ, and that Scripture must be fulfilled in him, "Whom He justified, them He also glorified." And what shall keep God's people when they are in glory? Shall it be because there is no temptation; or, because into that City of God shall enter nothing that defileth? No! Shall it be because they have perfectly the likeness of Christ? No! All necessary to their perfect happiness; but their preservation will lie in this-they are seen in Christ so bound up in the bundle of life-made to be the righteousness of God in Christ, that God's own immutability will secure them from falling from that better paradise. The poor sinner becomes a child of God, and so nigh to God, so one with Christ, so loved of God in Christ, that holy angels are his ministers, and he is raised far above them. Christ is not found to call one of these angels "brethren;" but He does so to every poor sinner that trusts in His blood. Oh! my dear friends, it is not barely promises we have to plead with God; promises are very good, but, as a child of God, I have the heart of God to encourage me; I have His heart; let Him have mine, and I shall not distrust His love or His wisdom about anything. He can never fail to be a just God; He will never fail to execute all His purposes-and one is to show in unrepenting sinners that He never can lie; that they are the authors of their own destruction, while we are not the authors of our salvation. He will have a justification from their own mouth amidst the weeping and torment of hell; they will have two hells (and the worst within them), the fire without and the fire within. Oh! my dear friends, it will be seen then that God is all in all. Oh,

happy those that fall in with the great purpose of God to glorify Himself and take advantage of present times, present occasions to glorify Him, so that they may have the inner testimony that Daniel had- that they are pleasing God. Then they may safely leave the outer testimony to the guidance of His wisdom. The Friendship of Christ.

"Henceforth I call you not servants" (John 15:7-15). Is not this word "henceforth" a marvelously significant word? Abraham "was called the friend of God," and God treated him as such when He said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" The Lord did not make light of the friendship of His friend Abraham; it was indeed a marvelous friendship. The way of obedience was then the way of friendship, and so it is now. But then the Son of God had not borne the curse upon the tree; He had not then ascended up on high to procure the Spirit-the Comforter-through His one perfect offering. Therefore the word "henceforth" shows us that by comparison with the amazing advantages of this intimacy, which is the fruit of the indwelling Spirit, former friendships are passed away, though not made nothing of.

Now we see the Son of God made perfect through sufferings, having sunk into unsearchable depths of woe; and according to His past sorrows are His present joys with God the Father, as set forth in Psalms 21:1-13 : "Thou preventest Him with the blessings of goodness: Thou settest a crown of pure gold on His head. . . . Thou hast made Him most blessed for ever: Thou hast made Him exceeding glad with Thy countenance" (v. 3, 6). We think of God as the God of sin-avenging justice, commanding the sin-avenging sword to awake and smite our Surety; but now that word is fulfilled, "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life." Then next to this joy in the Father, comes--not the ceaseless ministry of holy angels, nor the subjection of all creation to Him, but--His friendship with us. It is joy to Him to give life, to bring the child of Adam out of death into life; but that is only the stepping stone to the higher joy of friendship.

Now, beloved, we know that the Father seeketh worshipers; that we are only seekers and worshipers because God the Father has sought the worship of our hearts; and that He delights more in our worship of holy fear and love, than we can delight in His answers to our prayers. So the blessed Son of God craves our friendship more than we can desire His; He has all the heart to crave it that He had when He redeemed us by the death of the cross. But then there is a "whatsoever" in the condition on which this fellowship can be known. The blessed Lord proved in the garden--in answer to His prayer, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me"--that it was not possible for Him to pass into a state of glory and of joy without the cross, and He added, "Not My will, but thine be done;" and then was fulfilled Psalms 22:1. If God's will could not bend to Him, not a whit less can the will of our Lord bend to us in respect of the path of friendship: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (v. 14). This is the condition of friendship; verse 10 gives the pattern: "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." And then, beloved, observe these other words in verse 7, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." In chap. xvii., the Lord says, "I have given them Thy Word;" but He also speaks of His words. You will remember also the sweet words of Psalms 119:1-176, "Thou art My portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep Thy words;" that is, I will have respect to every jot and tittle of Thy will as in Scripture revealed.

There is no other "if" added as a condition of friendship; but this "if" stands as a rock that cannot be shaken. So my great business, in order to become the friend of Christ is, first to know the will of the Lord as set forth in the Scriptures, and then never to make a league with the Canaanites, that is never to yield to any temptation to come short of that will in my obedience.

Now the blessed Lord had nothing to unlearn. He could not say, "In Me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." He was under the law, and the law of God was in His heart, and the holy eye of God could have made no allowance for imperfection in Him. But no allowance was needed, for He could always say, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God." The law, broken by man, He had come to magnify, and as our Surety He spake the word, "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me." As the result of this, we do not stand before a sin-avenging God as criminals before a judge; nor do we stand in the simple relation of the creature to the Creator; but we stand in such a relation to God that His love must be to us what it is to the Son, and Christ's love to us is what God's love is to Him. It cannot be less. But the law of communion is unalterable, and my desire for it must be according to that law, with the entreaty for the Lord so to search me, that there may be nothing in me to hinder the communion which He craves. With regard to the imperfections of obedience which accompany every deed and wish and thought, however holy, let us never think of them as less than sins which could only be blotted out by the blood of Christ. It is very easy to consider myself delivered from sin, root and branch, if I have a shallow conviction of what sin is. In Romans 7:1-25, Paul said. "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not that I do." Oh, that we may be delivered from scanty thoughts of sin! If I do not stand before God as the criminal before the sin-avenging Judge, it is because Christ stood for me as my Surety. Oh! beloved, let us learn this, that on the one hand God could not possibly bear with us if we did not stand in Christ; and that on the other hand while we see our sins and are humbled, He says of us, "How holily, justly and unblameably!" Here is our perfectly pleasing God, as again we have it, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father" (1 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:10). And, beloved, we ought to have the testimony that we please God. This testimony every child of God is responsible to have. But it is much easier for Him to be pleased with our endeavors to please Him, than for us to be content and satisfied with our attainments.

