

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 4

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 4, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

132 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 4

Afflictions Weighed Out to the Christian

No physician ever weighed out the medicine to his patient with half so much exactness and care as God weighs out to us every trial; not one grain too much does He ever permit to be put into the scale.

Our sorrows in the scale He weighs,

And measures out our pains;

The wildest storm His word obeys,

His word its rage sustains.

Maranatha Anathema

1 Cor. 16:22

It is difficult to speak or write without deep feeling when dwelling on that awful word, and with so many on every side who are utterly careless as to its dread reality. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha" - accursed of the Lord at His coming. But is this, some may ask, its plain and true meaning? Most assuredly it is. Nothing could be plainer, more definite, or absolute. The curse of God is the eternal doom of all who love not the Savior of mankind - His wellbeloved Son. "If any man" is surely most comprehensive; any man, no matter who he is, what he is, where he is, how he reasons, what excuses he may offer: the Word of God is positive, it has gone forth from His throne, it is unalterable, it is fixed as the foundation of that throne, changeless as His own being - "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha" - anathematized when the Lord shall come.

Do you think, dear reader, this judgment severe? It may appear so at first sight, or to a thoughtless reader; but a moment's reflection will convince you that it is not only just but necessary in the righteous government of God. He loves His Son, knows what He has done and suffered for mankind, and fairly estimates His claims on their grateful love. All this He has revealed to us; we know His mind. And how sweetly He has pressed His love upon us! with every blessing that love can give, and the bearer to us of all these blessings is the Son of His own bosom whom He spared not, "but delivered Him up for us all." But surely, if any are careless about all these things, and despise the bearer of Heaven's richest favors, what will the throne of judgment say? Is there no crime in despising both the love and the authority of God? in disregarding His demands for the honor of His Son? Are His rights not to be vindicated, or the claims of His Son maintained? Rest assured that so just, so holy, so righteous, will the judgment of God be, that the vast universe will resound with a solemn Amen as the curse of God is pronounced on those who have hated, in place of having loved, the Lord Jesus. Heaven will willingly own it; the

faithful on earth will re-echo heaven's universal Amen; the condemned must own it, and hell too must groan out reluctantly its Amen, and acknowledge that God is holy, and just, and good, and that the man who is accursed has only lost what he despised, and is now in the place which he chose for himself.

To love the Lord is to believe in Him; and the more we meditate on His love to us, and what He has gone through for us, the more will our faith expand and rise into the most admiring, adoring, grateful love. But we must know Him to believe in Him, and know Him in the fullest expression of His love to us. Blessed Lord! He invites us to come to Him, to be drawn to Him by the attractions of His cross and the glory of His Person. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die." John 12:32, 33. Never was God's love to a sinner, and God's hatred of his sin, so far manifested as in the cross of His dear Son; and never did His love to the lost and helpless soul shine so brightly. Here we do well to pause for a moment and dwell on this wonderful sight, this two-

fold aspect of the cross. When or how could God's hatred of sin be so manifested as when He judged it in the Person of His own beloved Son? The thought is overwhelming! But it must forever justify God in punishing sin in the person of the impenitent sinner himself. The cross will stand forever as the declaration of God's righteousness in the judgment of sin, and in pardoning the chief of sinners who believes in Jesus.

But sin must be put away according to the claims of God's glory, that His love may flow forth freely, and the full blessing come to us. Without the shedding of blood is no remission. Jesus, the sinless One, in the greatness of His love, bore the judgment due to sin. He was nailed to the accursed tree, that the anathemas of God might never fall on us and sink our souls in hell forever. In love He endured the cross, and there was nothing that His love did not willingly endure that God might be glorified and the sinner saved. But who can speak of judgment of God against sin! The waves and billows of divine wrath rolled over His sinless, spotless soul; His brow was wreathed with a crown of thorns, emblem of the curse of sin; He was forsaken of God; He tasted the bitterness of death. God hid His face from Him, when bearing our sin; but at length the cup was drained, and the shout of victory was heard, "It is finished." All was now done; every claim of Heaven and every need of the sinner, fully met; sin and guilt were put away, the Word of God maintained inviolate, and His name glorified.

His love is the same - the same yesterday, today, and forever. He waits to be gracious now, He loves to bless now, He delights to save now, He rejoices over every returning sinner now, He is ready to receive every repenting, returning prodigal now.

What is so fitted to melt the sinner's heart, to win his confidence, as a Savior's love! What must the end be of those who despise this love! The anathemas of indignant justice will far exceed in their terrible thunders the most vivid description of either preacher or writer. And the sinner shall also find in that awful day of retribution that this sore judgment is not for his common sins merely, but for the great, the aggravated sin, of rejecting a Savior's love. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha," are the just and unalterable words of Heaven.

Pharaoh hardened his heart against the judgment of God, but what must be the guilt of him who hardens his heart against the love of Jesus!

The Apostle's Prayer for the Philippians

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Phil. 1:9-11.

The Apostle prays that they might have all kinds of knowledge and spiritual judgment, so that they might do things just fit to be done -that they might know in what one thing differs from another - that they might be connoisseurs in the Christian path; not only not fall into sin, but have the knowledge of just the right thing to do in the circumstances, for the standard is the satisfying the heart of Christ, not "Where is the harm?" The Apostle desires that they might discern things now as they will be when brought into the light in that day of Christ. It is as if he said, I want you to think of the Lord Jesus, and know what will please the heart of Christ. There is the delight of pleasing Christ, and also the delighting in the thing that pleases Him, by the active energy of the Spirit of God.

As and so: Two Words Coupled Together in John

These words convey to us some of those wonderful comparisons and measures of divine things which God has given us in the Scriptures. Let us look at a few of the places where they occur. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." John 3:14.

Once sin came in, nothing short of the lifting up of the Son of man - the cross - could meet and satisfy God's holy and just requirements with respect to it. The brazen serpent was the divinely appointed remedy for that day; so the Son of man lifted up is the alone source of eternal life to all who believe. Nothing short of this work could meet at the same time God's holiness and our need. But it is also the righteous outlet for God's love - not now to one nation, but world-wide in its aspect. Here we have the measure of our distance as sinners-what we were as seen in the light of God's holiness. Nothing less than the lifting up of the Son of man could meet the case and lay the groundwork, according to God, for the gift of eternal life.

"As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." Chap. 6:57.

The Lord Jesus was indeed the Sent One, the dependent Man on earth who ever walked in perfect communion with, and dependence on, His Father. His words, His works, were those which the Father had given Him to speak and to do. Now He is not only the giver of life, but food to sustain the life He gives. So our life is to be regulated on these principles -communion, obedience, and dependence on Him, drawing the resources to sustain the divine life, and carry us on from day to day, from Him.

"I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." Chap. 10:14, 15. The sheep had heard His voice; He had called them by name; but what a measure of the intimacy of knowledge between Him and them, flowing from the divine life and nature possessed, is expressed in the words, "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love." Chap. 15:9. Can we take in fully the extent of the Father's love to the Son? Such is the measure of the Son's love to His people; we cannot grasp its extent, its breadth, its fullness, its abiding and unchangeable character. Love that would serve, cost what it might - love that led Him to give Himself up to death, and the enduring of God's wrath against sin - love that rose superior to all that could try and test, and prove it to the last extremity - it is divine love, absolute perfection.

Thou "hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Chapter 17:23. Here is the Father's love to them whom He had given to the Son, seen in all its fullness when they shall be manifested before the universe in the same glory with Christ as truly one. Loved as His own Son. Is it not true now to faith?

"As He is, so are we in this world." 1 John 4:17. As the accomplisher of redemption, the risen and glorified Man, the Son has taken His place on the Father's throne, waiting the day when He shall

sit on His own throne. We are before God our Father, now in this world, in all the unclouded favor and acceptance in which Christ is.

"As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (Chap. 20:21; 17:18.)

The gospel of John speaks of the Son as the Sent One of the Father. He is thus mentioned over forty times. We are not of the world, as He was riot, but sent into it as not belonging to it, just as the Father had sent Him. His path as the Man on earth - the Servant (He was God too, as we know) - was one of absolute, undeviating obedience, terminating only in death itself. The servants of God and saints of past ages, had trodden the path of faith some little way; but here was One who never swerved from the path of submission to His Father's will for a single moment. Passing through a world where every element was opposed, where everything bore the marks of sin and ruin, where the manifestation of perfect goodness drew out perfect hatred, He could draw His resources as the dependent One, the perfect Servant, from His Father. How truly He has marked out the path and principles of true service! And surely how great the distance at which we follow His steps.

Let us then sum up a little of what is expressed in these two words, "as" and "so." We find in chapter 3:14 the measure of God's requirements with regard to sin what His holiness demands - the lifting up of the Son of man. In chapter 6:57, the measure of dependence in the one who, though receiving Him, has got this new life and nature. In chapter 10:14, 15, the measure in which Christ knows His sheep, and they know Him. In chapter 15:9, the measure of Christ's love to His people. In chapter 17:23, the measure of the Father's love to them to be displayed in glory. In 1 John 4:17, the measure of our present acceptance. In chapter 20:21, the measure and principle of true service.

Assembly Discipline: Some Wholesome Words

My dear Brother:

Yours of the 8th inst.... to hand. I am most thankful that the strain that has been on for a good while in the meeting has come to an end. I am sure this is the goodness of God. And I pray that the same goodness may yet lead to hearts being yet further "knit together in love" (Col. 2:2). This is of deepest importance, if there is to be growth and blessing.

I grieve for S. and A. I do not for a moment question that they are wrong in the course and position they have taken; but it is a terrible thing for saints to be cut off - far more so, I think, than we generally realize. And while faithfulness may sometimes require it, it needs to break our hearts.

On this line of things we get some most wholesome instruction in the closing chapters of Judges, in connection with the horrible wickedness of Gibeah, and the Benjamites allying themselves with it. Israel arose as one man against it. And this was righteousness, and faithfulness too. But God would have something more than righteousness, or even faithfulness in judging evil.

Israel united as one man, and 400,000 strong, arrayed themselves against Benjamin and Gibeah, who together numbered but 26,700, and although they had asked counsel of God, they were beaten before Benjamin, and 22, 000 perished the first day. The next day they not only asked counsel but wept before the Lord, and still they were again beaten, and lost 18,000 men. All this is most solemn, especially after the Lord, in answer to their inquiry, had told them to go up. What was the secret? I believe it was this: they were acting in simple righteousness against Benjamin, WITHOUT THEMSELVES BEING HUMBLING AND BROKEN BEFORE THE LORD BY BENJAMIN'S SIN.

After being smitten twice by Benjamin, "Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD." Judg. 20:26.

Hitherto their course had been a right one, but it was only now that they had reached a state in connection with which the Lord could give them victory. They had at last humbled themselves before the Lord, and taken the place of entire dependence, and rendered to the Lord His due - the offerings.

And now Benjamin is smitten - practically annihilated. But oh, the sorrow of heart that follows, now that they were in a state such that they could sorrow! They "came to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept SORE; and said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?" Judg. 21:2, 3.

Their course had been right, but they had to be humbled, and had to learn how to weep, and to fast, and to offer to the Lord. The judgment executed against Benjamin was just, but they had to feel the sorrow of having executed it against "my brother." So, dear brethren, I do not believe we

are in an acceptable state to draw the sword to cut off our brother until we too know what it is to weep, and to fast, and to do it as what is due to the Lord, and be brokenhearted. because we must, and because it is "my brother."

Of course. this is not exactly a case of cutting off a brother from the assembly, but it is in principle the same. And I must say I feel grieved that it had to be so. It seems to me, too, that I see distinctly the hand of the Lord in the matter being kept in abeyance so long. Had action been taken at once without patiently waiting, and in love laboring to recover the erring ones, it might have been more serious.

Faithfulness in not yielding to evil is most deeply important. But this alone will not do. We are not called to wield a Jehu sword, though it was perfectly righteous. With us there must be self-humbling - I am no better than my brother - and the working of that love that delights in mercy, and hates putting away (Mal. 2:16).

Now that the action has been taken, I simply throw out these suggestions for the consideration of the dear brethren who have had directly to do with this painful case. You will find it profitable to review the whole course, and to consider the question,

Why did not the Lord permit more speedy action? And I think you will find there was something for all to learn.

Often our thoughts and state of heart have to be corrected, where we are not aware that there is anything wrong. God is full of patience with us, but He is faithful, and He gently leads us on, correcting and disciplining us as we need it. Oh, how good He is, for into what blunders we would often fall did not He check us up, that He might minister suited instruction!

I do trust that matters may now move on in the gathering in peace and harmony, all giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We have to keep the Lord before us, and learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart. The meekness, gentleness, patience, grace, and love that are pleasing to God are found alone in Christ. And it is in communion with Him that they are reproduced in us in the power of the Spirit.

Now with much love to you all, I remain Yours affectionately in the Lord (signed)

P. S.

Brother has had thoughts which needed to be corrected, and still has, I think; and I doubt not that the Lord in His faithfulness will lead to this. On the other hand I believe there is much for which he needs to be commended. If ever S. is restored, he will recall 's earnest, faithful, patient, and gracious efforts in love to win him back from the step he has taken, and it may have more weight with him than all else.

No doubt the rest of you have been tried by his resistance of a certain course, and he may have been blamed for obstructive ways, but I am satisfied God has been in this. And looking at things from his point of view, he has been no less tried than the rest. I can see he has suffered deeply in his spirit, and his resistance has been from conscientious convictions. I have no doubt that he and all have gained by the exercises, and perhaps by some correcting of thoughts. All the members are needed (1 Cor. 12:21-26). Even those that are crooked and intractable are useful in teaching

us lessons of patience. And we cannot set such aside, unless the wickedness of a perverse will makes it a necessity - as for example, a case of deliberate railing.

The meekness, lowliness, longsuffering, and forbearance in love (Eph. 4:2), which are precious traits of the divine life in Christ, are all developed in a scene where we meet the opposites which call for their exercise. God will not allow us to get on in a "cut and dried" sort of way which has the character of legal righteousness. He works in us, in the midst of exercise of soul, the traits of Christ, which unite with righteousness, grace and love, so producing patience, gentleness, longsuffering, and forbearance.

At God's Right Hand

It is most blessed to see that in the cross the moral nature of God, outraged by man's sin, has been perfectly glorified. Christ would rather die than let sin subsist unatoned for. He has wrought atonement, and sin has been perfectly judged, according to God's estimate of its sinfulness before Him. God, having been thus glorified by the Son of man, has shown His estimate of that Man and of His work by putting Him into glory at His own right hand. Faith perceives this, and immediately reckons - and rightly too - that every question of sin must have been divinely settled to the entire satisfaction of God. The result for the soul is solid peace in the sense of acceptance in Christ in divine righteousness.

The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

There are not wanting those who reject the commonly received opinion that the Apostle Paul wrote this epistle. It may therefore be interesting to look at the historic proof of Paul being the writer.

There are several particulars relating to the personal history of the writer:

He was not one of our Lord's disciples, and probably did not know Christianity till after our Lord's ascension (Heb. 2:3). Paul we know was converted after the ascension of our Lord (Acts 9).

The epistle was written from Italy (13:24). Paul was in Italy for some time.

The writer mentions some hindrance which prevented his leaving Italy (13:19). This agrees with what we know of Paul, who was in prison there (2 Tim. 1:8).

The writer desired the prayers of his brethren for the removal of this hindrance (13:19). This is conformable to the custom of Paul in his other epistles (Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:19).

The writer knew of Timothy's release from prison. Paul mentions this (1 Tim. 6:12).

Timothy was not with the writer in Italy, but was shortly expected (13: 23). This agrees with what we know of the situation of Paul when in prison (2 Tim. 4:9).

The writer looked forward to traveling with Timothy to visit the Hebrew Christians.. Timothy was Paul's constant companion in travel.

Here there are several particulars respecting the writer of the epistle, all of which agree with what we know of the history of Paul, but do not suit with what is known of any other eminent New Testament saint. It is highly improbable therefore that any other New Testament writer but Paul wrote this epistle.

Further: to none of the assigned writers do all the circumstances here noted suit, as far as we are acquainted with their histories. We know not that Apollos or Barnabas were ever in Rome, or suffered imprisonment there for the truth's sake. Luke was in Rome, but we have no information of his having been imprisoned there. In the absence of certainty, there is evidence enough from the personal remarks of the writer to lead us to the conclusion that Paul wrote this epistle. (2 Pet. 3:15 seems to me decisive that Paul wrote to the Jewish saints; and this of

course is no other than "Hebrews.")

[If the question be asked, Why did Paul not name himself, or state his apostleship here as in his other epistles, there are several reasons that might be given:

It would have been somewhat out of order for Paul to put himself forward when writing to the Jews, for he was the Apostle to the Gentiles, the uncircumcision (Gal. 2:7, 8), and not to the circumcision. It is not strange, however, that the Lord should use Paul to write a final appeal to the converted Jews to draw them away from their earthly attachments, for He had previously used

Peter, the Apostle to the circumcision, to open the door into the kingdom to the Gentiles (Acts 10).

The Red Sea and

It was suitable that this appeal should reach the converted Hebrews with all the authority of God Himself; hence, the epistle opens with, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, bath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Another has written, "How enfeebling would have been the Apostle's introduction of himself in such a connection!" Yes, it was God Himself who was speaking to them, and the servant needed to be hidden.

In the third chapter the Lord Jesus is put forward as "the Apostle," the true sent One of God; hence it would not have been fitting to set forth Paul's apostleship here. - Ed.]

Babylon's Fall: the End of Christendom

There was once a mighty city called Babylon, the glory of the Chaldean kingdom, and the praise of the whole earth (Jer. 51:41). But her sins rose up to heaven, and judgment from God went forth against her. The very night that her king and his lords and their ladies were feasting together, and degrading the holy vessels of the despoiled temple of God at Jerusalem to the level of their own carnal festivities, destruction overwhelmed them. The mysterious handwriting on the wall, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," pronounced the doom. Babylon fell, Belshazzar the king was slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom (Dan. 5).

In the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ; Babylon is used figuratively by the Spirit of God to describe a vast system that is rapidly developing upon the earth at the present moment, against which the judgment of God has long gone forth, for He who foreknows all things described the system before its formation by man's self-will, and plainly warned men of the fearful consequences of their sin. It is prefigured in two aspects - as a woman, and as a city. The woman's name is, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." We have not space here, neither would it meet the object before us, to enter into all the details of God's description of her, and of its teaching, but it must suffice us to bring before the reader a few points as to her chief moral characteristics, and to endeavor to gather a few practical lessons for precious souls.

Babylon represents a vast system built up by man upon the earth through the exercise of his own will, in rebellion against God, and disobedience to His Word, under the influence and deceitful misleading of Satan. It comprises a vast mixture of natural and religious elements, ostensibly combined for the glory of God, but actually for the glory of man himself. History repeats itself, man practically saying, as at Babel, "Let us build us a city," etc.; "Let us make us a name," etc. But alas! how little does man remember the solemn words of the Lord, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." Luke 16:15.

Protestants apply this scripture to Romanists, and the latter doubtless have their version of its meaning, but suffice it for us to say here that it has a voice (oh, that men would listen to it!) for every one who reads these lines. All Christendom would do well to take heed to the solemn contents of the chapter where this evil system is described.

The prophet John, carried away in spirit into the wilderness, saw a woman seated upon a beast, adorned with imperial raiment and costly jewelry, holding out to her votaries a golden cup of intoxicating wickedness, herself drunken with the blood of the true people of God, shed through her persecuting spirit in enmity against God and the truth (Rev. 17:3, 4). The woman represents ecclesiastical evil, and the beast, worldly power. Professing to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit of God, she becomes the habitation of demons, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird (Rev. 18:2). Nations and kings have been caught in her toils, and have bowed down at her shrines; the merchants of the earth have amassed untold riches through the abundance of her delicacies. The religious elements of Christendom are one of the most

fruitful sources of the world's wealth.