04 - The Good Shepherd: 11-17

Heavenly Integrity.

READ Psalms 25:1-22 AND Psalms 26:1-12.

DOUBTLESS, beloved, these two Psalms will have their mission to fulfill in a yet future day, when God's people Israel will be suffering under Antichrist ; but, observe, the Spirit of God purposely makes no special mention of Israel or Jerusalem. Doubtless they are penned by the Spirit of God through David, though there is nothing in particular to make them in themselves applicable to David, and thus the great intent is to make them a comfort to saints at all times. To us in this company, and at this time--this peculiar time of the world, and peculiar time of the Church of God in the land--they may be taken up and used for our own profit. Now, observe that the Psalmist makes a full confession that no unregenerate man either will or can do. He cannot say, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." Leave a natural man to himself, and he will only hope for mercy on the ground that his iniquity is little--a small matter; inasmuch as the natural conscience of man measures the guilt of sin by damage done to fellow-creatures. The mere natural conscience of man will never rise above that level. Damage to fellow-creatures--that is man's measure of the guilt of sin, and hence all these cavils against the Scripture. "What! for eating a piece of fruit from a tree, all this flood of misery?" "We cannot believe it; there was no harm done." Not the life of an insect was taken when the first sin was committed--that first ruinous transgression. What was the sin? Self-will. All sin is great, because it lies in the creature's will against God; and the measure of the guilt is neither more or less than the majesty of God. Now, natural man, left to himself, will never measure the guilt of sin in that way. "Pardon mine iniquity, for I judge it in Thine holiness; I confess it to Thee, because Thou hast taught me." You will observe how much the 6th verse has to do with the confession, "Thy tender mercies and Thy lovingkindnesses, for they are ever of old." If there had never been, beloved, a revelation of grace, there never would have been a confession of sin. You see by the behavior of the first offenders, what the sinner is, left to himself, without a knowledge of God's grace. When paradise was untouched and no flower or leaf had faded, when nothing of God's hand around them had yet been marred through their sin, they, were withered up and blighted through conscious guilt and fear and shame. The Psalmist makes this heavenly confession, "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." If there is anyone in this company that has not yet received Christ, there is only one thing needful; tell the truth to God--nothing more. If the vilest sinner upon the face of the earth went and told the truth to God, he must go from God's presence a saint ; it cannot be otherwise. I often have the readiness of God to forgive pictured to my soul thus: I see the waters at high tide clamoring at the flood-gates. In the dock within all is dry, and outside the high tide. What is there to do? Only open the gates! Just so, my dear friends, are the floods of God's grace clamoring at the doors of sinners' hearts. Nothing to do but to open the flood gates. How? Tell the truth to God. You cannot get to the bottom of your sin; you can never measure the height of it. God alone can do that; but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, covers all. Man must have pardon if there is a confession of his guilt.

Observe, in this Psalm there is a most blessed close imitation of the Lord Jesus in the sixteenth Psalm and the 1st verse, "Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my trust." The hand of power that plunged Him beneath all the waves of wrath, when God Almighty did baptize His Son in the lowest depths, was being trusted to raise Him. The mark of Christ was, growing faith with growing trial. Whatever were the expectations of the cross in His early days, it grew more solemn and terrible as He approached thereto. Now, in the twenty-fifth Psalm, you will observe how the Psalmist begins, "Oh my God, I trust in Thee." Let us walk in this simplicity before God. Let us take heed to it, that in dealing with God we be able to do so with an uncontradicting conscience, with an approving conscience to tell Him (that is, our God and Father), "We trust in Thee." You observe how the Psalmist goes on, "Keep my soul, for I put my trust in Thee." Now, beloved, there is something in man's heart by which God would teach us. We all love to be trusted. If we see any token in others of distrust in our words, our promises, our faithfulness, our hearts resent it. The look that says, "Do you indeed mean it?"-" Do you say it?"-" Do you intend to keep your promise?" our hearts resent it instantly. Now, this should tell us how God delights to be trusted, and how He is grieved by His children to be distrusted. The first great business is, to trust God in anything, it matters not what-small or great-and the case is then entirely His. Anything which we really trust God with is God's matter. Not barely because He is faithful; He delights to be trusted, and to show that He delights to be trusted.mod made by Dav1d C0x

Here you have an instance of what we so frequently observe in the Scriptures, that you cannot alter the place of a Scripture without marring it. If you were to put one verse in the place of another, you would mar that particular Scripture. Suppose we were to put the 17th verse in the place of the 4th and 5th and the 4th and 5th in the place of the 17th, you would mar the whole Psalm. A very precious lesson we have in this 17th verse, "The troubles of mine heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day long." According to this order the Psalmist, in all his enlarged afflictions, is much more caring to be better acquainted with God than to be out of his trouble. But, to put the 17th verse in the place of the 4th and 5th, then the sense is reversed. The Psalmist would then be more anxious to be out of the furnace than to be learning the lesson. The only way in the furnace is, to be like to them of whom the king said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto him, True, O king!" My dear friends, we should not wish to be out of the furnace till the Son of God is walking with us in the fire, which will do nothing but burn up all the badness; then we come out ready for the next trial. You will observe a great justification of God in the 10th verse of this twenty-fifth Psalm. The word "mercy" has a signification that is better expressed by the word "lovingkindness," and would be better so read.

You will observe that the 21st verse plainly gives birth to the next Psalm, "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on Thee." The whole burden of the next Psalm is "integrity." Beloved, one of the highest and richest blessings from God is, to have what the Scripture means by "integrity." It is indispensable to our growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ and to the careful maintenance of peace of soul-indispensable to our dealing in true and living faith with our daily trials and matters. Indispensable! But let me say this, beloved, that the integrity that God means, is not the integrity which the word generally implies; nor, alas! alas! is it the integrity that very commonly contents the consciences of God's children. But, oh! if God's people did but wake

up to this-that God reckons nothing to be integrity that will not bear the test of His Word. For the most part, you know, the world is quite content if its dull, blind conscience does not rebuke, does not condemn; and, as conscience sinks in the man, in the family, in the nation, so that man, that family, that nation, may hold on the path to certain ruin, and yet be as quiet as if they were walking in ways pleasing to God. Dear friends, when once the devil succeeds in undervaluing God's Word, and we have little of that sounded in the ears of the people, depend upon it, God will smite the people. They will care nothing about the acknowledgment of God in public or in private, then there will be an end of this great empire. But, alas! the grievous neglect of this treasure of treasures by the people of God is too common. They are dealing with God's Word as they would not deal with a bag of copper! Their consciences become adapted to custom, and do not rise above the level of what is the universal practice. Hence many of these things which Christians are zealous of, will be but ill-commended at the judgment seat of Christ. Oh! my dear friends, when the Psalmist speaks about "integrity," he means "integrity" to be judged by God according to God's Word.

Beloved, this is a peculiarly precious portion of the Word of God. I call it the Psalm of heavenly integrity. "Examine me." You will observe it is very like that in the first epistle to the Corinthians, fourth chapter, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful, But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self;" that is, "as regards myself I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified" That is to say, "my conscience, instructed by the Word of God, testifies to my integrity; but I do not rest in that." I will say, "He that judgeth me is the Lord," and, while I am thankful for the testimony of a good conscience, I seek to have it rectified more perfectly by the Word of God. This is what Paul means when he says, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have a conscience void of offense towards God and man." "I will wash my hands in innocency"-an allusion to the brazen laver and its pure waters; and it is good to remember that Aaron and his sons were not only to wash their hands, but they were to wash and to worship. Why this, beloved? Just as the Psalmist, so the apostle exercises himself. He knows how true it is that none can understand his error; and if we are truly walking with God as our Father--justly, blamelessly walking--then this will be a mark of it. God as a Father judges me not according to the law of Moses, but as a Father in Christ. God marks my walk. I have made Christ my best robe, to answer the demands of His justice, so as to cover all my sin and guilt. He can see what I cannot see; and I say, "Examine me, for what I do not now see." No cleansing of the sin of ignorance without blood; and there is no sin of a child of God but must cast him into hell, did not the blood of Christ prevent. What a blessing it would be, if God's children everywhere sought to rectify their consciences by the Word of God! Now, note the 11th and 12th verses. No child of God ever grew in grace without exercising himself to have a conscience void of offense towards God and towards men; and there was never a child of God, that did so exercise himself, who did not grow in grace. As in the closing of the other Psalm, the psalmist has respect to the whole Church--the whole congregation. "My feet standeth in an even place: in the congregation will I bless the Lord." No one can be wrapped up in himself in his own service; the heart gains by a custom of fellowship that thinks much of other servants. Their service for God, my service; their joy my joy; their honor my honor, and their blessing my blessing--whether it be teaching in the Sunday-school or any other service. Oh! beloved, let us think with tender hearts of all in like manner serving. Are we endeavoring to preach the Gospel of Christ? Let us remember all our fellow-servants. Do we hear of their winning souls? Let us thank God, and then we shall have abundance of comfort from God in our own service; we shall be assisted in it, we shall be a

savor of Christ to God; and as to success, the Spirit of God will take care of that, and we shall not lack it. Beloved, let us seek in our daily occupation to maintain a good conscience before God, and then the very trials of our outward occupation will help on our growth in grace, and increase our delight in God on the first day of the week. It is because of doing things to ourselves, and not to the Lord, that service does not help our faith and increase our joy. We bear our burdens ourselves, and they become too heavy for us. mod made by Dav1d C0x Present Answers to Prayer.

It is good for us to remember that we are to seek guidance for prayer in the revealed will of God, and not in His secret decrees. Our rule of prayer is His commandment, while we ever find encouragement in His promises; and looking at the commandments and the promises, we are sure that His decrees will be fulfilled to our joy and His glory. Yet we may not see the fulfillment of our prayers and our just and holy desires immediately. The blessed Lord uttered a prayer on the cross while the nails were being driven into His hands and feet. God the Father heard the Sufferer's petition, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" and we are sure that that prayer was recorded in the highest heaven, though the full answer to it has not yet been given. There was, indeed, a precious answer given at Pentecost, but we still wait for the day of which we read in Zechariah, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications."