The mere profession, proud of religious successes, and boasting of the progress of the times and the spread of Christianity (socalled), deludes itself and its fellows, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," knowing not that it is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17). Those who have eyes to see can at once trace how exact the description of the Spirit of God is when He says, "How much she bath glorified herself, and lived deliciously," and "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7).

Beloved reader, are you involved in these wholesale delusions of the devil? Are you one of the many carried away by the fearful tide of nominal religion, flaunting itself more or less in everything that pleases the religious eye, and that charms the religious senses of the natural man? Are you a votary of fine altars

and shrines, candles and incense, flowers and millinery, stained glass and dim religious light, vestments and banners, processions, etc., in forgetfulness of the blessed Man upon the throne of God? Are you, while professing to worship God, following mere human customs and arrangements, without one thought as to whether all these things are suited to Him? Have you forgotten those solemn words of warning, "My people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. 5:31. Ah, what indeed!

Hear God's solemn warning concerning Babylon: "Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities," etc. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Rev. 18:5, 8. And if you should already be one of His people, His word too is plain to you: "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

In Rev. 18:21-24 we have the manner of her fall: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Yes, there is a moment coming when, with violence, Babylon shall be utterly overthrown. Her music, her arts and manufactures, her trade, her artificial light, all shall cease. Even the joy of natural relationship shall be known in her no more. God will avenge Himself upon her for her sorceries by which all nations are deceived, and for the blood of His martyred loved ones which lies at her door. He is strong that executeth His word. Who shall His arm withstand?

Notice the lamentation of those who drank of her intoxicating cup. First, we have the kings of the earth. They bewail and lament as they see the smoke of her burning, saying, "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."

Second, the merchants of the earth join in the same cry, "Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to naught."

Third, the shipmasters, sailors, traders, etc., cast dust on their heads, crying, weeping, and wailing, and say, "Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."

In one hour her judgment comes; in one hour the rich are impoverished; in one hour man's religious boast and glory come to naught; in one hour utter vanity is written upon the whole thing. This is the end thereof. What will your end be? Do you vainly reply, "Ah, but though the system itself is judged, men will escape, or how could they bewail her fall?" What does the Scripture show? That man himself is the acting instrument in her fearful downfall (the ecclesiastical corruption being destroyed by the civil power), to be judged himself next, directly at the hand of the Lord. (Rev. 17:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.)

Note too the description given by the Spirit of God of Babylon's merchandise: "Gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves [or bodies] and souls of men." Rev. 18:12, 13. We get in this list things most valuable in the eyes of men. Gold stands first. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Luke 18:24. Why? Because it is such a snare. Mark, gold first, and souls last. This is how God sees it. He knows the heart, and He knows the order of precedence in man's estimate. Ah reader, you need not travel far to prove the truth of it. It is a long list. Jewelry, dress, furniture, perfumery, food, equipage, bodies and souls of men; Babylon's general store; luxuries and necessities, used by some, indulged in by others, but with no fear of God before their eyes (Rom. 3:18). How terrible is the fall of man! So degraded and perverted that he actually traffics religiously in the bodies and souls of men! Shall not God judge for these things? He will.

Remark too another striking point about this vast and wicked system. In describing her adornment in chapter 17:4, purple and scarlet color (imperial raiment) are mentioned, but there is a total absence of fine linen. Now we are told that the fine linen represents the righteousnesses of the saints; that is, the practical righteousness wrought in the saints, God's people, by the power of the Spirit of God. This is utterly lacking in Babylon. Those who wear true fine linen are objects of her hate. But when the Spirit of God describes her traffic, fine linen is brought in. She knows how to turn it to account, to get advantage and wealth to herself through the faithfulness of the children of God. How many at that day will be found guilty of this! And the merchants too, bewailing her fall, cry, "Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen." Looking at it morally, we see how they are deceived by Satan, and are color-blind. They see not as God sees. They esteem that as fine linen which is but worldly abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16:15).

Beloved reader, this a dark and solemn picture, but it is no sketch of fancy, no overdrawn invention, but the sure and reliable Word of God. The colors are exact, the shadows not one whit darker than the reality. To speak broadly, it is God's view of Christendom. His thoughts are not as ours. Thoughts, ideas, opinions, theology, religion, are all valueless unless they answer to "Thus

saith the Lord." God has spoken. He has spoken in creation, and He has also spoken in His Word. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." Isa. 66:2.

The next thing that will take place is the coming of Christ. Every believer will be caught up to meet Him before the judgment of Babylon.

And now, one word of warning to anyone who has not yet confessed his sin to God, and believed in the Lord Jesus as his own personal Savior: time is running out - soon will grace give way to judgment. Do settle the issue with God NOW.

"O worldling, give ear, while the saints are near!

Soon must the tie be riven;

And men, side by side, God's hand shall divide,

As far as hell's depths from heaven.

"The children of day are summoned away,

Left are the children of night;

Sealed is their doom, for there's no more room,

Filled are the mansions of light."

Basis for Judgment

Nations, like individuals, will be held responsible for the profession they make; and hence those nations which profess and call themselves Christian shall be judged not merely by the light of creation, nor by the law of Moses, but by the full orb'd light of that Christianity which they profess - by all the truth contained within the covers of that blessed Book which they possess, and in which they make their boast. The heathen shall be judged on the ground of creation; the Jew, on the ground of the law; the nominal Christian, on the ground of the truth of Christianity.

Now this grave fact renders the position of all professing Christian nations most serious. God will most assuredly deal with them on the ground of their profession. It is of no use to say they do not understand what they profess; for why profess what they do not understand and believe? The fact is they profess to understand and believe; and by this fact they shall be judged.

Be Ye Steadfast

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58.

I have one word on my heart to press on you before going away, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable." If our hearts are not close to Christ, we are apt to get weary in the way. All is a vain show around us, but that which is inside abides is true - is the life of Christ all else goes. When the heart gets hold of this fact it becomes (as to things around) like one taken into a house to work for the day, performs its duties well, but passes through - does not live in the circumstances. To Israel the cloud came down, they stayed; it lifted up, on they went, 'twas all the same to them. Why? Because, had they stayed when the cloud went on, they would not have had the Lord! One may be daily at the desk for fifty years, yet with Christ - the desk only the circumstance - the doing of God's will - making manifest the savor of Christ; that's the simple thing. Whether I go or you go, I stay or you stay, 'tis all one. May that one word be realized in each of us, "steadfast, unmovable," in whatever sphere, as matter of providence, we are found. So the divine life shall be manifested - Christ manifested. That abides; all else changes, but that life remains, abides forever; yes, forever.

There is not a single thing in which we have served Christ which shall be forgotten. Lazy, alas! we all are in service, but all shall come out that's real; and what's real is Christ in us and that only. The appearance now may be very little - not much even in a religious view - but what's real will abide. Our hearts clinging closely to Christ, we shall sustain one another as members of the body of Christ. The love of Christ should hold the whole together, Christ being everything, and we content to be nothing... Helping one another, praying one for the other. I ask not the prayers of saints - I reckon on them. The Lord keep us going on in simplicity, fulfilling as the hireling our day, till Christ shall come, and then shall every man have praise of God - "Praise of God"; be that our object, and may God knit all our hearts together thoroughly and eternally.

Beware of the World

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." John 17:25. If we could get to the secret of the sorrows that trouble our hearts, it is dabbling with things that are not of the Father but of the world. Christ brings us out of these things, and the mind recognizes it distinctly; but if we don't, in our walk down here, see that we are not to be of the world practically, no wonder if our souls get low and feeble, and cannot rise up to the delight of the Father in the Son, because there is not girdedness of loins.

He has spread His own portion before us, and it is not of the world.

We can look without a question of the measure of the love that passes finding out, and the worthiness of the One who is the center of all the counsels of God, but we must beware of the world. If ever so little of the world be admitted, it changes, not Him, but our power of enjoying Him and walking in the freshness of it.

Bigotry and Faithfulness: the Difference Between Them

These are days when things are breaking up. Infidelity is rising like a surging flood on every hand, and that which is affecting the world is affecting the Church. Old landmarks are being rapidly swept away, and those of yesterday are not those of today. The plenary inspiration of Scripture, the doctrine of the atonement, the deity of Christ's Person, eternity of punishment—all are held by many as exploded theories of an unenlightened past.

Young Christians are more or less influenced by all this, and if they stand up boldly and faithfully for the very words and authority of the Scriptures, they are often dubbed "bigots" for their pains. No, dear young Christians, do not allow terms such as these to close your mouths for Christ, but pray God to give you strength to be faithful to Him and to His Word.

Paul knew that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among the saints, not sparing the flock, and from among themselves should men arise speaking perverse things, drawing disciples after them.

But what does the front rank man of Christianity do? Does he give them some well-worded creed to stand by, or some powerful arguments of his to meet the evil teachers with? No; he commends them to God and the word of His grace (Acts 20:28-31). Our strength lies in dependence upon God, and cleaving closely to His Word. We may not be able to understand it all, but we can exercise faith in God and His Word, and we shall thus be led on. For instance, how many doubt the first chapter of Genesis, and tell us what science has brought to bear on the question. But what saith the Scriptures? "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God." Heb. 11:3. Faith in the Word of God leads us triumphantly through no end of difficulties. Then these enlightened (so-called) individuals turn round and call us bigots. Bigotry is blindly adhering to a • creed. Bigotry leads to illogical positions, to a hard, dry, unfeeling line of action. But faithfulness to God does just the opposite. However, faith is outside the

province of these doubters. The joy of the Holy Ghost is unknown by them. The power of conversion has not affected them or their lives.

They may admire the terse, forcible language of the Scriptures, its poetry, its history, its moral grandeur, but they know not its power when applied to the heart and conscience by the Spirit of God. All these facts and experiences are foreign and unknown to them.

We asked a young man, converted a few weeks ago, if he understood the Bible better since he was converted. He answered in the affirmative, and agreed that before he was saved it was like a dead man coming to a living Book, and now (through the grace of God) it was a living man coming to a living Book, and a stream of blessing passing from it to him. Those who are seeking to undermine the authority of the Scriptures, and the wondrous truths of Christianity, have no conception of their own utter badness, and God's inflexible righteousness. They have never gotten into His presence, and so they can talk, talk, talk.

The young men in 1 John 2:14 are strong because the Word of God abides in them. What a secret of power! May we be kept thus proof against all the assaults of the enemy, whether as a roaring lion or clothed as an angel of light.

May bigotry never be ours, but unflinching faithfulness in these last and perilous days. May the hope of the Lord's near coming quicken our weary and lagging feet. The sight of His face -never to be withdrawn-will soon gladden our eyes, and fill our hearts with untold joy.

Calvary

Calvary shows us a wondrous sight - the death of the Son of God - a death quite of its own kind. Ours is the wages of our sin - the due reward of our deeds - the natural moral result of our condition and character. But Jesus was not in this state. He was "separate from sinners." No sin, no principle of death, was in Him. If death, therefore, touch Him, it must do so in a way altogether peculiar. And so it did. He was made "sin for us." He presented Himself to God as One who, though carrying life and title to life, was ready to surrender it for us, who carried death and the righteous sentence of it in ourselves. It was to God Jesus turned, offering Himself as for sin, or as sin. And the three hours of darkness was the expression of God's acceptance of this offer. For no darkness need there be at any other death. Death is but the issue of man departed from God, according to the early threatening. The sun may continue to shine then. Nature, in all its order, may hold on its way. Nothing beyond the ordinary course of an aliened and self-destroying creature goes on then. But now something new and strange was going on. One had presented Himself to God to die, though He carried in Himself all title to life, and was in no debtorship to death. And He did this that He might destroy him that had the power of death. Sin, in every other death, was dealing with the creature; but here God was dealing with sin. And God must take His place accordingly. If He accept the offer, He will see sin on the cross, and must withdraw Himself. And the darkness expresses this. It tells us of God's taking His place in relation to this object, and thus His acceptance of Christ in the sinner's place, as made sin for us.

What strong consolation is this! What solid ground under our feet is here! In the simplest form, God gave witness that He was dealing with sin there. The billows and waves of divine wrath flowed in to fill the place, instead of the kindly shinings of the divine presence. All retired but the soul of Jesus and the judgment of sin, the victim and the hand that bruised Him. The offer was accepted.

This is all comfort to poor sinners. This is the first great and solid standing under the feet of the consciously guilty one. He who offered Himself to the righteous God, as sin in the sinner's stead, had the offer here solemnly accepted, and was witnessed by this horrible darkness and desertion.

But there was more. There was the acceptance of the work, as well as of the offer. And this was next witnessed to us. For the moment the work was accomplished, its acceptance by God, or the victory of the Lamb of God, was felt in heaven, earth, and hell. As the life was rendered up, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, the rocks of the earth were rent, and the graves where the power of death held its prisoners were opened. Heaven gladly opens to let sinners in, and the enemy's hold is made to open to let them out. Willing or unwilling, all have to own the victory of the bruised Seed of the woman. The bands were loosed, prison doors forced, and the captives of darkness walked, in pledge of this victory, in the light of the holy city. And earth owned it also. Its rocks were rent at the same instant of the blood-shedding of this precious Lamb. For the earth confessed this great transaction at Calvary, as heaven delighted to own it, and hell was forced to own it. The work was accepted.

All this is further peace and comfort to the sinner. The ground is still firm under his feet. He leans the whole burden of his conscience now on the sureness of the accepted work, as before on the sureness of the accepted offer. And the resurrection publishes all.

Cares and Fears: Most Common Weights on Christians

Read Luke 12:22-34

There are two great principles here that are dealt with by the Lord in a twofold way, and which it will be very profitable for our souls to contemplate a little. I speak of what I believe few are strangers to; namely, care and fear -two of the commonest influences that are at work to weigh down the hearts of the saints of God. You will find that the two are closely allied to each other; that is to say, whatever is the thing that causes you anxiety is that concerning which you are likely to have the most fear; whatever it is that settles upon your heart, and becomes a pressure or a weight, this produces fear in connection with it. I do not speak of care about that which is wrong, hut I speak of it in the largest possible sense. There is a care which it is right to have - a godly, proper, prayerful concern -which if we were devoid of, we should be simply like sticks or stones.

I speak now of that which becomes so settled in the soul that it is between us and God; and there is a mighty difference between having God, and my Father's interest between me and legitimate anxieties, if I may so speak, and having these anxieties between me and Him.

I do not know anything more destructive of true, real, spiritual growth in the soul than having cares resting upon me. If I have God between me and them, then they only become fresh links between me and God, fresh opportunities for me to lean on Him, new reasons for my turning to Him. It was somewhat in that sense that the Lord used that word when He said, "Pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Trial is a thing that comes sooner or later to us all; in one sense we are never truly proved till we have been under fire. The Lord's charge to His disciples was this, "Pray, that ye enter not into temptation"; that is, when the moment of trial comes, let it be an occasion for you to turn to God instead of turning away from Him.

Verse 30. "And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." Think of what that

is! He says, Do not trouble yourself; you do not need to let these things weigh down your heart. Oh, what a resource! "Your Father knoweth." He knows it all from beginning to end.

And yet while I delight to own the fact that He knows all, that He is conscious of the need of His child, let me point out a danger. I sometimes think, in our anxiety to meet our need with the supply there is in God, we are making our need the measure - I do not say of the supply, but of the affections of His heart. There is a tendency in us to do so. Never let us forget this that God has a father's heart, that there are feelings that are peculiar to Him as a father. He didn't want servants, He did want sons, it was His pleasure to have them; but I speak now of what is more intimate than sons - of children. There is a distinction between the term son and children. Let us illustrate it this way: you have all seen and heard of acts of benevolence; how the mighty of the earth, moved with compassion, have taken some poor, forlorn little creature, some little waif, and have brought it into their family, have educated it and given it all it was in their power to supply.

But all the power and all the love that person had could never make it his child. You might adopt him and make him a son, for that does not of necessity suppose a birthtie; but when we speak of children, we speak of that which must be by birth, and therefore it implies a much more intimate relationship to say that I am a child, than a son. I am both, blessed be God! And hence I can say, "See what love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God" (1 John 3:1;. N. Trans.), and also, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom. 8:14.

Do you think God acts the part of a patron to us? Never; it might suit us but it would not suit Him. What God does is this: He has children born of Him into His own family, with the nature of children given them from birth, and toward whom He delights to do a father's part.

While I fully own how graciously He knows and meets all our need, yet I remember that there are motives and springs in Him apart from every question of our need, but of which our need becomes the occasion of display.

It is amazing how few there are who walk in the knowledge of this relationship. I find there are comparatively few who live in the enjoyment of what God has brought them into. What a wonderful place it is! And yet we actually see those who are brought into all this, walking about with the very livery of anxiety on their countenances. Why, one would think it was all over with them, that there was no Father's hand behind the dark cloud, and no Father's loving care for them. And it is not a question of the way in which He meets our need, I am sure, whatever that may be; that is not the measure of what is in His heart. And yet many people think it is a wonderful thing to be able to say, "Oh, I can trust the Lord, and I know I shall not want." It is a blessed thing to know we shall not want - no question of it - but is it the highest thing God has for me? What is the highest thing He can do for me? My need or necessity cannot be the measure of it; we cannot measure it; the heart of God is its own measure. When I come to Him, I find the fullness of God. It is a wonderful thing to say you are born of God, and that in grace He stands to you in the relationship of Father, with all the feelings and affection of a father's heart toward you. What am I to do then? Put your hand in His and go on in patience.

What are cares? They are choking things that stunt the spiritual life in the soul; am I to allow them when there is all this love for me?

It is the Lord's object to keep me up; these would drag me down. And what is to keep me up? Not the question of the supply, not the question of the time that intervenes between the need and the supply, not the question even of when He will come in for me, but. the blessed fact that He knows; so you can leave time, ways, means, everything with Him.

But now for an instant let us look at the next point. He meets the question of care by the fact of our Father's knowledge of us (v. 32); He meets the question of fear by the fact that it is "your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." It is a little flock, for God's people are very few in number compared with the multitude outside. It is the "Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom"; that is, it is the Father's good pleasure to do a father's part. Is it not sweet to find

that this is the very same word that is used of Christ when the voice from heaven was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight." Matt. 3:17; N. Trans. It is His good pleasure to act a father's part to you, and to give you the kingdom; and the consciousness of

that takes away the fear.

So far, this affects us in that which is negative, but there is a positive side of truth. He says (v. 33), "sell that ye have." He says, Let things here go. Beloved friends are we up to that? Many would be glad to say, "Thank God, I needn't have any fear"; but are you willing to let things go? What I mean is simply this: that the sense of the goodness of His nature, that He, in suiting those feelings of His, so gratifies His own heart, that I want no more, and so I can afford to let things go.

But what if I were to lose everything? you say. Well, you would have the less to burden you. There is not a thing on this earth that does not entail trouble. Even the possession of lawful things - all brings trouble - that is the character of them all.

Remember, I am not speaking of things which are wrong in themselves, but of what is perfectly lawful. Take, for instance, the God-given relationships of life, as that of father, mother, husband, wife, sister, brother, child. All I can say is, They are God-given relationships, and the man that despises them, despises that which is of God.

But look, for instance, at a mother and her child - you see how she loves it, nurtures, cares for it - but is there any fear in her heart about it? Isn't she afraid she may lose it, that it may die? The best thing I see in this world, there is the moth and the thief to seize upon it. There is death, the thief that enters into every house, and no bars can keep him out. Well, if I have not any of these things, I have the less to promote anxiety and fear.

Or, to come down to what is a great deal lower than these - earthly possessions - the same thing holds good. Suppose you were to enlarge the circle of these blessings, to widen the area. Why, you would only have a wider target for death, moths, and thieves to shoot at.

How wonderful to have something that death cannot touch, something to attract and to hold my heart.

First of all, what is your treasure? I believe with all of us there is a great deal too much tendency to make Christ the servant of our need. I know He is that. I know He is the willing servant of our need, but too many are satisfied with that, and He is not the treasure of their soul. The question is, Where is your treasure? for where that is, there will your heart be also; it is that which must control all the affections.

I feel we are all glad to have heaven as a sort of relief from the storms and trials of the way, but alas, we know very little of it as our home, the home of our hearts.

We know it is a shelter from the things that distress us here; and when everything else is gone, then we turn our thoughts there. And that blessed One is ready to receive us even though we value Him only as a shelter from the storm. He never refuses any who come to Him. But He wants the affections of our hearts to be set on Himself.

He will not deny us, though we only come when everything has failed here. But it is another thing to say, like Ruth, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge:... Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." There should be an attractiveness about the Person of Christ to our hearts, that will lead us above everything, so that even when things are bright around us, we can say there is a

brighter thing still that holds all our affections: and this would flow from it -in place of being visitors there, and dwellers here, we would be visitors here, and dwellers there.

Verse 36. Here is the second aspect of preparedness of heart; This refers to Christ's coming. There is the sense of His absence; I don't think any of us feel the want of Christ's presence as an affliction to our hearts. I may feel the terrible nature of the world through which we are passing, but do I feel that He is absent? I know He is here in one sense, that is true; but I am not speaking of that now, but of the sense that He is not here, and that it is only His presence that can fill up the void His absence creates. And this will lead us to watch and wait - to watch for His coming every moment. Is there not a lamentable deficiency about us in this respect?

"And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord"; this is the proper demeanor of the Christian, so that the world might read in our very ways that we are strangers here, waiting for our absent Lord. The world does not understand this - it does not know doctrines - but the world can understand whether the people who hold these doctrines practice them or not.

Has the world seen this in us? I fear that we have given a poor testimony to it. I fear that the saints of God have not backed up the gospel as they should. The gospel is just as clear and distinct as it can possibly be, but here are people who profess to have believed it and owned it; and yet there is not the practical testimony which ought to flow from it.

It is a solemn thing to think that the poor world, that lies in the arms of the wicked one, can turn round and say, "I hear all this that you tell me, but I do not see it carried out in practice; in other words, I do not see those who look like men 'that wait for their Lord.' "

The Lord give us exercised consciences and hearts; may His own Word find such a place in our souls that we may arise and shake ourselves from the dust and soiling influences of the age, to meet and welcome Him who saith, "Surely I come quickly."

A Citizen or a Subject?

Some years ago a peer of England who had a chateau and an estate in France conceived the idea that as he lived a great deal of his time in that country he might as well be a citizen of it; but when he found that he could not be so without ceasing to be a citizen of England, he abandoned the thought, and contented himself with being a citizen of England, and a subject of France. This illustration vividly shows how believers stand with regard to heaven and earth; we are citizens of heaven, and only subjects in this place of our strangership and pilgrimage. "Receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved," we are calm amid all the strife of earthly politics, and the shaking of this world's kingdoms. Wherefore the believer who mixes himself up with the politics of the day belies his heavenly calling, denies his living association with the Father's dear Son in the glory of heaven, and is untrue to the principles of "His heavenly kingdom" and the heavenly politics of the future when the heavens shall rule, and the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is come (Rev. 11:15).

Communication With Departed Spirits? a Faithful Reply to One Who Inquired

As to people receiving replies from departed friends, we believe it to be the direct agency of wicked spirits, who are allowed of God, in His judicial dealings, to deceive those whose hearts are turned away from the teaching and authority of His Word and the ministry of His Holy Spirit. Luke 16:26 teaches us that none of those who die in their sins can come back; and as to those who sleep in Jesus, the teaching of the entire New Testament goes to prove that they would not come back to this earth to communicate with those who, not content with God's Word and Spirit, turn to demons in order to hear things which God never intended them to know. In short, we believe the whole thing to be an awful delusion and deceit of the devil; and we would most solemnly warn our readers to have nothing whatever to do with it. We cannot believe that anyone having the fear of God in his heart could have aught to do with such downright wickedness. It stands on the same platform with witchcraft, traffic with familiar spirits, and the heathen oracles. Let Christians beware how they tamper with the works of Satan!

Communion

Beloved reader, nothing can make up for the loss of communion, bear in mind; it can only be had when we are in the path of obedience, of separation from the world. If we are walking carelessly, gratifying the desires of the flesh instead of mortifying them - if we are mingled up with the world, not taking our place "outside the camp" - we may gain exemption from opposition and scorn in our various circles, but we will lose communion. How bitter an exchange!

In our folly we may think that by compromising a little, by accommodating ourselves to the ways of the unconverted around us, by being a little more like 'other people (as the expression is), we will secure for ourselves a smoother path; but ah, we do not so in reality.

No, rougher far is the unrough path "toward Sodom," without conscious companionship with Christ, without the sweetness of His smile of approval. Smoother far the unsmooth path of faithfulness to an absent Lord, of testimony against the world which has rejected and crucified Him, and which "lieth in wickedness," with the capacity to enter, in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, into His thoughts.

Oh the unutterable joy of this fellowship! May we know it all along our dreary desert journey, and then, when finished, we will go where there will be no possibility of aught ever marring it. What communion, what fellowship, will then be ours in unhindered fullness!

Comparative Values

A very wealthy man took a friend up to the top of his house to show him the extent of his possessions.

Waving his hand about, he said, "There, that is my estate." Then, pointing away, he asked, "Do you see that farm in the distance?" "Yes."

"Well, that is mine."

Pointing in another direction, he said, "Do you see that house?" "Yes."

"That also belongs to me.-

This time his friend pointed and asked, "Do you see that village away out there?"

"Yes."

"Well, there lives a poor woman in that village who can say more than all you have said."

"What can she say?"

"She can say, 'Christ is mine.' "

The rich man looked very puzzled, and said no more. He was glorying in his earthly riches but was not rich toward God. He was not one of those spoken of in James 2:5 who are rich in faith. On the contrary, the poor woman had none of this world's riches, but had "unsearchable riches" in Christ. His riches might take wings and fly away, but her riches in Christ are everlasting, and no thief can steal them.

"Thus saith the LORD, . . . Let not the rich man glory in his riches: hut let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Loan." Jer. 9:23, 24.

Counsel of the Ungodly

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." Psalm 1:1.

Don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly, young man. Let none of us walk in their counsel. That counsel is to pile up riches down here. God saved you; what for? Eternal glory. Did He leave you here to make money and see how much you could gain, or did He leave you here in order to have what the world calls a good time? He left you here as a witness for Christ, to be a testimony to Him.

Crucifixion

Crucifixion includes the thought of death, but death is not necessarily brought about by crucifixion. The Lord became obedient unto death, the death of the cross (Phil. 2:8). To say simply that He died would not have been, in His case, a full statement of the truth. He stooped so low as to die that death to which ignominy and shame were attached.

Death is the termination of that condition of existence in the body upon earth, which is called life. The cross was a judicial way of accomplishing it. Hence, in the eyes of men it was no honor, but the contrary, to be crucified. Men can admire one who dies as a hero, or as a martyr to his convictions, but in the eyes of the world, no glory can attach to one who is crucified. So the preaching of Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness (1 Cor. 1:23). The Jew could neither understand nor accept a crucified Messiah, unless God touched his heart. A crucified Christ as his Savior, the Greek regarded as foolishness. To have heard of one who had died might have affected him differently, but to be told that He had been executed on the cross, was sufficient to make him, unless his conscience was reached, treat the tidings of the Apostle with supreme contempt.

Again, according to the teaching of the law, death by crucifixion made the one subjected to it accursed of God - "He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21:23). Men might burn sweet odors for some who died, but who would so act for the one who had been in this manner put to death? It was by His death upon the cross that Christ redeemed from the curse of the law those who were under it, being made a curse for them (Gal. 3:13). The manner then of His death had an important meaning for one who understood about the law, and was under its curse by virtue of his infractions of it.

But not only was the Lord crucified, submitting thereby to the death of shame and ignominy, redeeming by that those who were under the law from its curse (as many of them as believed on Him) but other purposes were accomplished by that manner of His death - purposes of great importance as regards us. Our old man was crucified by God with Christ (Rom. 6:6); and by the cross of Christ, the world is to be crucified to us, and we unto the world (Gal. 6:14). Thus in both these cases crucifixion is dwelt on, not simply death. And why? Because since crucifixion was a judicial dealing with the one placed on the cross, we are to understand that our old man has been judicially dealt with by God, that the body of sin might be annulled, that henceforth we should not serve sin; and that the world

is to be regarded by us as judicially dealt with for us, and we for it. See also Gal. 5:24. Substitute death in such places for the cross, and we should lose the force of the teaching intended to be conveyed. Regard the cross as simply a lingering death, and you lose the truth of the passage. Keep clear in the mind that the cross was a judicial manner of dealing with the one subjected to it, and the bearing of the instruction is made plain. '

Decision With Lowliness

There is no greater danger than forgetting the spirit that becomes those to whom God has shown His mercy in giving true understanding of what suits Him in the actual and broken state of Christendom. Is it not one of the things we need most to look to that the tone in which we use the truth should be becoming? The more we learn of God, the more we should cultivate lowliness of mind. This does not imply that you should have indecision in your convictions, but that along with this you have a just sense of your own weakness, and that you are broken in spirit, remembering how the glory of the Lord has suffered by the failure of His people.

Deliverance From the Power of Sin

This chapter may be justly called the chapter of the New Testament that shows how God has delivered us from what we were as children of Adam, from sin - the sinful nature that is in us - and shows us too the real power for holiness of life and walk down here. The question of holiness is one raised on all sides today, and the fact that sin has power over them, instead of their having power over it, is what troubles many Christians. There are thousands of the Lord's people who are in that difficulty. But it is a remarkable thing that those who talk so much about holiness, and their difficulties as to it, often overlook what is to be found in this important chapter.

God will deliver us from sin and all its consequences when we are in glory; but there is also deliverance from its power now, although we still have it in us.

The word "holiness" is twice mentioned in this chapter, in verses 19 and 22, both of which speak of practical holiness of walk while in this world. It will help greatly to the understanding of the chapter to notice that its main truth is set forth in three consecutive verses - 10, 11, and 12. I will first take them up as a whole, and afterward speak of them more in detail.

Verse 10 is what is true of Christ alone. In verse 11 the Spirit of God says, so to speak, "What is true of Him is true of you, because He took your place before God on the cross; and faith believes this. Verse 12 is, "Carry it out in practice." We first get what is true of Christ. When the Spirit of God wants to teach us something about ourselves, He speaks of Christ first, then says that "what is true of Him is equally true of you," and ends with, "Now carry it out." "Likewise" in verse 11 is very significant. Likewise; that is, in the same way as Christ. Christ died unto sin once; likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin. Christ is now alive unto God; likewise reckon ye yourselves to be alive unto God.

In verse 12 we get another word which is full of meaning-"therefore" - that is a conclusion

drawn from what goes before. This verse implies two things: first, that the sin is in our mortal bodies; second, that instead of it having power over us, we have power over it. If I say to a man, "Don't let that child come into the room," I imply that he has the power to keep him out. So when God says, "Let not sin... reign," it implies that you have the power to carry it out.

This chapter unfolds the way of deliverance from the power of sin now, while we are down here in the body - "the end everlasting life" (v. 22). The end is coming by-and-by - the end of all exercises of soul, and trials and troubles. Precious thought! But let me now take up these verses a little more in detail.

In verse 10, is what is true of Christ only: "In that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." I am quite sure that numbers of the Lord's people read this verse as if it said "died for sin." But it is not so. What, however, does it mean when it says He "died unto sin once"? We will just look at one or two scriptures that might help us, as it is very important to the understanding of the next verse, that we should catch its meaning. "He [that is, God] bath made

Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." 2 Cor. 5:21. What a wonderful truth! I could not attempt to explain it, and I suppose we shall not fully comprehend it throughout eternity. He was not made sin in His life when He trod the earth in spotless purity. He was not made sin in the garden of Gethsemane when He prayed to the Father in such an agony that He sweat as it were great drops of blood. It was not then, but on the cross, when He hung there and was forsaken of God, that He was made sin. What passed between God and His Son during those three hours of darkness we are not told; but at the close that cry was heard, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But Scripture is totally silent as to what took place during those hours when darkness covered all the land. God drew a veil over the scene. Ah! dear friends, just think of it; God made Him to be sin for me (speaking individually), because nothing else would fit me for His presence in glory.

Have you ever noticed the difference between this verse in Corinthians, and 1 Pet. 2:24? "Who His own self bare our sins in His

own body on the tree." There, you see, it is the sins - actual offenses committed. In 2 Cor. 5:21, He was made sin; that is different. It is important to see that the Lord Jesus was not only there to bear our sins, but all the depth of our evil, sinful nature - sin, root and branch - all came out before God then. He was made sin for us, who knew no sin.

The next scripture I will ask you to look at is Rom. 8:3. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." That expression, "sin in the flesh," means sin in our flesh, as children of Adam. The evil of our nature not only came out before God, but was judged and condemned there and then. God there saw an end of it. This verse is blessed: "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." It is not a mere, bare doctrine. Think of God's Son going under all the waves and billows of God's judgment! "God sending His own Son." Why does it say "own"? It reminds us of the love that He has to the beloved Son. Think how He loved His Son; or, as the Lord Jesus in Mark 12:6 speaks of it (let us turn to the passage), "Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved." He had only one Son. We know how fond parents are of an only son. That does not express all. He must add something - "His well-beloved." So in Rom. 8:3 it is not dry doctrine, but a question of God's heart of love. The Spirit reminds us of it, so to speak. Just think of it! And then think of that God who "sent Him," "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"; and then think of that beloved Son "made... sin for us." When He was on the cross, sin in the flesh was judged and condemned. He alone could sustain that awful weight, and not be crushed under it. He did sustain it. He said, "It is finished." Let us turn to the chapter. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." John 19:30. Those who understand the Greek language say that the word for "gave up the ghost" means that He gave up the ghost by the action of His own will. He laid down His life, we know. He had "power to lay it down" (John 10:18).

Now in verse 10 of Rom. 6, "He died unto sin once." The death of the Lord Jesus was the death of One who had undergone the judgment of God against sin, and had died to it. He died to sin; has done with it forever. He is never going to come in contact with it again in that way for all eternity.

The illustration given in verse 16 of Rom. 6 will help us to understand the application of this to us. It speaks of sin being a master, and we its slaves. However tyrannical a master may be, a slave cannot get rid of him by giving notice to leave, like our servants can. However hard a master he

may have, he is bound to him for life. But the time comes when that slave reaches a deathbed, and now he slips out of his master's grasp, out of that state and condition in which he was a slave; he dies to his master.

"In that He died, He died unto sin once." He has done with it forever. But have you ever seen that you are as clear as He is in God's sight? You do not question for a moment whether He is clear of it, but do you question whether you are free of it? "If I am dead to sin, why should I feel this working of sin in me?'" Many think that verse 11 means, "Carry this truth into practice"; but it is rather that faith accepts what is true of me in God's sight, and believes what God says. And thus we can reckon ourselves to be dead unto sin, because in God's sight we are so. What foolishness it would be for me to say to you, Reckon yourself to be the king of some certain country. Why? Because it is not true of you. But in God's sight we have as much died to sin as that blessed One has, and thus God can say to us, You may reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin.

I purposely did not quote just now the latter part of verse 10 - "In that He liveth, He liveth unto God" - because I wish to look at it separately in connection with verse 11. When John was in the isle of Patmos, and saw One like unto the Son of man, he fell at His feet. And He laid His right hand upon him. How would you feel to have the right hand of that living, glorified Christ laid upon you? He said to John, "Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one: and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages." Rev. 1:17, 18; N. Trans. He is the living One. "In that He liveth, He liveth unto God." It is not simply that He is alive. I cannot explain it, but I suppose that Christ as alive from the dead need never be occupied with sin again, or come in contact with it as the sin-bearer. He is free from death, judgment, and sin forever.

Now comes our side of it. You may count that you live to God in the same way. Have you ever done that? It is just as much an exhortation to reckon ourselves to be alive unto God as to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin. And in God's sight, as in Christ, we are as much delivered from sin as we shall actually be delivered from it when we shall be in glory. We have nothing about practice in this verse. It is faith that believes what God says about me. God says, as it were, "I have given Christ; He has died to sin; so have you. He is alive to God; so are you." As to a matter of fact, for a time, just for a little while, sin is in you still, but it is not for long.

Verse 12 - "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." Now as I said before, that verse proves first that sin is there; but it says also that you need not obey it. Do not pay any attention to what it says; you need not obey it. See what a power that gives us - that we have done with it as much as Christ has. I have only got it in me for a short time while I am in this body, but I have not to obey it any more than the slave of whom I have spoken, if he were to be raised, would have to obey his old master. "No," he could say, "I have died out of your hands, and am beyond your control." The old master has no power to tell you to do anything. I can say, "I shall not pay any more attention to what he says now; he has no right over me."

There is one more thing. Not only do not obey him, but do not let sin, that old master, have the members of your body as instruments to use. You used to use them in the service of sin; but now they are no longer to be used in the service of sin; they are to be used as instruments of righteousness unto God. The eyes, feet, hands, and the tongue - these are the members of our body. Ah! the tongue. You remember what we read in Jas. 3:5 about the tongue: "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things." And verse 6 too. Oh, how solemn! This is

one of the members we are not to let sin have. So in verse 2, "In many things we offend all. If any man

offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." I picked out this verse because the Spirit of God says that if you will not let sin have your tongue, you will be able to govern or bridle your whole body! How much the tongue can do! We often say things we are sorry for afterward. What mischief the tongue can cause! Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God. Sin may come in, and try to usurp a claim over them, but do not let it.

I would just refer to one more verse in the end of the chapter (v. 21) - "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" But in verse 22, "Now" - what have you got now that ye are "become servants to God"? "Your fruit unto holiness, and the end" (there's the end you see) - "the end everlasting life." Instead of death, the wages of sin, when that bright and blessed end comes, for us it is "everlasting life." Then we shall not only be delivered from the power of sin but from its presence too.

But God looks at every believer as in Christ, as much delivered from sin now as we shall be in glory.

God grant that we may not give our members any more to the service of sin, but to His service who has done so much for us. Amen.

Doctrinal Definitions

PURCHASE means that Christ's blood or death has bought the world, and all that are in it, to Himself and to God. (See Matt. 13:44; 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Heb. 2:9; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3.) But there is this difference, that the believer owns the purchase, the unbeliever disowns it, and denies Him who purchased all by His blood.

REDEMPTION is by power founded on the shed blood of the Lamb, as we see in Exod. 12-14. By the resurrection of Christ the Christian now knows this for his sin; that is, for his soul, and will know it for his body when Christ comes again, who will make it good for Israel in the day of manifestation.

RECONCILIATION is the bringing back to God what had been severed by sin, and this is applied to both persons and things, as we see typically in Lev. 16 - doctrinally in Col. 1

ATONEMENT consists of the two parts, united for us in the bullock, analyzed for Israel in the two goats of Lev. 16, which set forth Jehovah's part in propitiation - the people's in substitution.

JUSTIFICATION means that the believer in Jesus, though in himself ungodly, and confessedly so, is accounted righteous with God by virtue of the work of Christ, the full measure of which is Christ risen from the dead (1 Cor. 1, and 2 Cor. 5).

FORGIVENESS is the remission of the sins of those who believe in Jesus through faith in His blood; not their pretermission merely, as of old, but their remission (Rom. 3).

SANCTIFICATION of the Spirit is the setting apart to God of all that are born of God, to obey as Christ obeyed, and the sprinkling of His blood (1 Pet. 1); and this personal or absolute sanctification is followed up by practical sanctification in the measure of their faith, and therefore relative; it should also be progressive. There is also a position of sanctification by blood in Heb. 10 which might not be vital, and hence be lost.