Now, the Lord on the cross prayed as He enjoins us to pray-" Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." The prayer of John 17:1-26 is perfectly according to God's decree, every jot and tittle of which must be fulfilled. It is not possible that there can be anything less than everlasting fruit resulting from any prayer, that God's Holy Spirit has indited in the heart. We may call to mind the example of Paul, who could say, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Paul knew that it was as much the duty of Israel to repent and receive Christ then, as when they nailed Him to the cross, and his prayer was according to God's commandment. Some few olive berries were gathered after Pentecost, but the people as a nation were given up to hardness of heart. Rejecting Christ, and adding iniquity unto iniquity, they will be punished by receiving Antichrist. But the day of their blessedness is coming. Christ prayed, and Paul prayed, and we still pray to God for Israel. Let us continue to pray according to God's commandment, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." The full issue and fruit of our present dealing with God cannot be seen until the Lord shall come, when He will show us that He has not forgotten any supplications presented in uprightness of heart; but there is a blessing which He cannot fail to give us immediately, and we are always bound to obtain it. In offering our supplications we should ever have the Lord present, and the Spirit testifying that the Lord approves us. In Daniel 9:19, the prophet records his petition, "O Lord, hear: O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name." And then he goes on to tell us how Gabriel came with the revelation of what should take place during the seventy weeks. Was that a rejection of Daniel's prayer, "defer not?" No. Mark the words in v. 23, and consider that Gabriel is not only a holy angel, but his name signifies "Mighty one of God." Remember, too, the services that are recorded as rendered by him to the people of God. He was the messenger sent to Zacharias, and also to the mother of the Lord. To Daniel he says, "Thou art greatly beloved." This does not merely mean, "Thou art God's child, or God's servant ; but, " Thou art God's well-approved servant-God's empty vessel; He not only delights in Thee as His child and servant, but in thine affections towards Himself." But the Lord is

not content with that, for in chap. 10:19 we hear another voice saying, "O man, greatly beloved, fear not." In the previous chapter it was Gabriel who said, "Thou art greatly beloved," but who speaks here? It was, we are quite sure, the Son of God appearing unto Daniel, just as He afterwards appeared to that other Daniel-John the apostle, in the isle of Patmos.

Here, then, are samples of the immediate answers to prayer that we ought always to obtain-the conscious approval of God, the testimony of God's Spirit that He not only delights in us His children, but that He also has pleasure in our affections towards Himself. It is Himself-the joy of His presence-that is the chief answer to prayer; and when He shall gather us in glory, He Himself will be the great answer to all the prayers that we have ever been taught by the Spirit of God to put up.

Gethsemane and Calvary.

READ Matthew 26:36-46.

GETHSEMANE means "olive press." When the Lord comes in His glory, He will have time to teach, and we to learn without distraction, dullness, or infirmity, the value of His death on the cross, and what His expectations of it were. This is one of the chief reasons of our longing for His coming quickly. Let us be thankful for the little which we know; we know truly what we know, being taught by the Spirit of God. We shall ever be learning. The Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the new Jerusalem, the Lamb shall be the light thereof. The world's Christ is no more the Christ of God, nor the world's Gospel the Gospel of the cross of Christ, than was the golden calf the God that brought Israel out of Egypt. No one can know anything of the cross, who is not taught the guilt of sin. As we grow in the knowledge of this, and know more of the cross, we discern more and more the justice that bruised Christ. God had the choice, whether to leave us as He left the angels that sinned, or to provide an atonement; He had the choice, whether He would have us for His or not, if so, there must be the death of the surety for us, and redemption wrought out "that He might be just." There is a great distinction between Christ in Gethsemane and Christ on the cross. Verse 39, 42, 44. "O My Father!" three times in Gethsemane, and notice how careful the Spirit of God is in verse 44, in adding-" saying the same words." Contrast this with Matthew 27:46. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The words "My God" show the uttermost of faith, whilst the words "forsaken" indicates the very depths of sorrow. Read Psalms 22:1. The whole Psalm was in the heart of the Lord Jesus on the cross. A man of faith said, "Thou art become cruel unto me" (Job 30:21). When all the waves and billows of God went over Christ, He said "Thou art holy"-and looking on to the future said, "Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (verse 3). Though crucified, He had all the twelve jewels of the breast-plate on His heart. What are His hopes concerning His people, now that He is seated at the Father's right hand? In Gethsemane, God was not fulfilling the office of the sin-avenging Judge, but on the cross Christ was sustaining the weight of sin's heavy load, and God was visiting sin on Him in judgment. Christ when upon earth had the perpetual testimony of the Father's approval. Genesis 22:1-24. In whose hand was the knife? In the Father's hand. Isaac was spared-there could be mercy then, because there could not be atonement. In Christ's case there could be no mercy, because by Him only could atonement be made. So the Father becomes the sin-avenging God. In Genesis 22:1-24 He said-"Lay not Thine hand," &c., but at the cross, "Awake, O sword-smite!" (Zechariah 13:7) as if the sword had slept till then. Romans 8:22, "He spared not His own Son" is used in the same sense as 2 Peter 2:4, "spared not the angels." He spared not His own Son, and now He cannot but always have mercy

on us. All the blessings of God in Christ are written in the blood of His Son. Nothing but mercy can come into our cup. What a contrast between Paul's experience (Php 2:27) "lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow," and the experience of Christ in Psalms 52:7-" All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." His disciples could not watch with Christ for they were dull of hearing, and so an angel came to strengthen Him, but could not watch with Him. His disciples could not for lack of understanding, they would not have it that Christ should die; His words to their ears, were as those spoken in an unknown tongue. We should watch and suffer with Christ-we add to His glory when we share both; we can also rejoice with Him. Shall we not seek to rejoice with Him? He craves it, and we add to His joy when we thus share it with Him, and make His joy the chief part of the service.