ADOPTION in the Christian sense is the sonship which the believer receives as his new relation to God through faith in Christ Jesus.

PERFECTION means that full growth which is the characteristic of the Christian who goes on from the elements of truth in Christ after the flesh to Him, dead and risen and ascended to heaven, and our place in Him.

GLORIFICATION means the application to our bodies of that power of Christ risen, which will conform us completely to His image in glory (Rom. 8; Phil. 3).

REGENERATION goes beyond "new birth" in John 3, which is a change purely subjective, and was always true of saints since the fall, where as the Greek word paliggenesia is objective and imperfect: that change of place only which enables one to say, "I am in Christ a new creation, old things have passed away; behold all things are become new."

Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani: Where I Found Peace

"Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani" Mark 15:34

For myself - I speak as a man - I never found peace before God, or conscious rest with Him, until I was taught the force and meaning of that cry of Jesus of Nazareth - "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." Never until I understood that He who knew no sin had (then and there on the cross) been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, could I rest as a sinner in the presence of a holy God. And, as I suppose, it is owing to the distinctive peculiarity of that - His sorrow under the wrath of God - not being understood, that so many Christians have no settled peace at all.

The questions of sin and of guilt have never been met in their consciences. The incarnation is amazing and beautiful. That the eternal Son of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, should have become a babe and been laid in a manger of an inn! The contrast between the glory He came out of and the place man assigned to Him, is a contrast! God and heaven could express their delight over Him, then and there, as well as feel it (Luke 2: 8-14). But the bearing of our sins in His own body was not in the cradle but on the cross, and on the cross alone.

The flight into Egypt, the return and settling at Nazareth of the Child, the Youth in the temple and in returning from Jerusalem, the hidden retirement of His early manhood - all is beautiful, each in its place, but none present us with Him as in the act of bearing our sins. Again, when we look at Him (when He voluntarily identified Himself with those that owned their need of repentance, confessing their sins) at His baptism, in His service and ministries, all, and each part of all, 'is beautiful and perfect; but, if heaven could approve Him in each step, heaven too could give its avowals of approval to Him. Yet He stood not as sin-bearer under the judgment at any of these periods.

Again, what a contrast! and who ever felt it as He felt it, between Himself as the seed of the woman, and the race of man to whom He had come. What a contrast between Himself personally and individually, and the House of Israel, His own, among whom He had come. Himself, not only God manifest in the flesh, but that holy thing that was born of the virgin - holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, apart from sin - and yet voluntarily amid sinful men and guilty Israel, the immaculate seed of the woman, the King of Israel in His holiness. This brought with it sorrows. So, when He had entered upon service, did the constant persecution for righteousness which He endured, and the consciousness that there was none that could sympathize with Him, and that fallen men welcomed not the mercy of which He was the messenger - sorrows He had to endure at the hand of the world and man, but even that was not forsaking of God. But in none of these parts, nor in the being straitened when His soul turned to His coming baptism, nor when, in the garden, His soul passed into the scenes which then lay immediately before Him, was there (any more than anywhere else) that which there was when He cried out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." Here too He was perfect; forsaken of God, He would

not, did not, forsake God. Never did God or heaven see perfection shine out of Him as then and there when His obedience was at the goal-"Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." But if heaven found its delight in His submission under forsaking, for the sake of others (for it was the revelation of God as the Saviour-God) there was, there could be (just because it was forsaking for sin, our sin, which He had to endure) no expression of approval, nothing but forsaking. "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

I do not see how a sinner can find rest until he has learned somewhat of that which is distinctly peculiar to Calvary, learned that then and there there was a cup drunk by the Lord in obedient submission to God - cup of wrath due to us only, undergone by Christ at Calvary. The only spot I turn to when in conscience the question is about sin or guilt, or sins (of the human family, of myself as an individual, etc.), is Calvary, and to the Lord there, crying out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani."

He bore my judgment in my stead then and there in His own body on the tree, in the presence of God, and received the woe of wrath and forsaking at the hand of God. And there is my quittance, clear, and full, and complete - but there alone.

The experience of His soul when He said, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" was altogether peculiar and distinct from that which He had to endure and experience at any other time whatsoever. In that suffering of His, as forsaken, I get the measure and the judgment of my sin against God.

Enjoyment

We must be careful not to confound what is exclusively God's work with what is our responsibility.

It is God the Holy Spirit who leads us into enjoyment; our responsibility is to see that we do not grieve Him (Eph. 4:30).

Every Christian, whether a babe, a young man, or a father (1 John 2:13), has the blessed privilege of communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; there is nothing higher, and it is fullness of joy (1 John 1:4).

It cannot, however, be expected that a babe should have such deep communion as a father; but he may have fullness of joy, and in time he may grow up to be (1 John 1:4) a father - not by making his growth an object, but by feeding on Christ he grows (John 6:48, 57).

The moment enjoyment is pressed, as an object, Christ, the true object, is displaced.

The prayer of the Apostle (Eph. 3:14-21) was that God might so work in the saints, that they might be filled to all the fullness of God. Well may we say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who has taken up such as we are to fill us with His fullness, and display in the ages to come, the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us by Christ Jesus.

Do not grieve that Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30); then you will have fullness of joy, not by making joy an object, but Christ, who is everything, and in all (Col. 3:1; 1).

The Enjoyment of Heavenly Things: in the Wilderness

Redemption, complete salvation, purchased by the precious blood of Jesus, introduces the Christian into pilgrimage in the wilderness. With God he only passes through the world as a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; still, this pilgrimage is but the life down here, although it is the life of the redeemed. (To this the epistle to the Romans answers.)

But, there is the heavenly life, the warfare in the heavenly places, which goes on at the same time with the wilderness journey. When I say at the same time, I do not mean at the same instant, but during the same period of our natural life on the earth. It is one thing to pass through this world faithfully, or unfaithfully, in our daily circumstances, under the influence of a better hope; it is another thing to be waging a spiritual warfare for the enjoyment of the promises and of heavenly privileges, and to conquer the power of Satan on God's behalf, as men already dead and risen, as being absolutely not of the world. Both these things are true of the Christian life. Now, it is as dead and risen again in Christ that we are in spiritual conflict; to make war in Canaan we must have crossed the Jordan. To this Ephesians answers, only Ephesians has nothing to do with our death to sin. It is, as to this question, simply God's act, taking us when dead in sin and placing us in Christ on high. Colossians is partially both. It is life here in resurrection, but it does not set us in heavenly places - only our affections there. By heavenly life I mean living in spirit in heavenly places. Actually Christ was divinely there - we are united to Him by the Holy Ghost....

In both Philippians and Colossians the heavenly life is spoken of as a present thing; but there is entire separation, even down here, between the pilgrimage and this heavenly life itself, although the latter has a powerful influence on the character of our pilgrim life.

Enoch

What was true of Enoch before he was translated? "He had this testimony, that he pleased God." Heb. 11:5. What does that mean? He had the consciousness in his own soul that he was doing that which was pleasing to God. Do we not all desire that? Let us ask ourselves, Is God pleased with my daily walk and conversation? This testimony that Enoch had is worth very much.

Ephesians and Colossians: Comparison Between Two Epistles

These epistles both treat of the Church united to Christ, as being His body. But the epistle to the Colossians goes rather to unfold the perfection of the Head than to show the privileges of the body, while the epistle to the Ephesians does the reverse. The Ephesians being well grounded in faith and holding fast the truth of their union with Christ, the Holy Ghost could unfold to them the great privileges derived from that union. The Colossians, on the contrary, needed to be established in the faith and to be shown Christ in His fullness, Head of the Church. Thus the two subjects are complete, and present at once to us both the perfection of the Head, and the privileges of the body.

In the epistle to the Ephesians the Church, being in a good state, is seen on high in its position in 97

Christ, and from there looking down contemplates what God is doing and going to do. In Colossians Paul shows rather what is on high, directs the Christian's gaze upward, showing him the perfection of Christ, and the hope which is reserved for him in heaven. This position of the Christian awaiting the heavenly glory resembles a little that given him in the course where we see him pressing toward the mark. In this respect the subject of the Colossians approaches that of the Philippians. The two aspects of the Christian's position explains another difference remarked between Ephesians and Colossians.

In one Paul says, Christ shall appear; in the other he does not speak of His return. The Ephesians are seen as being already on high.

Son of the Father hail! Son of God eternal!

Jesus, the sinner's Friend, whose favor knows no end;

Love made Thee condescend, with man to make abode,

And through Thy precious blood, we're now brought nigh to God.

Thee, Savior-Lord we bless - our Lord Jesus!

Full of truth and power; Highly-blessed,

Blessed, evermore!

Eternal Punishment

I often recall a good saying of the quondam infidel, Thomas Cooper: "When the belief of eternal punishment is given up, then the eternal demerit of sin has faded from a man's conscience; and what consistency can he see in the doctrine of Christ's atonement?"

That is, I think, a most pregnant statement. He connects sin, atonement, and punishment, and views them in the eternity of their co-relations, so that what is true of one is true of all. If sin be a trifle, then so is atonement, and therefore also punishment. But if sin be what Scripture says, and to which a groaning creation of 6000 years of sorrow bears awful witness, then punishment is infinite, as also the value of the atoning sacrifice. Sin and the sin offering are necessary antitheses of one another, and the offering must balance the sin. Thank God He has done so! Oh, may we humbly, but firmly, hold the eternal worth of that sacrifice, and measure all else by Him! "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Fifty Years in the Light of Scripture

With the advent of New Year's day 1951 comes the halfway mark in the great 20th century - a suitable time to glance back over fifty years of unparalleled progress, to appraise them in the light of the Holy Scriptures, and then to look ahead and see what will probably take place before the century closes.

The history of the first half of the century is one of accomplishment, of success, of conquest, and of triumph by man in almost every field of endeavor. In that fifty years all of the world's millions of automobiles have been built, transforming the lives and habits of people in many nations; the airplane has been invented and developed until there is scarcely a spot on the earth where it has not been seen, and its speed has increased until it has outdistanced the speed of sound; radio has come in as an infant and grown to maturity; television has followed in its train; electricity has been made available to many millions of people to illuminate their homes and lighten their labors; highways, dams, skyscrapers, and structures of all kinds have been multiplied. Science of every kind has made strides, and technical skills have been brought into use to produce for mankind mechanical slaves too numerous to mention. The fields of medicine and surgery have added their triumphs to the amazing story of five decades. In short, there has never been another half century in man's history that has seen such startling development and progress. Does it not remind us of the words of Gen. 11, "and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do"?

We who are Christians daily use many of the modern conveniences developed in this short span, and we can do so thankfully as taking them from God. We can use the world while not treating it as though it were our own (1 Cor. 7:31, N. Trans.), and we should discern what can be used for His glory and what cannot; for instance, we very much doubt that there can be a legitimate use for television in any Christian's home, for it will only bring the world in its many forms right into the home; it will surely impoverish the soul; it will be as "the melons, and the leeks, and the onions" of Egypt were to the Israelites, for it will certainly spoil the appetite for Christ, the true manna. There are many other things the use of which requires discriminating discernment by us who live in the age of man's greatest achievements.

And shall we applaud man and his ability to harness and use the elements, as though he were omnipotent? as though by an acquired mental capacity he were able to comprehend all things? No indeed, for what ability he has comes from his Creator. Does he thank the Creator for his intelligence? Does he not rather take credit for it as though he had not received it? There is great danger of deifying man in reviewing his accomplishments, rather than glorifying the God who made him and who made all things for man to use.

Then we need to reflect soberly on this also: Has man's increased wisdom brought him closer to God? Does the world by wisdom know God better than it did fifty years ago? Alas, alas, it is not so! the very reverse is true. The creature has used all his progress to exalt himself more than his "Creator, who is blessed forever." The world with all its wisdom in 1951, knows less of God than it

did in 1901. Infidelity characterizes institutions of higher learning; in fact it is now almost so in the primary schools. And in professing Christendom the same retrogression is evident. In the beginning of the 20th century a modernist in the pulpit was a marked man, but by the middle of the century the preacher who accepts the Bible as the Word of God, and honestly believes all it contains, is the marked man - he is a rarity, accounted to be a relic from the dark ages.

And what shall we say of all the wonderful inventions that relieve the drudgery of work? Have people availed themselves of more leisure to seek after God? or has the god of this world, Satan, used these things to give people more time for the pleasures of this world? The answer may be daily seen in any city. Is not the divine prophecy of the last days true, that men are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"? (2 Tim. 3:4, N. Trans.) Yes, verily! So if we consider all these developments in the light of what they have done to men's souls, we must admit that they have done real damage, for "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Then there is another sad reflection: all of man's great inventions and discoveries have been turned to the account of making war. If he boasts of what he has accomplished he may well hang his head in shame to think that the ultimate of all has been the art of destroying his fellow man and, in so doing, always destroying much of what he has made for man to use.

We were a part of this same race that does not seek after God. It is only His sovereign grace that has picked us up and given us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, to believe His Word, and to be able to look back on all the works of man and view them in some little measure as He Himself sees them. Well did the prophet say, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. 2:22.

When we look at the history of the nations in this same short span of time, we see event after event crowded into its pages. The only two world-wide wars of all time occurred in this period the first one was dreadful, and the second far worse. Nations have been conquered and reconquered; governments have been overthrown, and thrones removed. Great empires have disappeared, and others have been reduced. Communism which was little more than a textbook theory at the turn of the century has captured the imaginations of so many minds that today perhaps 700,000,000 people are governed by it. A Jewish state in Palestine was only a Zionist's dream in 1901, but today it really exists.

Now as the last half of the century begins, the storm clouds thicken over the world. The probability of a third world war is mentioned on all sides. Fear and dread seize men at the very thought of the awfulness of the weapons of destruction being produced. What then seems to be in store? Trouble and more trouble. Man cannot cast out God's Son, the Prince of Peace, live without Him, and yet have peace.

But we who are Christians do not need to anticipate the next fifty years; the coming of the Lord may take place at any moment. It is imminent. Everything points to it, and He Himself has promised to come for us. There is not a single world development that must necessarily precede His coming. In fact, the signs of those things that are to take place after we are gone are already showing themselves. There is a nation of Israel in Palestine ready to accept the antichrist; the nations of Western Europe are coming closer and closer to the formation of the ten nation confederacy of the revived Roman Empire; the nations of the Americas, being descendants of the

peoples of the Roman Empire, are being aligned to back this European merger; Egypt is ready to play her destined role as the "king of the south"; the Moslem world is just waiting for their occult leader who will unite them, become the "king of the north," and oppose Israel; Russia's avarice is forcing all the other nations into the pattern of "the time of the end."

So the latter part of this century of man's greatest achievements seems destined to be the last years of "man's day," and of Gentile supremacy. The coining of the Lord for the Church is at hand; the great tribulation with all its horrors will follow; and then Christ as the Son of man will return in power and great glory to make His enemies His footstool. He will come to rule all nations with a rod of iron, put down all unrighteousness, and bring in His glorious reign, often spoken of as the Millennium. May the realization of the fact that we are at the very end of this dispensation stir our hearts.

We believe that the fifty years into which we have now entered will most probably carry us beyond the rapture (1 Thess. 4:15-17), beyond the tribulation (Matt. 24:21), beyond the destruction of the beast and his armies (Rev. 19:11, 20), beyond the overthrow of the "king of the north" (Dan. 11:45), beyond the doom of Russia and her satellites (Eze. 38 and 39), beyond the division of the sheep and goats of the nations on earth (Matt. 25:31-46), beyond Israel's rebuke and humiliation (Isa. 25:8), beyond their regathering (Rom. 11:2, 15), beyond the suffering time of the whole animate creation (Rom. 8:19-22). How this should cheer our hearts! How it should spur us onward in faithfulness to the Lord the few Says that remain!

" 'Tis Thy heavenly bride and Spirit Jesus, Lord, that bid Thee come, All the glory to inherit,

And to take Thy people home. All creation

Travails, groans, till Thou shalt come.

"Yea, Amen, let all adore Thee,

High on Thine exalted throne: Savior,

take the power and glory;

Claim the kingdoms for Thine Own.

Come, Lord Jesus, Halleluia! come, Lord, come!"

Forever With the Lord: From an Old Letter

I think I have had my mind more occupied of late than ever with the subject which your letter suggests - the being with the Lord. I am sure it is deeper, happier, fuller acquaintance with Himself that our hearts need; and then we should long, and desire, and pant after Him in such ways as nothing but His presence could satisfy. I know souls in this state; and yet it is not knowledge that gives it to them, but personal acquaintance with the blessed Savior, through the Holy Ghost.

I alighted, as by chance, the other day on some fervent thoughts of an old writer in connection with this dear and precious subject. In substance they were as follows, and almost so in terms, only I have somewhat condensed them. "It is strange that we who have such continual use of God, and His bounties and mercies, and are so perpetually beholden to Him, should, after all, be so little acquainted with Him. And from hence it comes that we are so loath to think of our dissolution and of our going to God. For naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome. We would rather spend our money at an inn than turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host; whereas to an entire friend with whom we have elsewhere familiarly conversed we go as boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such a one. I will not live upon God and His daily bounties without His acquaintance."

Beautiful utterance this is. It expresses a character of mind which, in this day of busy inquiry after knowledge, we all need - personal longings after Christ. May the blessed Spirit in us give that direction to our hearts! It is a hard lesson for some of us to learn to reach enjoyments which lie beyond and above provisions of nature. We are still prone to know Christ Himself "after the flesh," and to desire to find Him in the midst of the relations and circumstances of human life, and there only.

But this is not our calling; this is not the risen, heavenly life. It is hard to get beyond this, I know, but our calling calls us beyond it. We like the home, and the respect, and the security, and all the delights of our human relationships and circumstances, and would have Christ in the midst of them; but to know Him, and to have Him in such a way as tells us that He is a stranger on earth, and that we are to be strangers with Him, "this is a hard saying" to our poor fond hearts.

In John's gospel, I may say, among other things, the Lord sets Himself to teach us this lesson.

The disciples were sorry at the thought of losing Him in the flesh, losing Him as in their daily walk-and conversation with Him. But He lets them know that it was expedient for them that they should lose Him in that character, in order that they might know Him through the Holy Ghost, and ere long be with Him in heavenly places (chap. 16).

And this is again perceived in chapter 20. Mary Magdalene would have known the Lord again as she had already known Him; but this must not be; this must be denied her. "Touch Me not," the Lord says to her. This was painful, but it was expedient - good for her then (just as it had been already good for the disciples in chapter 16) to know that she was to lose Christ in the flesh. For Mary is now taught that she was to have fellowship with Him in the more blessed place of His

ascension.

So the company at Jerusalem in the same chapter. "Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." But this gladness was human. It was the joy of having recovered, as they judged, the One whom they had lost, Christ in the flesh. But their Lord at once calls them away from that communion and knowledge of Him to the peace which His death had now made for them, and the life which His resurrection had now gained for them.

All this is healthful for souls to ponder, for we are prone to be satisfied with another order of things. The sorrow that filled the hearts of the disciples at the thought of their Lord going away - the "Rabboni" of Mary Magdalene - the disciples being "glad, when they saw the Lord" - show the disposedness of the heart to remain with Christ in the midst of human relationship and circumstances, and not to go with a risen Christ to heavenly places.

How slow some of us are to learn this. And yet our readiness of heart to learn it and to practice it is very much the measure of our readiness and desire to depart and be with Christ.

But all this I say to you as one that suggests a thought. Would that it were the experience of the soul! But I desire to have it so.

Fortified With Truth

We need individually to be fortified with truth. If we have not the truth we may be made the sport of Satan tomorrow. I will give you an instance of it. The Galatians were an earnest, excited people; they would have plucked out their eyes for the Apostle. But the day came when he had to begin afresh with them from the very beginning: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." There was excitement without a foundation of truth, and when unbelief came in, the poor Galatians were next door to shipwreck; and the epistle to the Hebrews is a witness to the same thing. The Hebrew saints were unskillful in the Word. But we must be fortified by truth. A state of quickening needs the strengthening of the Word of God.

Four Prayers in Scripture

Deut. 3:24; 1 Kings 19 Cor. 12; Matt. 26.

These four scriptures set before us four characteristic prayers. We must look at them in three ways - the first two together, then the third, then the fourth. The hardest lesson for us to learn, I suppose, is "that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing." "The flesh profiteth nothing." In three of the four passages (putting the fourth in contrast) we have prayers from the hearts of men in deep exercise connected more or less with this evil principle within us.

At the end of Moses's history, after he had led the children of Israel for forty years, during which he had loved them, borne with them in all their crooked ways, and sought to shelter them, and pleaded for them in the character of divine love, we find him at last coming out as at the beginning. He came out then truly in faith to be the deliverer of God's people, but it was in the enemy of nature. For forty years God took him aside to discipline and train him, and then he led the people for forty years; and at the end of this time, eighty years altogether, the very thing that came out at the beginning was manifested in a still more terrible way. It is good for us to look at it, for this thing is what you and I have in us, and it cannot be improved.

The more we go on with the Lord, the more terrible the allowance of the flesh becomes, because God has linked His glory with us in a very distinct way. It is more terrible in us than in Moses. As you find in Psalm 106, at the end of the journey the people chode with him, and "he spake unadvisedly with his lips." For that one failure -the only one - his way into the land was barred. And now, when speaking of it to the people, we find how deeply he felt it. The possession God had given to the people was dear to him because it was God's own gift to Israel; he desired to go into the land. But his failure shut him out - his allowance of the principle opposed to God, that which is in you and me. It can't be changed; it is the same from the beginning to the end. This is intensely solemn. It appeared a little thing, but barred Moses's entrance into the land because it was worse at the end, for God's glory was more distinctly linked with His people. Moses was bound to give a true expression of God's character, but he failed to sanctify God in the eyes of His people.

God has left us down here too for this purpose. He has set us in the world and linked His glory with us, as we read in John 17, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "Even so have I also sent them into the world." Sent into the world, even as He was, to be the true expression of God's character here - not only to have God's word in testimony, but to present the character of God to man.

Moses failed in this; but though he failed to give a true presentation of God to His people, God nevertheless took care of His own name and glory. But this does not set you and me free from responsibility. He was sanctified in the eyes of the people, but Moses's allowance of the flesh shut him out and brought down the hand of God in government. Having brought us so close to Himself, and because He is holy, it is on that very ground He deals with us. There are His grace and His government, and we are the subjects of both.

God dealt with Moses and shut him out of the land, but He felt for His poor servant. He said, as it were, You can't go in, Moses; your failure has shut you out. But I will show it to you. So God took him to Mount Pisgah and showed him all the land. God's grace came out there. He sympathized with His servant, and showed him the whole extent of the land, and then He put His servant to sleep. "He buried him in a valley." There was no funeral like that anywhere else. In the epistle of Jude you read of the archangel Michael contending about the body of Moses. This was the occasion, I suppose, when he did so. God buried His servant, doubtless, by angelic hands. What wonderful grace! What wonderful faithfulness!

But let us apply it to ourselves. Unless we keep the old nature in the place of death, we falsify God's character in the eyes of man. As a consequence of failure in this, Moses prayed, "Let me go over," but God answered, "Let it suffice thee."

In our second passage (1 Kings 19) we have another kind of prayer from another burdened heart. Elijah says, "Take away my life."

He was a wonderful man of faith standing isolated and alone amid that company of idolatrous priests. By divine power he stood - a wonderful scene - one solitary man standing for God in the face of the enemies of God, where the full power of evil was manifested. (1 Kings 18.) Was it possible for a man to stand firm amid such circumstances, knowing that there was not another to stand for God in Israel save him? Yes; but the next chapter shows us the same man under quite different conditions. He had gone on in the testimony, but without maintaining the secret of communion. The moment that the words of our lips are beyond our spiritual condition, we are in the place of danger.

There must be the two things - the power of God equivalent to the testimony. The words of our lips must correspond with our heart's affection. Elijah had been carried on in the energy of the Spirit, but had not been in company with the Spirit of God in his soul. He was not in communion with God, and fell under the burden of the work he had undertaken. He went into the wilderness and sat down under a juniper tree, and prayed just the opposite of Moses's prayer. He said, "Take away my life."

Elijah said, "I am not better than my fathers." Did he think he was no better than his fathers? No; for he repeats (in substance), There is not another man besides me who has stood for Thee - a proof of what our poor wretched hearts are. He had not trusted God's care of His people, nor sought out the seven thousand beside himself that had not bowed the knee to Baal. So with us; we credit ourselves with being better than we are, not seeing Christ in one another. In truth we are only exalted in our own eyes, and must be abased.

But can there be a more miserable spectacle? Occupied with himself, he said, "I am not better than my fathers"; "take away my life" - let me get out of this place. But his prayer was not answered. Look at the tenderness of God's love. It was then - poor, failing creature that he was, occupied with himself - that an angel came, not a raven. When he sat beside Cherith's brook, the ravens came, but here he was ministered to by an angel. How sweet that in the moment of our failure, when we have turned from God, He ministers to us. Ah! there is no change in His heart, whatever we may be. What grace, that He should be the servant of our necessities!

It is true that Elijah got out of the testimony, but not in the way he desired. He passed through Jordan, but actually he did not die at all, but went up by a whirlwind into the heavens. He went out in God's way. May we not say that, like Moses, he had his prayer answered in company with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration? Was it not better than he asked?

I would now speak of the third prayer; but you must keep the first two together. The first shows us how the evil principle brought out the government of God; the second displays the self-occupation of the servant; but in 2 Cor. 12 another, who had traveled through this world in perils and sufferings, prayed; and what did he say? As Moses's and Elijah's, his prayer was definite and unqualified. Moses's was, Let me go in; Elijah's, Let me go out; and Paul's, Take it away. The Lord was dealing with him in full preventive discipline. How wonderful to be the subject of His care in this way. He had been to paradise and heard unspeakable things, and for fear that he should be exalted the Lord gave him a thorn for the flesh (not in the flesh) - something to keep in check the thing that would bring dishonor on the Lord. It was not because of failure, but this evil principle was in him, and the Lord gave something to prevent his falling.

Just think of the Lord watching over us so! And He sees danger of allowing this evil principle so, in faithfulness, He deals with us in one way or another. You may say, "Lord, I don't know what this means; I judge myself, but I am not conscious of anything that needs this thorn." Then comes the answer, "It is necessary because I see something in you; and in order that you may not run into this or that, I give you something to keep it in check." When the declaration day, the day of judgment, comes, we shall see what was the infinite love of God that thus dealt with us. Should we not even now receive His faithfulness because we know His love? That blessed hand never leaves us.

Paul said, Take it away; and then the Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Paul added, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." What a wonderful word of Christian attainment; but what did he attain to? To take pleasure in infirmities! Look at the distress he passed through for Christ (2 Cor. 12). Could we rejoice in such circumstances? If, like Paul, it were to learn something of the Lord Jesus we had never learned before, who would not glory in that? - in circumstances that give Him an opportunity to be everything to us, to carry us along, and to bring us through? Ah! that is Christian attainment.

Paul did not get his prayer answered, but he got something better. And so it is through all these three prayers. The Lord always gives us more than we ask for. We look to God for blessing, but are we willing to be blessed in His way? But it must be, for He will bless us in His own way, and this only is true blessing.

The fourth prayer is in Matt. 26 There is no comparing it with the others; it is beyond that. To take the shoes off our feet, becomes us when we speak of it. Here is another Man - the Son of God. There was no evil there to be dealt with, no fear of evil coming out there. Every step of this blessed Man, who walked all the pathway through for the glory of God, gave joy to the heart of God. Behold Him here! Scarcely can one speak of the divine grace of the blessed Savior who went down under the hand of God in judgment on our account. He took His chosen disciples and, selecting three of them, He went a little way from them and poured out His heart to God.

The three gospels differ in their expressions. In Matthew it is, "My Father." In the darkness of that hour He who was the divine Victim going to the cross fully realized the relationship that existed - "My Father." In Mark it is, "Abba, Father"; in Luke, "Father" - all precious distinctions. See how the perfections of the Lord Jesus, this one blessed Man, came out in a marked way in these distinctions. In Matthew His soul realized the blessedness of the relationship He stood in. The prayer in Mark is that the hour as well as the cup might pass from Him. Thus Paul prayed that the thorn might be taken away, but there was not the same dependence and self-renunciation. Here, there was no will but what was in harmony with the heart of God. He prayed, "Not My will" - perfect subjection to the will of God. Look at the deep intensity of the sufferings. He had not yet drunk the cup, but He suffered; He was feeling the weight of it. Luke tells us that an angel came to minister to Him, and Satan tried to press upon Him all the consequences of taking the cup - all the forsakings of God, the hiding of His face. But all was absolute obedience on His part. And though Mark tells us that He said, "Take away this cup," yet He added, "nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." Here we find the perfect Man who, in obedience, went under the hand of God in judgment.

How marked the contrast, beloved, when we see God's saints side by side with the Lord Jesus. We have this evil principle, the flesh, within us; and how distinctly it was true of His servants, as of us, "That in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." What Moses and Elijah could know nothing of, we do know; and let us seek to keep the flesh under the sentence of death, bearing about in our bodies the dying of Jesus, and thus realize how God gives us power to refuse the old nature. Let us see to it that we hold these things firmly, and not think it a light thing. We have to bear about in this world the glory of God morally in our walk and ways, and in our conversation - to set forth God's character in grace. Are we doing so? Is God sanctified in me? Do I give a true expression of Him? He does sanctify Himself, but do we sanctify Him? If we manifest the flesh, we tarnish His glory and, like Elijah, plunge ourselves into misery; the enemy comes in, and there is failure. May the Lord give us grace to have our eyes fixed on Him, to maintain communion, and not to let the words of our lips go beyond the expression of our hearts. The Lord never takes His eyes off of us. He helps us - it may be with a thorn, as in Paul's case. Is not that comforting? And if we do not understand it now, we shall in the coming declaration day.

Oh! to be able to say, as our blessed Savior did, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done."

Friends of God: a Special Privilege

The Lord Jesus speaks of this privilege as belonging, through divine riches of grace, to His saints when He says, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." John 15:15.

This friendship, this communication of secrets gives a wondrous sense of gracious and confiding intimacy. When we pray, we feel that we need something; when we serve or when we worship, we judge that we owe something, at least that He is worthy; but when we are receiving communications (not commands as from a master, but communications as from a friend) we listen without any necessary reflection upon our own condition, freed of all sense of either need or obligation. Our proper attitude then is neither standing like Martha so as to serve, nor kneeling like Mary to worship, but like Lazarus - sitting (John 12:2).

The inspirations of a prophet are not equal to the divine communications which a friend receives. They do not intimate the same nearness or dignity. A prophet receives an inspiration as a vessel or oracle, and he may understand it or not (1 Pet. 1:10, 11). A friend learns secrets on the ground of personal confidence.

All the elect are, I grant, according to the grace and calling of God, endowed with this privilege; but among them I believe Abraham, Moses, David, and John had it very conspicuously. They illustrate it.

Abraham was told what the Lord was about to do to Sodom. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" says the Lord, and then tells him of the business which was then taking Him down to Sodom (Gen. 18).

What a moment that was! The Lord had come to Abraham's tent at Mamre and there sat at his table and his feast. The Judge of Sodom was communicating with the conqueror of Sodom - the divine Judge of that vile, reprobate place, conversing with him who had already, through faith and the victory of faith, refused all its offers.

Again I say, What a moment! And in the confidence which all this inspired, Abraham drew near and stood before the Lord while the attendant angels withdrew and went on their way.

And so Moses in his day, for we read, "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Exod. 33:11.

Wonderful! The Lord dealt with Moses as a man will deal with his friend. He talked with him. We are not told what He said, because it is the business of the passage rather to exhibit the grace of this intimacy, or divine friendship, than to convey information to us. But we do learn the use Moses makes of this gracious friendship - the very same use which Abraham of old had made of it. He speaks to the Lord about others. He pleads for Israel, as the patriarch had pleaded for Sodom.

The Lord had approached Moses as His friend; He was not receiving him as His suitor or debtor. It was fitting, therefore, that Moses should occupy the place and the moment in a manner which showed freedom from himself.

And so David, as we see in 1 Chron. 17 David was a penitent, wearing sackcloth in the day of the plague, and going up to Mount Olivet with dust on his head in the day of Absalom. He was a worshiper, too, singing and dancing as he bore the ark of the Lord to Zion. But David was a friend as Abraham and Moses had been. He received communications from the Lord through Nathan; and then, as one whom the Lord in the ways of His grace had thus endowed and privileged, he went in, as we read, "and sat before the LORD." Beautiful and wonderful, but withal right. To have stood or knelt then would not have been obedient or holy, for holiness is consistency with God; and if He "mourn" we are to "lament"; if He "pipe" we are to "dance"; if He reprove and convict us we may be in sackcloth before Him; but if He deal with us face to face as a man speaks to a friend, we may and should sit before Him.

But again, John was the nearest to Jesus at the last supper. He lay on His bosom. And thus it was he who reached the secrets of that bosom. Peter in the distance used John's nearness, and the Lord admitted its title and gave him the privilege of it. John pressed the bosom afresh, in the confidence of an Abraham or a Moses, that the secret which was there would make itself his (John

13:25).

Surely all this tells us of the peculiar grace of this wondrous thing - this state and relationship of "friends" into which the Lord has called His saints - and we see the glorified saints in the full use and joy of this privilege. On the holy hill (to which I have already, in a passing way, alluded) Moses and Elias "talked" with Jesus. Sharing the glory, they knew the privileges of it, while Peter beholding it, felt the power of it, saying, "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (Matt. 17:3, 4).

It is not to present something strange or striking that I notice all this, but rather to aid the soul in assuring itself of that love wherewith the elect are loved - a love which gives us a place where forgetting both our need and our obligation, neither kneeling to supplicate, nor standing to serve, we may sit to listen, and receive communications as a man is talked with by his friend. And when we see this to be the ways of His grace, we may still be conscious of slowness of heart in our selves; but we cannot but know that we are in possession of a love on God's part that passeth knowledge.

And here let me add that this grace of friendship is eminently ours. It is seen in the apostleship of Paul. Paul was let into the secret which had been "hid in God" before the world was - the good pleasure which God had purposed in Himself. (Eph. 1-3). This was a divine communication, as to a friend. For Paul knew the secret, and knew it for himself. In our Apostle, and so in ourselves, this privilege takes us into strange and excellent intimacy. And accordingly we "sit" as David did, or as Lazarus of Bethany did, but it is in "heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6).

This excelleth. Friendship, as we have seen, is no new form of grace. It has been among the privileges of the elect from the beginning. But with us it has peculiar elevation, as everything else has that belongs to the Church.

From One Who Was Ill

My earnest prayer is that our souls may reap a rich blessing through the trial in a deeper communion with the Father and the Son - our hearts more truly disengaged and free to listen alone to Him. There has been much prayer for me, I trust, to the Father's will. I have felt the seriousness of their prayer a good deal, remembering Hezekiah (Isa. 38:9). The Lord's time for our departure to Himself is the best, and if interfered with it is a calamity. Perfectly restful, I had, and have, neither wish nor will in the matter, only desiring His glory and that Christ may be magnified in this poor body. I but want to give my little testimony to the Lord's grace, and to say how firmly the foundations stand all the rude blasts of adverse winds, for your own comfort when similar circumstances have to be met and passed through.

The Garden of Eden: Adam and Eve

The full act of creation under God's hand is detailed in Gen. 1 The work of creation is again given us in chapter 2, but much more succinctly; the narrative soon passing, the general action confines itself to Eden, or to the garden of Eden, because there the scene of the great action about to be tried was laid. and all here is under the hand of the Lord God in a character of covenant relationship to man and the creation. The garden is shown us very particularly; it is described as the place of every desirable production, and as the source of those fruitful rivers which were to go over the whole earth; and Adam himself is put there "to dress it and to keep it."

Now all these were so many characters of the man's happy estate. He had provision of all desirable things; he saw his habitation a spring of blessing to the earth around it, and he himself made important to that garden from which he derived his enjoyments. He was made to give as well as to receive, and all these were but different features of a happy condition to a well-ordered mind such as Adam's. All this was surely so, but with advantages of so high an order it was needed that he should be told that he was but a creature still, and that the divine planter of the garden alone was supreme. Accordingly the voice of a Sovereign was heard over the garden; a commandment went forth, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat " But this voice was not a discord. It was all unison in the ear of an upright creature; for, act in what way or sphere he may. God must be, and will be, God -filling the chief room, and not giving His glory to another. A creature of a right choice must therefore rejoice in any witness of God's supremacy as in its own blessing. All this is but harmonious and consistent happiness; for in the command there is nothing beyond the necessary thing. There is no laying upon Adam any other burden. One command is needed, and only one is given. And this is therefore only another item in the great account of his happiness. There the Lord God, to fill out the scene of this happiness, celebrates for Adam a coronation day, and a day of espousals; but here I must linger for a moment or two. The order of the passage is this (vv. 18-22)-

The Lord God first took counsel with Himself about Adam's espousals.

He then introduced him to his dominions and sovereignty.

At last He celebrated his espousals, and presented Eve to him.

This is the order of his coronation and of his marriage, and it is an order which has its meaning. I believe the richest purpose of joy is the first in counsel, but latest in manifestation - so in the substance. The Church was in the election and predestination of God before the world began; but other ages and dispensations took their course ere that mystery "hid in God" was made known (see Eph. 3).

There is something of peculiar beauty and meaning in the order of this passage. It is not the mere progress of the narrative of independent facts; it is the design of a great Master who knew the end from the beginning. But not only so. It is not only the design of a perfect mind, but the well-known way of love also. The Lord God's first thought was about Adam's best blessing. The helpmeet at

his side was to be more to him than the subject creatures under him. The day of his espousals was to be dearer to him than the day of his coronation. Accordingly the Lord crowned him; but that was done at once, and put out of hand. But that which was to be chief in his enjoyments was the fondest image in the mind of his Lord. His Lord pondered it. He made it familiar to His thoughts - spoke of it to Himself, because it was to be the dearest to Adam. This was the way of love. We understand it to be so. We like to think of the materials of a loved one's happiness; we turn it over in our thoughts, and thus is the Lord God represented here as engaged for Adam. The manner of forming the plan or taking the counsel was thus beautiful, and the plan itself was wonderful. It took the highest aim: It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him."

Jesus the Son of God has found this to be so. His joy is provided for in the very way in which the Lord God here provided for Adam's. As we read, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son." How excellent a purpose therefore was this! It was making nothing less than the divine enjoyments the standard and the measure; it was saying to the creature, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And not only in the plan, but in the execution of the plan, the divine original is copied. Adam slept a deep sleep, and out of his riven side a rib was taken, of which the helpmeet was made - as the Lord's helpmeet came forth from His toil, His sorrow, and His death - and He felt and valued all this.

Adam saw of the travail of his soul, as it were, and was satisfied. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," said his satisfied heart, surveying the fruit of his weariness and of his mystic death; and this again is divine joy. There is Another, we know, who will thus see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. It is the rest of the laboring man that is sweet. It is the bread eaten through sweat of brow that is pleasant. Adam had not helped in the forming of any beast of the field. They had not been quickened through any sleep of his. But Eve was taken from his riven side. She had been the fruit of his death-like slumber, and he therefore prized her. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man." Not only as his helpmeet, his companion, but because he had been so necessary to her did he prize her; she was out of his side as well as for his side. The execution of the plan bound his heart to her as well as the result.