Christ: The Perfect Servant.

Read Isaiah 49:1-7; John 4:31-34; Job 17:4-6. Job 26:1-14; 2 Timothy 4:5-8. A "POLISHED SHAFT" always hitting the mark. We are called to fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, not chiefly for our own joy, nor for our own glory, but for the joy and glory of the Father and of the Son. Do we really believe this, and bear it in mind as something to exercise our hearts about from day to day, and hour to hour? How precious the words in John 4:1-54, "My meat is to do the will of God." The hungry, thirsty, and weary One said this as He sat on the well. He now sits on the throne. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." This probably implied a lack of sympathy and fellowship. You know what it is to say you have meat to eat which the world knows not of. It is said, "laborers are few;" after Pentecost this ought not to be so; during our Lord's earthly ministry it was different-the Holy Ghost was not yet given. We are individually responsible to know and fill our place, it may be behind the counter, or may be in the kitchen. The highest success is, in seeking every moment to please the Father. "I have labored in vain" (Isaiah 40:4) was the language of the rejected One-the least successful of preachers, but the most successful in being constantly well-pleasing to the Father (Psalms 61:1). Whilst Christ never could fall, He could be preserved, "Behold My Servant whom I uphold." He was preserved in the way of perfect success in pleasing God. He finds His meat in the same thing now, for having finished the work, He is now unfolding it. There was perfect singleness of heart in Him-the Holy Spirit ever bore witness to this. Though we see such successful preaching at Pentecost by Peter, when 3,000 men (women not included) were "added unto them " in one day, and at another time 5,000 (Acts 4:4). Yet we see a still greater success in Acts 22:22, when Paul stood on the castle stairs bearing testimony amidst the fiendish hatred of the audience, and heard the shout of "Away with such a fellow," etc. The greater success being, in Paul knowing more of Christ through sharing more of Christ's rejection. The once-persecuting one had the wages, "Away with such a fellow," etc. They said of Christ, "Away with Him!" How much there was of Christ in Paul rejected! He identified himself very closely with his loving Saviour in life and death, and this is the secret of his never growing cold or turning aside. If we do not seek to please God in all our ways, we shall be more likely to desert our colors. Paul did know and did eat the meat that the Lord was wont to eat. He could say, and indeed we should, that "We are to God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and them that perish." There was more of Christ in Paul than Peter could have known until the sheet was let down from heaven (Acts 10:11), though 3,000 and 5,000 had been saved through his preaching. If we turn our eyes away from the business of pleasing God, we shall certainly be more or less discouraged and distrust our calling. The Redeemer spoke of His work as

finished (John 17:4). The redeemed rest from their labors (Revelation 14:13). Paul did not say, "I have finished my work," but "I have finished my course," or "race." The Redeemer finished the work and the redeemed finish the race. God takes time to pay His servants their wages. He will not set aside any servant who is fit to work. We set ourselves aside. No laborer for the Master need beg for either work or wages from Him. In this and other lands thousands may beg for labor-not so with God-He begs laborers. God's answer to Christ "It is a light thing" (Isaiah 49:6). Paul uses verse 8 in 2 Corinthians 6:2. Christ looked for a day beyond the present, and so should we. Let us look right on and see what is in store for us. That will enable us to leave our wages with God, and He will not be our debtor. Don't let us be in His debt. The present rejection of Israel is only an occasion with God to glorify His name. The World's Philosophy and the Word of Christ.

Read Colossians 2:3-10; Colossians 3:16; John 15:14; John 16:6-14, John 16:23-27. THE force of the admonition in Colossians is seen in verses 8-9. What the world calls "philosophy" the Spirit of God couples with "vain deceit," and against these, the child of God is exhorted to be on his guard, by letting the Word of Christ dwell in him richly. In Christ "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and "we are "complete in Him." When this is received in faith, it teaches the believer his true dignity according to God, and enables him to behave aright in the world, and to keep himself separate from it, because he is not of it. The whole Bible is irreconcilably opposed to the philosophy of the world. There is, of course, a wisdom from God in the natural man which can be rightly used in the things of this life and in what concerns this world, even as God filled Bezaleel with wisdom, and with understanding, and with knowledge, enabling him to make the Tabernacle. In Romans 1:1-32 the apostle says of men, that, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools"; and in Corinthians he shows, that the world's wisdom ends in crucifying the Lord of glory. The cross of Christ is the death-knell to all that man can boast of in the things of God. But in a risen Christ we who believe have a divine fullness of wisdom and knowledge treasured up, and He is to us the antitypical Solomon. God says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," that is man's Cain-like wisdom. Scientists may study geology and astronomy, but let them by virtue thereof have nothing to do with making a "theology," as if the world by wisdom could know and understand God, or anything outside the material world around them. There never was a time when men understood matter as they do now, but when worldly men touch the things of God they show themselves to be fools, and we do the same if we listen to them, or are influenced by them.