And this was divine joy; this is the joy of Jesus. The joy in His Church is His chief joy; she is both for His side and out of His side. Angels are not of the travail of His soul. But that which His toil and sorrow have won for Him, and which is prepared for the fellowship of His thoughts and His affections - this will be the dearest. The who redeemed thing in heaven and in earth will surely be to Him the rest of the laboring man, and the bread that is eaten through sweat of brow; but it is the Church which is destined for His side, like Eve, as well as taken out of it.

A Gem From the Seventeenth Century

The reason why God is trusted so little, is because He is so little known. We say of some men, "They are better known than trusted," and if we knew some men more, we should trust them less; but the truth is, God is always trusted as much as He is known, and if we knew Him more, we would trust Him more. Every discovery of God shows somewhat which renders Him more worthy of trust.

Caryl, 1602-1672

Trust in Him ye saints forever,

He is faithful, changing never;

Neither force nor guile can sever

Those He loves from Him.

"They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." Psalm 9:10.

Gentile Supremacy

In a recent issue we mentioned how easily the present rearmament program of the nations could bring forth the man of men's choice to weld together Western might and policy, and wage conquest in the name of peace. The world is looking for this man, a super man, but he may begin his career in a comparatively small way. He will come up as a "little horn" among ten horns, but soon will become master of them all.

In Dan. 7 where the course of Gentile supremacy is traced, in the vision of the four beasts, from the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians, on through the ascendancy of the Medes and Persians, then of the Grecians, to the Roman Empire of the past, we are conducted in thought to the future of that empire. There will be ten sovereign rulers who will yield their power, willingly or unwillingly, to this "little horn" who comes up among them, and who will be acclaimed a ruler in his own right. This little horn will soon dominate the whole strange beast, and in Revelation he himself is sometimes called the beast.

There is an added touch in Dan. 7 which is not found elsewhere: when this little horn acquires the mastery he will pluck up three of the first horns by the roots. From this it seems evident that all is not going to be smooth sailing for this man whose look is "more stout than his fellows." Three of the ten Western European nations who become a part of this alliance will resist "the beast," and he will use the power which shall be at his command to pluck them up by the roots. He will deal roughly with these recalcitrant powers, and subdue them. This fact is mentioned three times in that chapter - verses 8, 20, and 24.

The feet of the image in Dan. 2 bring before us the same time and the same empire, there described as ten toes. The material which is used to depict the future state of the Roman Empire is "iron and clay." Now it is evident that iron and clay do not mix to make a strong substance, and the mixture is in contrast with the past state of the empire which is pictured as "iron" which "breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things." There will be inherent weaknesses in this future Western European confederacy. There will be in it the iron; yes, the iron will of the man who at first seizes the power and subdues three of the ten rulers when they fail to cooperate with him, but there will be a definite lack of cohesion. So when we see the infant organization of Western European nations today we discern the lack of complete agreement, and even some things working at cross purposes. But the man who is coming will exert the strength of the iron, and forcibly forge the various dissident groups into a single pattern, although there will probably remain a certain internal lack of cohesion.

These weaknesses mentioned in Dan. 2 and 7 do not contradict what is said in Rev. 13 about all the world following the beast with wonder or amazement, because there it describes the condition during the last three and one half years, or the time when the confederacy will receive direct Satanic aid. The devil will have been cast to the earth and will use his great power to support this monstrous beast; at that time people will say, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (or, it). v. 4. And it is said in Rev. 17:17, "God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will,

and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." This probably takes place just at the end of the first three and one half years, for it is given in connection with the destruction of the apostate religious system known as "Babylon the Great." Its destruction will signal the great change in character of the empire, for even the mere profession of Christianity will be ruthlessly eliminated. And the Jewish feasts which bring the God of heaven to mind will be stopped, and Satan will actively support the wicked deification and worship of man, and receive worship himself - "and they worshipped the dragon" (Rev. 13:4). Then shall be what is, strictly speaking, the "great tribulation," and the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7). It would be impossible for us to visualize the terrors and awfulness of those days.

The Lord said to His own in foretelling of them, "If those days had not been cut short, no flesh had been saved; but on account of the elect those days shall be cut short." Matt. 24:22; N. Trans. When we consider how long God dealt with the world before Christ came, and then has allowed it to go on after rejecting Him for almost 2000 years, we can well understand that when He has confined those terrible days of judgment to three and one half years He has cut that period very short. And He has done it for the sake of His elect whom He will have on earth at that time; He will have elect Jews, and some of the Gentiles who will believe the "gospel of the kingdom" which the Jewish messengers will preach, saying, The king is coming (Matt. 24:14; 25:34-40). The elect of that day will not include those who have heard and rejected the "gospel of the grace of God" for they will be given over to believe a lie according to 2 Thess. 2:11, 12.

Thus we see that while the world is anxiously awaiting a man who can bring order out of chaos, when he comes he will be an arbitrary dictator, eventually backed by Satan, and will be a scourge in the end. Such is the way of a man of men's choice.

When Israel wanted a king, they wanted a leader so they would be like the nations. They did not seek God's mind; nay, rather, they refused it when known. They got a man who was head and shoulders above the rest, a man that men could look up to - he was their man. But even in their case God warned them that they would smart under his yoke, and they did. Later God gave them David, a man after His own heart, not a man after man's heart, for his own father did not consider him suitable when Samuel went to select a king from among his sons. David had his failures, but, he always turned to God even in them, and he was but a feeble type of the Lord Jesus who is truly the Man after God's heart. He, like David, has been rejected, but God's decree has gone forth, and that blessed One shall yet reign and put down all His enemies. When the enemies are all put down, He will then reign in the Solomon character when there shall be "neither adversary nor evil occurrent" (1 Kings 5:4), but in an infinitely greater and better way than those who were but types of Him.

The second psalm, which gives God's decree that His beloved Son shall reign, closes with an exhortation to rulers: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." vv. 10-12. How good it would have been for this world had this admonition been followed. Eventually every knee must bow before Him, and confess Him Lord in the day of judgment; but how happy is the portion of those who have bowed the knee to Him now in the day of His grace, and by faith call Him Lord.

"Father, Thy holy name we bless,
Gracious and just Thy wise decree,
That every tongue shall soon confess
Jesus the Lord of all to be!
But oh! Thy grace has taught us now
Before that Lord the knee to bow."

Giving up the World

We must all, converted or unconverted, give up the world. The veriest votary of the world must sooner or later give up its vanities and its pleasures, its hopes and its interests; he must give them up. The only difference is this, that the Christian gives them up for God; the worldling gives them up because he cannot keep them. The king of Egypt gave up Egypt and Egypt's court, as well as Moses. But there was this difference, that the king of Egypt gave it up for judgment; Moses gave it up for Christ.

God Seeking the Sinner

Under the law, God was in the holy place, and the unclean must be removed, and the priest and the Levite attend that sanctuary. But in the gospel, God is in the unclean place, seeking the ruined ones. Jesus is going about doing good; the Stranger from heaven has come where man lay in his blood, and has looked on him and had compassion; has gone and meddled with all that pollution, untouched by it, washed the wounded sinner from his blood, and anointed him with oil (Eze. 16). All this He has done, and changed places with the wounded sinner also. For though rich, He has become poor, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich.

God's Loving Care: Unbelief and Its Fruit

"And ye murmured in your tents." Deut. 1:27.

Unbelief is not only a blind and senseless reasoner, but a dark and gloomy murmurer. It neither gets to the right side of things nor to the bright side of things. It is always in the dark, always in the wrong, simply because it shuts out God, and looks only at circumstances. They said, "Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we." But they were not greater than Jehovah. "The cities are great and walled up to heaven" - the gross exaggeration of unbelief! - "and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there."

Now, faith would say, "Well, what though the cities be walled up to heaven? our God is above them, for He is in heaven. What are great cities or lofty walls to Him who formed the universe, and sustains it by the word of His power? What are Anakim in the presence of the Almighty God? If the land were covered with walled cities from Dan to Beersheba, and if the giants were as numerous as the leaves of the forest, they would be as the chaff of the threshing floor before the One who has promised to give the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham, His friend, for an everlasting possession."

But as Israel had not faith, as the inspired Apostle tells us in the third chapter of Hebrews, "They could not enter in because of unbelief." Here lay the great difficulty. The walled cities and the terrible Anakim would soon have been disposed of had Israel only trusted God. He would have made very short work of all these. But ah! that deplorable unbelief! It ever stands in the way of our blessing. It hinders the outshining of the glory of God; it casts a dark shadow over our souls, and robs us of the privilege of proving the all-sufficiency of our God to meet our every need and remove our every difficulty.

Blessed be His name, He never fails a trusting heart. It is His delight to honor the very largest drafts that faith hands in at His exhaustless treasury. His assuring word to us ever is, "Be not afraid, only believe." And again, "According to your faith be it unto you." Precious, soul-stirring words! May we all realize more fully their living power and sweetness. We may rest assured of this, we can never go too far in counting on God; it would be a simple impossibility. Our grand mistake is that We do not draw more largely upon His infinite resources. "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Thus we can see why it was that Israel failed to see the glory of God on the occasion before us. They did not believe. The mission of the spies proved a complete failure. As it began, so it ended, in most deplorable unbelief. God was shut out. Difficulties filled their vision.

"They could not enter in." They could not see the glory of God. Harken to the deeply affecting words of Moses. It does the heart good to read them. They touch the very deepest springs of our renewed being. "Then I said unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them. The LORD your God which goeth before you, He shall fight for you" - only think of God fighting for people! Think of Jehovah as a Man of war! - "He shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt

before your eyes; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God, who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to show you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day."

What moral force, what touching sweetness in this appeal! How clearly we can see here, as indeed on every page of the book, that Deuteronomy is not a barren repetition of facts, but a most powerful commentary on those facts. It is well that the reader should be thoroughly clear as to this. If, in the book of Exodus or Numbers, the inspired lawgiver records the actual facts of Israel's wilderness life, in the book of Deuteronomy he comments on those facts with a pathos that quite melts the heart. And here it is that the exquisite style of Jehovah's acts is pointed out and dwelt upon with such inimitable skill and delicacy. Who could con-

sent to give up the lovely figure set forth in the words, "as a man doth bear his son"? Here we have the style of the action. Could we do without this? Assuredly not. It is the style of an action that touches the heart because it is the style that so peculiarly expresses the heart. If the power of the hand, or the wisdom of the mind is seen in the substance of an action, the love of the heart comes out in the style. Even a little child can understand this, though he might not be able to explain it.

God's Resources for His People's Need: Israel's God Is Our God

Deut. 8 gives us an outline of the resources by means of which God supplied the need of His people while passing through the wilderness; they were resources unknown to the flesh, and such as the flesh could not picture of itself. God often puts His children in positions where every human resource fails; His object is twofold - first, that they may know themselves; second, that they may learn God's ways toward them.

God never varies in His government; that is to say, He never acts on a different principle in one case from that which guides Him in another; for example, He hates sin, and always acts consistently. Thus, a spiritual Christian may often know beforehand what line of conduct God will take in a certain case. It is most important for us to remember this truth - that God changes not. His ways may change; thus, He had put His people under the law; now, He has put the Church under grace, and hereafter He will place her in glory. Yet there are principles which never change and therefore the prophets could say that it was not for themselves but for us that they ministered those things (1 Pet. 1:12).

Circumstances may vary; Israel may have been driven out of their land, etc., but after all, God does not change; and if the means vary, the end (that is His own glory) is ever the same. As to salvation, for instance, God has always saved upon one principle. Abram and every saint to the most distant ages is only saved, as we, by blood.

God takes knowledge of everything, and judges us according to the light we have received. He says to His people, "Ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face." Deut. 8:19, 20. This is God's principle of government; when sin has come to its height, then He punishes it. It was thus He had dealt with the Amorites and other nations; and it was thus He would deal with His own people. Thus we see that God acts evenly in His government here below; He cares for His own glory, and acts so as to show it forth. Not one action is unimportant, for the most insignificant may deprive us of blessing, on account of the government of God which

is at all times in action. It is true that often one who walks unfaithfully receives many blessings, because God loves to show forth His mercy; nevertheless, everything bears its fruit, either inwardly in the soul, or outwardly in chastisements.

That which strikes me as most precious in this chapter is God's desire that Israel should not forget their wilderness position, which was a state of entire dependence, for Israel had no resources in itself, and received the supply of every need by means of a miracle. We are saved, and led into the wilderness; and there we are surrounded with blessings as, for instance, the enjoyment of brotherly communion instead of being in a position of isolation. But, as with Israel, God's blessings might lead to twofold evil, in separating them from Him, and making them forget their dependence upon Him (v. 17); so we have to take care lest the blessing we enjoy should produce the same affects on us. This world must needs be to the Christian a land of drought - a thirsty land, where no water is... Surely God has given us enough spiritual blessings to satisfy our hearts! We may

rejoice in that Word of God which opens out to the spiritual man the thoughts and counsels of God toward us. If only we draw from this treasure, our souls will have enjoyment enough, and will be able to do without that which the world offers. Let Christ become our all, and let us strip ourselves of all that is not Christ, that He may reign alone in our hearts. This is real progress, and here is true enjoyment for the Christian.

Verses 11-15. Israel was not to stop short in the enjoyment of the gifts of God, nor to take occasion from them to forget God Himself. The Christian too must watch lest, in the enjoyment of the blessing, he should forget Him who has given it, and lose sight of his own dependence upon God. The heart may depart from God long before God's blessings are withdrawn; and we may still enjoy them when far from Him. Let us ask ourselves, Have I the enjoyment of such and such blessings? But is my heart really in communion with Jesus? Is it in Him I find my joy? Do I realize my own weakness? etc. How often would the upright soul answer, No! Let my outward circumstances be as favorable as they may, if my heart is not in communion with God I shall be unable to meet temptation. This is an important truth, for the consequences are immense.

We see in the history of Israel the proof that the heart may backslide from God long before He withdraws His blessings. How long it was after Israel had forgotten the Lord ere God came in judgment to show what was their state! How often do we enjoy brotherly communion and the Word of God long after we have forgotten our own weakness and dependence! It is by walking in communion with God that we can be preserved. This is what Moses expressed to the people in verses 11-19; it is "Take heed!"

How often have we been made to feel that the object of our daily journeying is to humble us! How much that is painful have we learned of ourselves! And how often have we discovered our unbelief when brought into trial! God has led us through the wilderness to humble us, prove us, and to know what is in our hearts, whether we would keep His commandments or no.

See verse 3. Manna was a thing unknown to Israel when they went into the wilderness; neither had their fathers known it and they themselves could do nothing toward producing it. They were dependent. Had God omitted to send it, even for one or two mornings, they must have perished. The water from the rock was equally miraculous. There was no water in the desert, and God gave it by a miracle. There was no path marked out in the wilderness, and they might have wandered from the way; but God performed another miracle, for a cloudy pillar was their leader. But it was not only in great things that God took care of them, or that He does so of us in the wilderness; we have to admire His precious care in the smallest things, and in our tiniest wants. There is a particular as well as a general providence (v. 4). "Thy raiment waxed not old." It may be that the Israelites had taken but little notice of the fact, and so it is with us. How many details of God's care for us pass unobserved by us!

We find in Isa. 40, immediately after the description of the greatness of God and the wonderful effects of His power, the expression of this care in small things. "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from

my God?" v. 27. God does not forget us, and that we might know how dear we are to Him, the Lord Jesus said, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Luke 12:7. The Lord would have us remember these two things in the wilderness: first, that it is He who has redeemed us from the

world, as He did His people out of Egypt; second, that it is He who sustains moment by moment in the wilderness. It is when we realize this direct dependence upon God, that we are strong to resist the devil; but when we lose sight of it, we feel less the necessity of communion with God; we neglect it, and soon attribute our blessings to ourselves. "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth." v. 17.

Verse 11. "Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping His commandments." When in the presence of God, the conscience keeps His commandments, for in His presence they are neither hard nor forgotten. How can we forget the desires of one who is dear to us, when with that person? Let us remember that apart from communion with God even His blessings become a snare to pride. We are in the desert but we are there under the care of a tender Father

A Good Prayer

"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." Psalm 141:3.

Gospel Preaching: How Should It Be Done?

How needful it is not only to preach the glad tidings of a present and eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, but to preach it in the Savior's style-in the bowels of Jesus Christ - to have such a divine sense in our hearts of the realities of eternal damnation and eternal salvation, as to publish the blessed tidings with deepest fervor of affection. It is here we need to watch, for

careless professors abound, and lukewarmness grows apace. An address may be orthodox enough, accurate as to expression, faultless as to sound doctrine, but so cold, dry, and formal that it quickly falls to the ground. It lacks savor, and therefore power. It seems to the hearers more like a work of duty than the heartfelt utterances of one who seeks to snatch souls from eternal misery, and bring them to present reconciliation with God. The message has been so coldly delivered that it comes pointless and heartless. It is in word only - a doctrinal statement rather than a message of divine, unsearchable love.

When we preach, we should seek to do so in the Lord's strength; to go forth in real dependence on Himself, looking unto Him: not satisfied with anything less than a felt sense of His presence, being in direct exercise of faith in Himself, abiding in Him, and entering into His thoughts, His feelings as to the value of immortal souls, considering that Christ is forever glorified in the salvation of the lost one. Be assured that this only will make us earnest, fervent, successful winners of souls. Should we aim at less than the message being delivered worthy of Him, according to the deep love of His heart who sends it? If it be a work of faith and labor of love, it must flow out of personal communion with Himself. This entails much self judgment, earnest prayer, unfeigned dependence, and true exercise of faith in Himself. The apostles so felt this that they said, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." O to be men of earnest prayer and simple faith! If there be earnestness with God in the closet, depend upon it there will not be lacking fervor in preaching. If our Father sees us dealing with Him in secret, be certain that He will reward us openly. Let us think of the quality of our service rather than the quantity. Let us beware of trafficking in mere Bible knowledge instead of telling out the love of God from deep, heartfelt enjoyment of personal intercourse and fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

"Thou must be true thyself,

If thou the truth wouldst teach;

Thy soul must overflow, if thou

Another soul wouldst reach.

It needs the overflow of heart

To give the lips full speech."

The Great Census

Almost 2000 years ago Caesar Augustus issued a decree throughout the Roman Empire that everyone must be enrolled in a great census, and in order to facilitate this he ordered people to return to their own cities to be counted. He thus set the world in motion, little thinking that he was but working out God's purposes. He probably thought only of knowing the greatness of his empire and the number of the multitudes of people over which he reigned, but God had decreed that His beloved Son should come into the world in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2), and so to Bethlehem Joseph and Mary must go in time for the child Jesus to be born there. The great Caesar was but a cog in the wheels that were carrying out God's decrees.

Later, when the world cast that blessed One out - Pilate, Herod, chief priests, leaders of the Jews, Roman soldiers, and common populace, all having a part in it - they but carried out (as the apostles said in their prayer in Acts 4:28) "whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." How puny and insignificant is man, although he imagines that he is master of all.

Today we see the whole world put in motion again - this time in an all-out preparation for war and conflict. Is man the master or the servant of the situation? Surely, but the servant! Those in high places make decisions and issue decrees, but it is evident that they are powerless to turn back the course of the world; they may as well try to reverse the tides of the mighty oceans; all their efforts will prove to be futile, except so far as they are carrying out the divine purpose. The world is heading for the time of "tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Matt. 24:21.

The United States, in cooperation with other nations, has embarked on building a war potential destined to dwarf anything heretofore known. May we ask why? The answer may be given, Because of Russian threats; but back of all is the working out of God's own counsels. It is being said that all this great military might will be placed at the disposal of the head of the Western European armies. And men are looking forward to the time when all this materiel and manpower will be available to check any further Russian moves of expansion or conquest. They are anticipating the time when they can look at the balance of power and say, We have found the solution; from now on there will be "Peace and safety" (1 Thess. 5:3).

The present state of things brings Rev. 6:2 strongly before us. (Remember that the Church will be gone from the earth before the events mentioned in this verse take place.) When the Lamb opens the first seal, at the beginning of those providential judgments which will only pave the way for the three and one half years of "great tribulation," there will be a rider go forth on a white horse, with a bow in his hand, "conquering, and to conquer." Though we cannot say positively how this will be done, or who this great personage will be, yet we can see how easily the present situation could fit into this picture. Under the overruling hand of God, it could very easily be that when all this great array of military might, now being contemplated, is placed under the head of a United Western European Army, such a one would be the man who will go forth "conquering, and to conquer." The

bow may signify distant conquest; the white horse may denote the bloodlessness of his victories, or that he wages war in the name of peace, all of which would be possible when the great leader of Western armies has an irresistible power behind him.

There is another point in this verse: this Man starts without a crown, or without any designation of being a ruler himself - he may begin as only a general charge, or a coordinator of defense - but later "a crown was given unto him." Perhaps in this way "the beast"- that great head of the revived Roman Empire - may come into being. From both Daniel and Revelation we learn that the revived empire of that day will have ten separate kingdoms under one head. Until now, humanly speaking, it seemed incredible that ten nations would sacrifice their own sovereignty to the extent of giving such power to one man, but events are fast making them willing to do just that thing in order to survive at all. Well did the poet Cowper write:

"His [God's] purposes will ripen fast,

Unfolding every hour."

The head of the revived Roman Empire is to be the Jews' protector, and make a league with them for a period of 7 years. He will give them their temple worship again and guarantee them the right to their own land (Dan. 9:27). Perhaps this may be a part of the conquests of this man of men - the world's man. His number will be discerned in that day; it will be 666, or man, man, man; -.but God describes him as "the beast." It reminds us that when Nebuchadnezzar saw the vision of Gentile supremacy, he saw an image of a man (Dan. 2), but when God informed Daniel of these same powers, He showed him four ravening beasts (Dan. 7). The head of the coming Roman Empire will be a man, and a man of men's choice, but like his predecessors he will be but a beast in God's account, for surely Gentile dominion became bestial at an early date, and its character will culminate in this man, "the beast."

Dear fellow-Christian, it is almost 2000 years since our blessed Lord said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3. He went back to the Father's house and directed our gaze to Himself there; He desired that the Church should remain in the constant hope of His return, but early in its history it went to sleep and forgot to watch for Him (Matt. 25:5). Then over 100 years ago this precious hope was revived, and today many Christians believe in His return as a doctrine, but is there the living in the good of it? Do we really believe it, so as to expect Him today? How differently would we evaluate the things about us if our hearts were stirred with loving expectancy! And how can we remain indifferent to the imminence of His return when we see the heavings and tossings of everything that formerly was considered stable and enduring, when we see everything being readied for a man to ride across the scene according to the Word of God, knowing that we shall see His blessed face ere that man rides?

Our Lord's last words were "Surely I come quickly"; may, in heart respond, "Amen-even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20

Greatness and Meekness

"The man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of... the people." Exod. 11:3.

"Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth."
Numb. 12:3.

Nothing is more sad than to witness a pushing, bustling, forward, self-confident spirit and style in those who profess to be followers of Him who was meek and lowly in heart. It is utterly impossible for anyone to indulge in this spirit if ever he has really measured himself in the presence of God. To be much alone with God is the sovereign remedy for pride and self-complacency. May the Lord keep us truly humble in all our ways, simply leaning on Himself, and very, very little in our own eyes.

"O keep us, love divine, near Thee,

That we our nothingness may know,

And ever to Thy glory be

Walking in faith while here below."

Greetings Refused: David With Nabal and Hanun

There are two places in Scripture where greetings were refused. The first was when David sent a beautiful message to Nabal - "Thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast." 1 Sam. 25:6. But Nabal refused it, and came under the judgment of God.

In the second case, David sent to comfort Hanun when his father died. But poor Hanun had evil counselors who said, Don't listen to it; he doesn't mean what he says. How many dear souls are hindered now in a similar way by bad counselors.

The Ground of Peace

The moment we begin to rest our peace on anything in ourselves, we lose it. (And this is why so many saints have not settled peace.) Nothing can be lasting that is not built on God alone. How can you have settled peace? Only by having it in God's own way. By not resting it on anything, even the Spirit's work within yourselves, but on what Christ has done entirely without you. Then you will know peace - conscious unworthiness, but yet peace. In Christ alone God finds that in which He can rest, and so it is with His saints. The more you see the extent and nature of the evil that is within, as well as that without and around; the more you will find that what Jesus is, and what Jesus did, is the only ground at all on which you can rest.

Guidance

Guidance is such a comprehensive subject, I scarcely know where to begin; I suppose you refer to our movements as servants. Well, I seek to walk with God with my own will set aside, and a single eye for His glory. Then, in general, there are considerations present, which, spiritually discerned and estimated, enable me to go from place to place, and the sequel satisfies me that the step was of the Lord. If exercised before the Lord, and having thus, in entire submission, sought His direction, and not conscious of any special guidance, I go quietly on doing what seems the proper thing to do and it turns out so, insofar as can be judged until the judgment seat is reached. It is well to beware of legality in this and other aspects. The Lord knows I desire and seek to do His will. The matter being thus referred to Him, He will, consciously or unconsciously, guide me.

These remarks, in principle, apply to the choice of subjects to preach from. In great crises, where much is at stake, I have perseveringly sought, waited for, and received His guidance in the way of a clear, firm, abiding inward conviction that His mind and will was so and so; and, acting on this, the sequel has justified the step.

About brothers who so live as to nullify the testimony, there is the Lord to speak to, and the Scriptures to use as guided by the Spirit, the great object being, by the presentation of Christ to the heart and conscience, to reach the state of soul and change it. A correction of the outside only won't do - it is deceptive, and positively mischievous. The consciences of others in the assembly might be reached, and their state elevated, and their prayers enlisted as to any walking disorderly, and one might, upon sufficient grounds, refuse to shake hands.

The Hands of a Clock

if ever there was a day when it is important for every true follower of Christ to be true and to stand fast to his profession, I believe it is the present day. There is no answer to infidelity like the life of Christ displayed by the Christian. Nothing puts the madness of the infidel and the folly of the superstitious more to shame and silence than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a thoroughgoing, heavenly-minded, and divinely-taught Christian. It may be in the unlearned and poor and despised, but like the scent of the lowly violet it gives its fragrance abroad, and both God and man take notice of it. Works, if only hypocritical doings, go for nothing; but works which are the genuine expression of living and walking with God in Christ, are of the same value as the hands of a good clock. A good clock without hands is, for practical purposes, of no value; but the hands on the face tell the measure of the value of the works within, and record the lapse of time. "We are His [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10. Now is the time for works, and for overcoming, to him that has an ear to hear.

The Happy Path: a Word on the First Psalm

Psalm 1 gives us in brief the conditions under which saints of God in all ages can tread that happy path of communion and usefulness which is the true aim of all whose hearts are right.

Primarily applicable to the Lord Jesus Himself, we all know this Psalm to be; but, praise be to His name for the grace, He has bidden us follow in the same path. Now that part which deals with the subject we have under consideration (vv. 1.3) falls naturally and simply into three divisions.

The third section, which is also the third verse, presents to us a perfect picture, that is God's picture, of this happy man. He is said to be, first, "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season." Could we have a more telling figure of a healthy Christian? Second, it is said of him that "his leaf also shall not wither." If we turn to "Song of Songs" we shall get God's own interpretation of these figures.

In chapter 2, verse 3, the bride, there speaking of her beloved, says, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." We know these words were spoken of the Lord Jesus Himself. And how true it was and is, that He ever bore fruit, and that His leaf was always green. No poor, wearied, hungry one ever sought shelter and refreshment beneath His shade without finding it abundantly. Precious Lord! what springs, indeed, are in Thee!

Beloved reader, if you are a true Christian, does not your heart yearn to do what He did, and to be to His wearied and tempted saints what He is to them? Does not He expect it of our hands? "Comfort ye My people, saith your God." And this Psalm says, happy is the man that does this. Surely it is so. But there is a third thing in this verse that is true of this "blessed" man. "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

What a complete picture of a healthy Christian! Fruit to refresh the hungry, shade to rest the weary, and success in service.

But we must look back at the two first sections to find out the conditions that must be fulfilled in order that we may be thus a help and a blessing; for conditions there are, and attention to them is of the very highest importance.

Verse 1 says, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." This happy, useful man is then a separate man. This most important truth is enforced right through Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

Wherever we turn, in all ages and under all circumstances, God's chosen vessels have been separate men or women. The histories of Joseph, Daniel, Paul, Timothy, all teach the same lesson; and beloved friends, you and I will never be numbered among these happy ones (for happy they were in spite of the sufferings such a path entailed) unless we be clean vessels, "meet for the master's use."

But there is a second condition, for the first one is but a negative condition after all. It is not sufficient merely to be clear from what is harmful. We need to be built up by what is positively good. So the second condition is, "His delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." And then the consequence of these two conditions being fulfilled is what we have above seen in the third verse.

Now, in recapitulating, do we not see how morally perfect this little picture is? You have presented to you a man who diligently avoids evil of all sorts, as diligently finds his delight in the good, and who as a natural consequence is what every earnest, truehearted believer desires to be.

Beloved friends, nothing could be simpler. Of details, we do not get much here. But, broadly, to have before us as our earnest aim the keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, and the constant daily delighting in the precious Word of God, will inevitably result in that happy path of usefulness that brings joy to our own hearts and gives glory to God.

Have You Come As You Are? Gospel Appeal

Now dear friends, I would just in conclusion ask you, Have you been led to come just as you are, ungodly sinners, to God? Not to bring your own righteousness, which is nothing but filthy rags; but have you come pleading the blood shedding of the Lamb of God? If you have, assuredly there is peace for you, for that is a sure token that God is for you. Or have you been acting against God all your lives, and have never found peace? Are you still tormented with a guilty conscience, and are you still rejecting and refusing salvation? I would earnestly beseech you to consider the danger you are in, and I would ask you to look before you, and see where you are going and what you are doing. You are wandering in the midst of the wide sea of this world, you are toiling through its waves, without a prospect of deliverance; and if persisted in, you will ere long sink down into death and eternal misery....

But be of good cheer if your hearts are set on Christ; there is your stay, the anchor of your soul. If He is such, dear friends, stand forward for Him; be not ashamed to own your relationship to Him, your dependence on Him; be decided, cut short all expedients for deferring the bold acknowledgment of your being His; confess Him before men, act for Him, and live for Him in an ungodly world.... Be not debating within yourselves when you shall avow yourselves; do it at once, decidedly. Make the plunge, and trust God for the consequence. I know by experience that an open, bold confession of being Christ's is more than half the struggle over. I know the devil tempts, and says, "Oh, don't be too hasty; you might ruin the cause by over forwardness; this is not the time to confess yourself openly - wait for another opportunity." But I say, dear friends, as one who knows that if a man, in the strength of the Lord, is just brought to say to his companions and friends, "I am Christ's, and must act for Him," he will not suffer what others will feel who are creeping on, fearful and afraid to avow Him whom they desire to serve. Believe me, my friends, it is as I say - by this decided and open opposition to the world, he may at first be laughed at and mocked, but what of that? Christ was served so.... Oh! I once more entreat you to be candid. Be open, be decided, confess Christ's name on earth, and He will not be ashamed to confess your name before the whole assembled universe.

Head Coverings: a Reader Inquires

"Should sisters wear hats -head coverings -when we come together in a private home for a special meeting, perhaps informal in character?"

ANSWER: For the general principles of women's head covering we refer you to a pamphlet entitled "Because of the Angels" which is for sale by the publishers. The Spirit of God has laid down certain rules in 1 Cor. 11, and has also explained that the angels are spectators of things on earth. They should be able to witness in the Church on earth God's order of headship by seeing the man "uncovered" and the woman "covered" at the time of prayer; but alas! it is generally disregarded in Christendom, and so disorder and confusion are to be witnessed by the heavenly intelligences. The lack of adherence to the rules, however, is no reason why any of us should be guilty of the same thing. We have the Word of God to guide us.

In answer to your specific question regarding proper order in special meetings held in private homes, we would ask a few questions. Are the brothers and sisters, or even sisters only, invited to come together for the purpose of having certain questions concerning the Scriptures discussed? or perhaps to hear some brother give a talk on the Scriptures? If the answer is "yes" in either case, then is it not proper that such a meeting should begin and end with prayer? Can we think of not seeking the Lord's guidance and help at the beginning of such a meeting, or of not turning to Him in thankfulness at its close? Then in such instances the sisters are there in the place where prayer is wont to be made, and certainly should have a covering on their heads. The fact of its being a special or extra meeting, or of its being held in a private home does not alter that. The heads of sisters should be covered, and the heads of brothers uncovered, in such meetings.

There may be cases where you may invite a few brothers and sisters to your home for dinner, and after the meal the conversation naturally turns to the Word of God, and perhaps a chapter is read: this is somewhat different than a called meeting and becomes more of a family discussion of the Scriptures; but even then, if prayer is made, each sister by

all means should place a handkerchief or some other covering over her head at the time of prayer. There should not be a question about this, for she should so act in the privacy of her own home. It is a matter of godly order to be witnessed by heaven even though no other human being is there to see.

Whenever a sister is in the attitude of prayer, whether actually speaking to God herself, or where another is doing so, she should be covered, as the sign of submission to God's constituted authority. The same rule would apply for a man having his head uncovered. The only modification of the application of this important part of the Holy Scriptures would be when one is not in the attitude of prayer; for instance, one may pass out a tract on a street or in a public conveyance and at the same time silently ask the Lord to bless the printed word; or, one may at any time lift the heart to the Lord for His guidance and help without getting into an attitude of prayer. How quickly one may in spirit desire, "Lord, guide me," or "Lord, help me."

We desire for ourselves, and for all the dear saints of God, a greater simplicity about the Scriptures, that will accept things without reasoning, and also a deeper reverence for and trembling at the Word of God, and the spirit of subjection of heart and mind to its divine precepts.

Headship and Lordship

It is deeply interesting and most profitable to mark the varied lines of truth laid down in the Word of God, and to note how all these lines stand inseparably linked with the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the divine center of all truth; and it is as we keep the eye of faith fixed steadily on Him, that each truth will find its right place in our souls, and exert its due influence and formative power over our course and character.

There is in all of us, alas! a tendency to be one-sided - to take up some one particular truth and press it to such a degree as to interfere with the healthy action of some other truth. This is a serious mistake, and it tends to damage the cause of truth, and hinder the growth of our souls. It is by the truth - not some truth - we grow; by the truth we are sanctified. But if we only take a part of the truth - if our character is molded and our way is shaped by some particular truth - there can be no real growth, no true sanctification. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Pet. 2:2. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. It is by the whole truth of God, as contained in the Scriptures, that the Holy Ghost forms, and fashions, and leads on the Church collectively, and each believer individually; and we may rest assured that where some special truth is unduly pressed, or some other truth practically ignored, there must be, as a result, a defective character and an inadequate testimony.

Take, for example, the two great subjects named at the head of this article - "headship and lordship." Is it not important to give each of these truths its due place? Is not Christ Head of His body the Church, as well as Lord of the individual members? And, if so, should not our conduct be ruled, and our character formed, by the spiritual application of the former as well as the latter? Unquestionably. Well then if we think of Christ as Head, it leads us into a very distinct and a very practical range of truth. It will not interfere with the truth of His Lordship, but it will tend to keep the soul well balanced, which is so needful in days like the present. If we think only of Christ as Lord of His servants, individually, we shall entirely lose the sense of our relationship one to another, as members of that one body of which He is the Head, and thus we shall be drawn away into mere independency, acting without the slightest reference to our fellow members. We shall, to use a figure, become like the hairs of an electrified broom, each standing out in his own intense individuality, and practically disowning all vital connection with our brethren.

But on the other hand when the truth of Christ's headship gets its proper place in our souls; when we know and believe that "there is one body," and that we are members one of another; then - while we most fully own that each one of us, in our individual path and service, is responsible to the "one Lord" - it will follow as a grand practical result that our walk and ways are affecting every other member of the body of Christ on earth. If "one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." We can no longer view ourselves as independent isolated atoms, seeing we are incorporated as members of "one body" by "one Spirit," and thus linked with the one Head in heaven.

This great doctrine is clearly and fully unfolded in Rom. 12:3-8, and 1 Cor. 12, to which we beg the reader's serious attention. And, be it remembered, the truth of Christ's headship and our

membership is not a thing of the past merely; it is a present reality - a grand formative truth to be tenaciously held and practically carried out from day to day. "There is one body." This holds good today, just as thoroughly as when the inspired Apostle penned the epistle to the Ephesians; and hence it follows that each individual believer is exerting a good or a bad influence upon believers at the very antipodes.

Does this seem incredible? If so, it is only to carnal reason and blind unbelief. Surely we cannot reduce the Church of God - the body of Christ - to a matter of geographical position. That Church, that body, is united by - what? Life? No. Faith? No. By what then? By God the Holy Spirit.

Old Testament saints had life and faith; but what could they have known about a head in heaven or a body on earth? Nothing whatever. If anyone had spoken to Abraham about being a member of a body, he would not have understood it. How could he? There was nothing of the kind existing. There was no head in heaven; and hence, there could be no body on earth. True, the eternal Son was in heaven as a divine Person in the eternal Trinity; but He was not there as a glorified man, or head of a body. Even in the days of His flesh we hear Him saying, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." John 12:24. No union - no headship - no membership - no vital connection, until after His death upon the cross. It was not until redemption became an accomplished fact that heaven beheld that wonder of wonders; namely, glorified humanity on the throne of God: and the counterpart of that was God the Holy Ghost dwelling in men upon earth. Old Testament saints would have understood lordship, but not headship. This latter had no existence, save in the eternal purpose of God. It did not exist in fact until Christ took His seat on high, having obtained eternal redemption, and the Holy Spirit came down to indwell the believers.

Hence then this truth of headship is most glorious and precious. It claims the earnest attention of the Christian reader. We would solemnly and earnestly entreat him not to regard it as a mere speculation - a matter of no importance. Let him be assured it is a great fundamental truth having its source in a risen Christ in glory, its foundation in accomplished redemption; its present sphere of display, the earth; its power and development, the Holy Ghost; its authority in the New Testament.

The Hope of His Calling

Eph. 1:18; 2:10

"That ye may know what is the hope of His calling." God has called you; what is the hope of the calling? What future is there in this call? We get it in verse 3, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children." I know "Abba's" heart now. I am to know "Abba's" house then. If God says, "How beautiful My house will be with My Son in it, surrounded by those associated with Him," is it nothing to my heart that God already has joy in the thought? It will have a separating effect on the soul from evil to God.

And what the riches of the glory"? Glory is not the same as the Father's house. There is rest in the thought of the house, whereas in the glory we get the public expression of it. What a contrast to this beggarly world down here! Here it is all toil, but what is it all leading to? To a bright, brilliant, glorious future, now made little of by people here, then made much of by God up there.

So far there is no question of life. He takes them, as it were, and shows them the corpse they were, the pit they were in. God loves to be Center -- to have round Him a circumference of blessing. What was the pit you came from? What good was there in it? God could find none, so you cannot. Everything in it is bad, though it need not come out. As the pit was down there, and nothing but evil working in it, so the blessing came from quite a different place -- from the Man up there upon the throne. Had we taken a few steps toward Him? No! it is even when we were "dead in sins." It is not a question of bad fruits -- "dead in sins" (not alive in sins, as in Romans), all entirely wrong, all dead, not a correct notion of God, nor of Christ, nor of the Holy Spirit, nor of ourselves.