Men of the world cannot know God because they will not. The carnal mind is at enmity with God, and the natural heart says, "No God." Man preferred the creature to the Creator, as we read in Romans 1:1-32, and consequently God gave him up to a mind "void of judgment" (margin, v. 28). This is God's judgment upon man. But what I have on my heart most, is to plead the cause of Christ our heavenly Friend, and His injured love, so that we may help each other to please Him well.

Turn to Deuteronomy 26:1. We injure His tender love when we cannot truthfully and experimentally say, "I am come in unto the land" ; and so, also, when we forget that we were Syrians "ready to perish." The Hebrew word there is "lost," and is the same word as that used in the passage, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." When we forget Christ's redeeming love and power, we injure His love and rob Him of our basket of first-fruits.

Another passage in connection with Christ's injured love is Song of Solomon 5:2, 3 He knocks and seeks an entrance, but His beloved is asleep, and keeps Him outside. Suppose two friends were both tenderhearted, each one closely knit to the other by the dearest bonds, and yet one heart is more tender than the other: which will feel any breach of fellowship or any coldness of affection most? Surely the one whose heart is the more tender. So it is as between Christ and ourselves; He sorrows most, but we lose most.

Let us compare Joseph's heart with those of his brethren. It was Joseph who was the first to propose the embrace, and to welcome them to his heart, when he said, "Come near to me, I pray you." And then when they came near, he said, "I am Joseph your brother, "I will nourish you," and " he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them." They had been bringing their empty sacks and receiving from his fullness, but they had not thought of delighting his heart. Is not this of times the case with ourselves? Do we not injure Christ's love, too, in our dealings one with another? "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye," is the figure God Himself has used; and Christ says, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "And this is His commandment, that we love one another." The measure of our obligation depends upon the measure of God's revelation. Through grace we are the first-fruits unto God, and the highest of all creation; so, correspondingly, is our obligation.

If I am walking in fellowship with Christ, His choice becomes my choice, and I shall have nothing apart from Him. There is no limit to our friendship with Christ, for He Himself said, "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." The love wherewith God loves the Son is the measure of His love to us, and the hallowed intercourse between the Father and the Son is the rule of our freedom and fellowship with Christ. Such is the wondrous place into which Christ has brought us, and in which we stand through grace; but, alas! how feebly it is understood and appreciated by us. In John 15:1-27 we have both sides of this friendship brought out-God's side in His revelation of Himself to us; our side in our obedience to His Word. The friendship of Christ with the family at Bethany was even deeper than the friendship which Abraham enjoyed with God. Abraham made the Lord a feast, but he stood while the Lord did eat. In John 12:1-50 we read, "Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him." Thus Abraham stood and served, but when Christ came in the flesh, Lazarus was permitted to sit down in the presence of the Lord, and to share the feast with Him. He calls us bosom friends. There is a platform of fellowship and a quality of fellowship enjoyed by saints now, that could not have been before the Holy Ghost came. Lack of this is not because of the lack of education, but because of the lack of heart and will. Self-will is a mighty hindrance to this communion, and against this we have to watch continually. The result of the enjoyment of this fellowship will be, that the word of Christ will dwell in us richly. It is not by reading much that we shall have the Word dwelling richly in us, but by having communion of soul with Christ about what we read. Friendship is the outcome of communion, and communion is the outcome of union-our union with Him as branches of the vine, and as members of His body.

Christians are very prone to be drawn into the snare of leaning to their own wisdom and understanding, instead of being guided by Christ and His Word. We chiefly trespass by our words, which influence and guide our acts; hence the Scripture; "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

There is a beautiful connection in Joshua 1:1-18 between faith having courage to grasp the promises of God, and faith finding strength and courage to do the will of God. All success flows out of this combination of promise and obedience. Israel sinned by making a league with the inhabitants of the land, and we never grieve the Holy Ghost more, than when we make a league with wicked spirits in heavenly places, over whom Satan is ruler, and under whose subtlety, unless we are watchful, we are ever prone to fall, as Israel fell under the Canaanites that were left. That we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us, must never be forgotten. The secret of non-success lies within ourselves; neither the world nor the devil can gain any advantage over us but that which we allow them. By making a league with the inhabitants of the land, we forfeit the enjoyment of God's friendship and the fulfillment of the promises.

There is an all-sufficiency in the Word of God whereby we may know ourselves, may condemn the flesh, and may have our faith ever strengthened. That is a solemn word in Joshua 23:13; "They shall be thorns in your eyes" ; and is not this an exact description of what is found in the church today? In the great work of the Reformation the corners of errors were left in the Prayer-book, and the terrible result is that today Popery is fast covering the land. Tares grow while men sleep. In Deuteronomy 25:1-19 we read of "divers weights and measures" (verses 13-16); then comes the reference to war with Amalek (verses 17-19); and this is followed by the command to bring the basket of first-fruits. Is it not true that the church has had divers weights and measures in the things of God, and that Amalek has been encouraged instead of being defeated and exterminated? Consequently God has not had: His due from His people; their basket of first-fruits- (chap. 26:1-11), and their tithes (verses 12-15) have not been brought into His presence, and the result has been that verses 16-19 are not fulfilled in the church of God today. There is not the avouching of the Lord as our God and walking in His ways, and therefore we are not avouched as His peculiar people.

There is no such thing as fellowship with God without a tender conscience in respect to the whole word of God. (Psalms 119:127-128). Hence the need of the prayer, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." I may not see them; others may or may not know them; but God does. We must not have "divers weights and measures" as to the question of sin. We are bound to be walking with God and aiming at intimacy with Christ; but in order to have this, there must be the confession of sin, and the crying to God for cleansing; not as we may think we need it, but as He knows we need it. There is today a gross misunderstanding of sin, and of the cross where sin was judged. Does any think himself sinless? Take such an one to Christ, as He walked in obedience to the perfect law and will of God, and ask if there was any imperfection in Him; then ask if he finds any in himself when tested by such a standard. If Christ had had any imperfection, His sacrifice would have been unfitted for the work of atonement.

God as Father can allow us to say what Paul said: "ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you." And God on the ground of sacrifice accounts us blameless as to our standing in Christ; yet, let it never be forgotten, that all imperfection and shortcoming in obedience-and that obedience according to the balances of the sanctuary-is accounted sin. In 1 John 3:9-10, a contrast is drawn between a child of God and one unsaved. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin"; "he that committeth sin is of the devil." "The devil sinneth from the beginning," and the unsaved person lives in self-will and rebellion against God; into this condition the believer cannot fall. The characteristics of the two families are

given. Abel was a man of God; Cain was a man of the world. Cain was full of the enmity of Satan, and this came out, not at the plough, but at the altar. Solemn thought! It is man's religion rather than his irreligion which shows the condition of his heart towards God. "Be filled with the Spirit" is a command for all times, and should be the constant state of the believer in Christ, and thereby the difference between him and the unbeliever would be manifested. In Romans 6:1-23 Paul not only teaches us about reckoning ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God, but he teaches us also about fighting. It is far easier to please God in our obedience, than to satisfy the upright heart and the enlightened conscience in ourselves. There are still lusts within the believer; but instead of being obeyed, they are to be subdued. In 1 John 3:1-24 we have two persons contrasted, and in Romans vi. we have two contrasted natures in one person.

Any imperfection in yielding our members to God, let us remember, is an act of iniquity. May we, then, learn to walk and to please God as children of obedience, not fashioning ourselves according to our former lusts in our ignorance, but as He who hath called us is holy, so may we be holy in all manner of behavior. Then shall we escape the defilement of this world's philosophy, and live in the enjoyment of unbroken fellowship with that Friend who sticketh closer than a brother.

Family Life.

ONE matter laid much upon our hearts is family life. Our hearts do cry that Enochs, Abrahams, Samuels, and Daniels may be raised up. God has great need of such for His own joy, according to that precious proverb, "My son, if thine heart be wise, My heart shall rejoice, even Mine. Yea, My reins shall rejoice when thy lips speak right things" (Proverbs 23:15-16). There is another in that Book of sonship, of Israel's sonship and ours; that Book of Christ called the "Book of Proverbs." "My son, be wise, and make My heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth Me" (Proverbs 27:11). God's Word speaks for itself. If His sun, moon, and stars speak to man, demanding on God their Maker's behalf that man shall listen to their testimony for God, much more do the Scriptures of truth. Beloved, let us remember this, that our obligation to the Church of God is the same as ever, according to John xvii.-loved in Christ; God's love, according to His eternal counsels, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me" (John 17:13). That belongs to all saints, because, according to God's counsels, they are in the love of God; but the love of the fellowship ("Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you:" John 15:14), that fellowship the Church has been content to forfeit. Instead of contending for obedience without reserve, a league has been made with the Canaanites, and there has been no Bochim about it (Judges 2:1-23). In family life it is not so. Supposing a child of God be an husband, his wife and helpmeet gives him offspring. There are those here, more or less, holding family responsibilities. My dear brethren and sisters, wont you accept this affirmation, that there is more glory brought to God by a man-a child of His-ruling his family according to Christ, than the wisest man ruling a kingdom. There is no kingdom under heaven so favored as this, by the excellent woman that God has been pleased to give (going out of his course, because rule does not belong to the woman), and in making her to rule this country she has been a blessing to the land. And yet all that glory is as nothing in the sight of God in comparison with a servant-a child of His-ruling his family according to Christ. What is the reason? It is not the duty of any kingdom to rule according to Christ. Rule in the family should be according to Christ. It is required of the child of God as an husband that he should represent Christ. Is he a father? Then he should be the very image of his Father in heaven to his children. Is the wife a child of God? She has favor from God such as is not to be found in any of the relations

that rulers bear to each other-to show forth the future Church in glory subject to Christ. Surely in Ephesians v. it is not the Church now, but the Church by and-by in glory that is the pattern? Is it children? Then Christ is their pattern; Christ the pattern of subjection to the servant, and Christ the pattern of rule to the master. To the eye of God, and to the eye of faith, and to the understanding heart, this earth of ours is more abundant in types and shadows of heavenly things, and therefore a better world to look at, than was the earth as yet not marred by the sin of the first man. To pass by types innumerable that could not be found in Paradise, let us go to the most excellent of all types, the husband and wife, the parent and child, the master and servant.

I would now look at a few passages familiar to us, which the Spirit of God will make fresh and new to us. Ephesians 5:18; Ephesians 6:1, Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:18, Colossians 3:25; Colossians 4:1-2. Beloved, the greater part of the Scriptures is taken up with showing the saved how to be happy. I cannot but judge if you were to search out the Scriptures that refer to the enemies of God, to His judgments in time and eternity, and the Scriptures that show how the lost are to be saved, put these all together; then gather out the Scriptures that teach us, who are saved, how to please and honor God, and how to be happy, you would find the latter to be the greater portion of the Word. It is all wrapt up in this-Christ dwelling in your heart by faith (Ephesians 3:17), and God's love poured into your heart abundantly by the Holy Ghost. That is the grand secret of happiness in the family, and there is no substitute for it. In God's order, the special responsible person in connection with a family is the father-the head of that family; he is to be the spring of the family's happiness. If I stand in the capacity of head to a household, or as father to children, or as master to servant, for their sakes, next to pleasing God, I do feel it to be my obligation to be happy in the love of God; to have God's love shed abroad in my heart by the Spirit of God given to us. That is the course of His love, if I don't hinder it. God's love in me must press out, and if I don't hinder it, it must flow into my heart. I trust that we may have opened ears and tender hearts to receive and treasure up the many things God has been saying to us. Above all, let this be rooted in us, that it is God's delight to make us happy with His love, and it must be so if we don't hinder.

What suits the Church suits the family, and what makes a happy church makes a happy family. In the exhortation that we have been reading (Ephesians 5:1-33), observe it begins with the relation of husband and wife; and for this reason the children can well understand God by observing the holy or unholy walk of father or mother. They keenly observe, and in the very order of God so it is, they must be affected by the walk and spirit of their parents. The father and mother may be upright and blameless persons to the world, yet if they little think of fashioning their minds, affections, speech, and behavior according to Christ, they more or less make void what they so teach. But, on the other hand, if they do walk according to Christ, if the Word of Christ dwell in their hearts richly, the children will say in their hearts, "What a blessed thing it is to know the Lord! How happy father is; how loving mother is!" Such impressions will thus be deeply made on the young hearts in their early days. Happiness and obedience go together. If the Word of Christ dwell in me richly, it will lead me to view everything in relation to God. And let us remember this, that if the Bible be used aright, it will be first of all the pleasantest book in the world to him that serves it well. The children will say, "What a lovely book the Bible is!" And they will not wish anything to please or interest them by comparison with the Scriptures handled by the lips of one full of the love of God. Beloved, let us remember this, it is one thing to read the Bible, choosing that which suits me, but quite

another thing to search it in order to become acquainted with God in Christ, and that I may be fashioned like unto Christ. Let me, first of all, please God by my affections to Him, that thus He may find in my house a banqueting room. If I read the Bible for that end, the Spirit of God will always make it to me better than thousands of gold and silver; sweeter than honey, even the honeycomb.

Before I cease, I would say a word as touching that in Ephesians 6:1-24 with reference to children. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise." There is no promise to any other. First of all let me say, that it is to be understood according to Christ, and not according to Moses. The promise of the old covenant I would show forth thus: The gold was scarce and the copper plentiful; that is, heavenly things were but dimly revealed, but the promise was given of earthly things, and of the abundance of them. No sickness or disease, length of days, increase of offspring, flocks, herds, &c. Now, beloved, we are to "be content with such things as we have, for He has said, I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). And, again, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). The child of God has a far securer title to daily bread than the Queen of England. She, as such, has no title at all. God may or may not cast her down from her high estate. The world, simply as such, has no title from God to anything but the wages of sin. As a child of God He speaks to me through His Son. He says, "Consider the lilies of the field, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothe the grass which today is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. After these things do the Gentiles seek. . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matthew 6:28-34). We have these things by promise, but then in our day the gold of heavenly things is plentiful; the gold of the things concerning the Father and the Son-the gold of the full revelation of the mind of God touching the past, present, and future. Beloved, the gold of heavenly things is now plentiful, but the copper of things temporal we shall not be without. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

But, remember this, beloved, teach your children that they honor you; that is, not only that they obey you, but joyfully teach them that to do this is better than that everyone of them had ten thousand pounds each. Teach them as soon as they can understand anything, and God will set His seal upon that. As to earthly things, God will take up your cause as to your children. But, besides that, there is another thing, they will see that you esteem God's Word, because it not only teaches you how to be saved, but how to be happy, and reveals the very heart of God, His ways and works. They will see that you love the Bible, and commend by speech and ways the Scriptures even before it please God to convert them-calling them from death to life. Don't urge them, overdrive, or chill them, and thus you will win them. Your hearts being happy in the love of God, you will find this, that your training before conversion will mightily tell upon their character afterwards; because we must never forget this, that whatever the vessel is before conversion, the heart purged from an evil conscience, the affections sanctified by the truth of God, the will subdued by God, the vessel is the same. Saul of Tarsus was the same after he was converted as before. His capacity and capability for evil was the same as before conversion, but they were afterwards used for God, to make him what he was; that is to say, all his natural and mental

powers and capabilities were now under the direction of God by His Spirit. It is said of Timothy, "from a child thou hast known the Scriptures;" and God turned this to good account.

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