There are three things: life-giving, separation from the grave, and a place of permanent rest. Satan cannot rob me of blessing because I am within Christ. The bringing into a place of blessing is a thing to be known individually; knowing it, and knowing the existence of it, are very different things. You can say you believe it. Have you got it yourself? Can you say, "I have gone up from the tomb by a power that associates me with all that is dear to God? God looks on me and says, 'There is an individual who has life together with My Son.'" Can you say it? Is the life that you live in the flesh by faith of the Son of God?

God promised a son to Abraham; his circumstances said, "Impossible, you cannot have any children." But Abraham said, in substance, "Let God alone; He must see to His promise." Difficulties to believers now come in exactly the same way. Things inconsistent are brought up by conscience. If you say, "That is inconsistent with the Man up there; I am ashamed of myself," you judge it in faith. But if you say, "I have failed; I am no Christian," you play into Satan's hands. You do not judge yourself, but slur over the evil. We get here three things

Abba's heart, Abba's house, and that the Man, the perfect Servant of God, who was obedient even unto death, has won His place up there. He went in not only as One who had a right to go in, but because He had humbled Himself. These things just mark the place that you and I are in as

Christians. God wanted to show what a God He was, and the resources He had in His Son.

If God has raised us up together, it is that we may have communion with Himself through this Christ dwelling in us by faith. We cannot get steadiness of works unless with a soul abiding in communion with God. If I am in communion with God, what do I get? If a heart be right with God, there is talking about Christ, always Christ at home in the heart. I look up and say, "There is a Man on the throne of God, and He has all power in His hand -- the Son of the virgin, the Seed of the woman -- and God says, "This is My beloved Son," "the fullness of the Godhead." If you know Him, you may get all the fullness of God.

I never shall know Him, but I know Himself. God presents in that Man, seen there by faith, what can fill the humblest mind.

God has formed in my soul such an estimate of Christ that I could not do without Him; and more than that, He cannot do without me. Nothing is good without Christ, and the presence of Christ in anything makes it a home-scene to the heart.

The valley of Baca is a precious place if Christ be there. Oh, what a height and depth in the truth that makes us one with Him! What an expression of love! What an expression of light!

How to Read the Scripture

Christians who make their own blessing their object in studying the Word of God, and are only interested in it as far as it concerns them and their own welfare, necessarily lose much of its fullness, and their times of meditation are in consequence often barren and profitless. Let us remember that though all Scripture is for us, it is not about us, except as far as the glory of Christ is bound up with our welfare.

Springing from the practice of making our own interests our guide in the study of the Word is the use of the term "nonessential" with reference to revealed truths. Men make a distinction between truths which are "fundamental" and those which they consider "nonessential," a distinction which Scripture does not warrant. I grant that there are certain great truths, fundamental in their nature, without a knowledge of which none can lay claim to the name of Christian. I admit, further, that there are many truths of which one may be ignorant, and yet for all that, be a true child of God.

But all that God has revealed is essential to the glory of Christ; and to neglect any part of His Word, whether prophecy, history, or doctrine, because we do not see its immediate bearing on ourselves, is to exhibit a spirit of selfishness and indifference to His interests.

It is well, of course, that we should discover the fullness which lies in all the little details of Scripture; but it is of paramount importance that we should endeavor to seize its scope as a whole. Let us take a good survey of the field, and seek to comprehend its bearings, position, etc., as a whole, before we begin to examine microscopically every blade of grass.

And then let us seek to take in the scope of each of its parts, each of the sixty-six books into which the volume of inspiration is divided. If the questions were put to us, For what purpose was each written? What is its subject? and, How does the inspired writer deal with it? how many of us could give an answer, even as to the books of the New Testament, let alone those of the Old? And yet all this may be learned from Scripture itself, without reference to commentaries or any other human writings.

If we would get this wider view of God's revelation we must read consecutively; that is, we must not fly about from one part to another, reading one day in Judges and the next in Jude, without any system at all. That method of study will never give us an insight into anything but details. Who would dream of treating a story book in that way - reading a page or two in the middle one day, then a chapter at the end, and then at the beginning? Who would wonder at a boy's complaining of the difficulty of arithmetic if he made it his practice to read his book "wherever it happens to open," or "wherever he thinks it would be nice"? I do not say that on some occasions the Holy Ghost may not direct us to some special portion as peculiarly suited to our state of soul; but we find that those who, as a general rule, study Scripture consecutively, see most of its beauties, and are best able to admire the perfect harmony of its various parts.

Another thing that we must never forget is our own inability to rightly understand one word of Scripture apart from the teaching of the Holy Ghost. We cannot fathom that which is infinite by that which is finite. The mind of man will not suffice for the things of God. The most gigantic intellect, the most profound scholarship, are alike of no avail in this matter. The Holy Spirit, who in the first instance dictated the words, can alone make them intelligible to us.

And it is for this purpose, among others, that He has been given to us (1 Cor. 2:10, 16). And be it remembered that He indwells every believer in Christ (John 7:39; Eph. 1:13); so that none of us can say we are without power to understand and know the things freely given to us of God.

Unintelligence in divine truth implies either the want of diligence in study, or the lack of subjection to the Holy Ghost. God has, as it were, placed in our hands the key of the treasure house of Scripture, telling us that all is ours. Whether it be the depths of prophecy, the heights of doctrine, or the symbolism of type and shadow, nothing is beyond the reach of the saint who is both diligent and dependent.

The realization of this will send us often to our knees. We shall earnestly seek illumination from above upon the pages of the written Word, and we may take it that our prayer is answered in proportion as we discover Jesus in our daily reading.

And further, with the continued study of the Scriptures, and increased light upon their teaching, new desires will take possession of us, new motives will influence us, and our prayers will become more an expression of God's mind than of our own desires. Apart from reading the Word, our prayers are apt to be merely the expression of our own wishes, limited more or less to our own little circle of interest; while on the other hand, if we do not give prayer its place, the Word has not its proper power over us. While our minds are being stored with its riches, our consciences are left untouched, and our souls are famished.

Very often difficulties that one encounters in the study of Holy Writ seem insuperable, owing to our natural yet pernicious habit of placing comprehension before faith. We hesitate to believe what we cannot understand. But this will not do in the things of God. We must implicitly believe every word of His that we read, whether we understand it or not.

We may be sure that the darkness is in us, not in His Word, and we can confidently look to Him for further light. But for this, if we dishonor Him by want of faith, we may look in vain.

We must not make reason our guide. In the Scriptures God addresses Himself, not to man's intellect, but to his conscience. Where the man of human wisdom stumbles and misunderstands, the simple soul whose conscience is at work may find no difficulty. Where reason can see no path, faith may proceed without perceiving any obstacle.

In conclusion let me point out that we shall make no progress in the knowledge of Christ unless we live in the power of what we already know. God teaches us His will, that we may do it. We may look in vain for fresh light until we have put into practice what He has already taught us.

Dear Christian reader, seek that your knowledge of God's Word may increase from day to day, so that your life may be more for His glory. Let your prayer be, "Help me to live the truth that I have learned."

Ignorance of God

The haughtiness of intellectual pretension which excludes God because it is incompetent to discover Him, and then talks of His work, and meddles with His weapons according to the measure of its own strength, can prove nothing but its own contemptible folly. Ignorance is generally confident, because it is ignorant; and such is the mind of man in dealing with the things of God.

In Vain Do They Worship Me

The words of our Lord Jesus as found in Matt. 9:8 have come forcibly to mind since the Roman Catholic Church announced, on November 1st, the dogma of the Assumption. Our Lord, quoting from Isaiah, said of the Jewish leaders, "In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

When He was here on earth the Jews were zealously observing many teachings and commandments of men while they slighted the plain Word of God. They were very careful to not transgress the tradition of the elders, but their very tradition transgressed the commandment of God (Matt. 15:2, 3).

And so it is with large segments of Christendom today. Church rules, church teachings, and church dogmas are carefully adhered to while the Word of God is ignored. Who gave any man, or any group of men, the right to add to God's infallible Word? We have in the Word of God the whole revealed mind of God; nothing can be added to that, and nothing taken away. Since that Word was completed there has not been any further revelation to supplement it, nor is there going to be. God has recorded the past, told us of the present, and revealed the future. He has given us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3); nothing else is needed. The Apostle Paul, writing by inspiration, said, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill [or, to complete] the word of God." Col. 1:25. It was given unto him to unfold "the mystery" and to give all that we are to have about the Church.

Furthermore, God in His Word has made no provisions for men to make additions to it, but rather takes us back to the beginning when speaking of the last days. Whenever error comes in, the resource of the saints of God is "that which was from the beginning." The Apostle John warns the saints of the dangers of the "last time" and refers them to the truth "from the beginning." (See both his first and second epistles.) The Apostle Peter, in view of his decease, warned of coming dangers and spoke about the saints having "these things always in remembrance" (2 Pet. 1:15) - not something to be revealed by some person at a later date. Jude in view of the last days exhorted the saints that they should "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3. The Apostle Paul, in view of his departure, told the elders of Ephesus that men would arise speaking perverse things, and grievous wolves would enter in, but the all-sufficient resource for them would be, "God, and the word of His grace" (Acts 20:17-32). And in the last epistle he wrote he foretold of the last days of Christendom with their appalling moral conditions which make perilous, or difficult times, but he held up the "holy Scriptures" as something that would remain stable, always trustworthy, and useful: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect [complete], thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

And what is this new dogma,

this precept of men that was introduced with great pomp and ceremony, and by papal decree made binding on all Catholics everywhere? It is that the virgin Mary after her death was taken bodily into heaven and her body "saw no corruption." And now if any Catholic "presumes to think otherwise" he is branded as a heretic, as one who has departed from the faith. Such is the pressure that is applied to the acceptance of a commandment of men.

This dogma is another step in ascribing to Mary that which alone belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone as a man down here among men was without sin, and He alone was raised from the dead without seeing corruption. Of Him, and of Him only, did the 16th Psalm speak: "For Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol, neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to see corruption." v. 10, N. Trans. The Apostle Peter confirmed this when speaking by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). On that memorable occasion Peter expounded the Scriptures to show that the Lord Jesus was delivered by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," and that God raised Him from the dead without seeing corruption, according to the word spoken by the mouth of David and recorded in the 16th Psalm. He proved that David had not been speaking about himself, for he was dead and buried, and his sepulcher was still there; David saw corruption, but he "being a prophet,... spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell [hades], neither did His flesh see corruption." vv. 30, 31. The Apostle Paul rehearsed the same thing at Antioch in Pisidia: "Wherefore He saith also in another Psalm, Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption." Acts 13:35-37. In all this there is no room for Mary, or any other person, to share the singular glory that belongs to Christ. To affirm that it was true of Mary is to "consent not to wholesome words...

and the doctrine which is according to godliness."

Many legends, dreams, visions, speculations, and myths have been interwoven with this false assumption, and many unscriptural notions have become correlative; for instance, this has led to the reference to Mary reigning as the "Queen of Heaven."

Perhaps it is significant that the only place where we find the expression "the queen of heaven" in Scripture is in the book of Jeremiah (chaps. 7 and 44) where we have Israel indicted for the gross idolatry of worshiping this false deity. All became involved in it-"The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven." Chap. 7:18. In Israel's day this probably referred to the moon, but, alas, in Christendom it is Mary.

In Scripture we never read of a queen reigning in heaven, nor really of a queen in heaven. The New Testament reveals that the Church (that body of believers from Pentecost to the rapture) is to be "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Mary will be a part of that Church, a part of the Bride, for she found a Savior in the Lord Jesus, and was present among the disciples in Acts 1, waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit to baptize all believers into "one body," which also came to pass a few days later, on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2.

In Rev. 19 where the marriage of the Lamb is prophetically recorded, there are only two companies of believers, the Bride herself (the Church of this dispensation) and the guests, "they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (the saints of other ages, as John the Baptist said of himself that he was "the friend of the Bridegroom"). No special place is here found for Mary;

she will have a blessed portion as a part of that Church arrayed in fine linen.

Figuratively in the Gospels "the mother of Jesus" sometimes represents Israel. She was present in Cana of Galilee at the marriage feast where Jesus turned the water into wine (John 2), but that scene is prophetic in character, symbolizing the wondrous time that is coming during the Millennium when the Lord shall bless Israel and give them the wine of joy which they have so long lacked.

Let us stand on the firm ground of the unalterable Word of God which lives and abides forever, remembering that "Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Pro. 30:5, 6.

Israel and the Church

Israel was a people according to the flesh, separated in external things from all others, in a particular country which had been assigned to it as its abode.

The Church is a people drawn out of the midst of all others although dwelling in the midst of them, dispersed over the whole earth, and in which all national characteristics are completely set aside.

Israel's nationality was according to the flesh. Every one who was born of Israelitish parents, circumcision on the eighth day being observed, was an Israelite.

The Church's unity is according to the Spirit. It is neither pedigree according to the flesh, nor any ceremonial which makes a man to be a Christian, but only faith, and the being born of the Spirit.

A Few Thoughts on John's Gospel

The doctrine of the Gospel of John does not go beyond the seventh chapter. In chapter 6:33 we have incarnation; in verse 51, death (we eat His flesh and drink His blood); and in verse 62 we have ascension - "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" Then in chapter 7 we have the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the whole thing is completed.

In chapter 8 a fresh thought comes in. We find Him as the light of the world, detecting every man's conscience. In chapter 9 He gives eyes that men may see. He is light in chapter 8, but if anyone wants to see, he must have eyes to do so; so in chapter 9 we read (v. 6), "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle"; the clay (incarnation) and the "spittle" (something more, and from Himself), and "He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." That which he gets from Christ Himself gives him sight; and all are in antagonism to the man in a moment. Who does not know that when your eyes are opened to see Jesus the world is against you? Pharisees, Jews, parents are against this poor man; but he has got his eyes opened.

Chapter 10 gives the doctrine of chapter 9 - the 9th being an illustration, the 10th the doctrine. Then at the close of the 10th chapter, He completes the circle of His mission in Israel, and comes back "to the place where John at first baptized," beyond Jordan.

Now in chapters 11 and 12 we have God putting His seal on Christ in His three Sonships. He is the Son of God in chapter 11; in chapter 12, the Son of David, when He enters Jerusalem; and then the Son of man. But as soon as He speaks of Himself as the Son of man, the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die.

Chapters 13 to 17 - a series of chapters which give us the new service and teaching of the Lord as beyond the cross. In 13 His new service for His own is taught. Exod. 21 gives us in figure a picture of this service. The Hebrew servant would not go out free; he loved his master, his wife, his children; he would not go out free. His master shall bring him unto the judges, and shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

You will find what a remarkable place the ears have in the scriptures which speak of the service of Christ. In Psalm 40:6, 7, "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; Mine ears hast Thou opened [or digged]:... Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God." The Son says, "I delight to do Thy will." What is the place of a servant? To have no will - the ears always opened to receive commands. In Isa. 50:4, 5, the ears are again mentioned - "He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned [learner, or instructed]." "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Heb. 5:8. Here, notice, it is never said that He learned to be obedient. To a child you say, You must learn to be obedient; but of Christ it is said, He "learned obedience," because it was a new thing with One who ruled all; and besides, there was not the will to be disobedient in Him. "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able

to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect," etc.

In Exod. 21 the servant's ears were bored through with an awl, and he became a servant forever. So Christ: He loves His Master, His Church, His people - all. His time of service here on earth was over. But there is one thing about the Lord's service above all others - He never gives it up. He is the servant now, and will be the servant in the coming day (Luke 12:37).

He took the form of a servant. Could you take the form? No; because you are one. How blessed if the heart can enter in the smallest degree into what it cost Him to do this. In the gospels He labors and toils for poor souls, and when He has done it all, He begins again when gone on high. He came to have a place with His people here, but received it not; then He will prepare them for having a place with Him there; He cannot remain as man in a defiled earth, but He will have His people there, and He will fit them for the same.

Joseph and His Brethren

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age." Gen. 37:3. For this his brethren hated him: and Joseph dreamed and, for his dreams, his brethren "hated him yet the more." "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit," and ever seeks most diligently to find a cause for the display of its animosity. Joseph could not help the fortune, or misfortune, of his birth; and the dreams of his unconscious hours could afford no honest ground for the hatred of his kindred. But it was jealousy, and "jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire"; and they "could not speak peaceably unto him."

The flesh ever seeks its own, and others' gain often only aggravates it to manifest its works: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." Gal. 5:19-21. But what we shall see, the Lord helping us, in our short perusal of the life of Joseph, is the unpretentious dignity and perfect manly meekness of one who has to meet all this, though led on in triumph by the One to whom, as his great-grandfather had learned, nothing was too hard.

Highest honor was before this stripling, the youngest but one of all his brethren; and the way to it was through clouds and storms, shame, suffering, and loss. But through it all Joseph exercised the greatest patience - no fighting for his rights, or undue faithless vindication of his character. The language of his life and habit was, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.... My expectation is from Him." Psalm 62:1-5. And God was faithful, as ever, to show Himself strong in the behalf of him whose heart was perfect toward Him. He continually manifested Himself on his side, and crowned his life with honor, and recorded in the list of acts of faith accomplished by the accounted worthy ones, of whom the world was not worthy, what he did "when he died." (Heb. 11.)

In Gen. 37 Joseph was sent by his father in search of his brethren, but when they saw him they conspired against him - picture of those who, in a later day, when the blessed Antitype of Joseph came, said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him." But Reuben delivered Joseph out of their hands.

It is blessed to see how in every emergency God provided a way through or a deliverance from it for His servant. Truly "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about His people" (Psalm 125:2). It was necessary, in order to the fuller development of the type, for Joseph to be delivered out of the hand of his enemies, while the language of Christ was, "Our fathers trusted in Thee: they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. They cried unto Thee, and were delivered: they trusted in Thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man.... Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death" (Psalm 22). Nothing but deliverance out of death could be His lot, while with Joseph, as with Isaac on Mount Moriah, it was deliverance from it. For Joseph, "the pit was empty, there was no water in it." The cry of Christ was, "Save Me, O God; for the waters are come in unto My soul."

.. The floods overflow Me" (Psalm 69). It was necessary for Him to die, who had volunteered to do the will of God, thus making atonement and bearing the judgment of our sins, as our Substitute. Spiritual blessings and life eternal could only thus be brought to us, while the temporal blessings, fruit of Joseph's sufferings, enjoyed in his day, did not need it, as far as Joseph was concerned. Yet it is important to understand that all the world is benefited by the propitiation of Christ; and all benefits and blessings, temporal or spiritual, enjoyed by any, saved or unsaved, from Adam to Joseph, and on through our day and the coming age, are alone based on it. By reason of the propitiation of Christ, the sinner exists, is preserved, surrounded by a multitude of mercies, and called by the gospel to a standing in grace. How solemn and wonderful this fact of the world's indebtedness to Christ, extending to every creature in it, though only the tiniest proportion ever returns "to give glory to God."

"And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?... Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites." They lusted after his life; no credit to them that they did not take it; it answered their purpose better to barter away his body. Judah suggested the sale of his brother, which was effected for twenty pieces of silver. Judas, in after days, sold his Master at a greater price, for thirty pieces. Then they dipped Joseph's coat of many colors in the blood of a goat they killed for the purpose, and presented it to their father, thus deliberately carrying out their wicked plot to do away with Joseph and deceive his father.

To what lengths will envy and hatred not go, and what will flesh not do, if unrestrained by grace, to gain its selfish ends? Jacob at once identified the coat, and thought of

the worst to account for it; he was troubled at the rumor of war (Matt. 24:6). "It is my son's coat: an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."

What will Jacob do under these circumstances? Will he be like David, who, when told that the child was dead, "arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshiped"; and further said, "I shall go to him"? (2 Sam. 12.) No, he refused to be comforted, and said, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him."

Jacob looked no farther than the grave, and at that only as the close of the days of mourning. David, as so constant with him, looked beyond it, to resurrection. And learning the grace, and rejoicing in it, which meets his unrighteousness, says, "My tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness. O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise." Psalm 51:14, 15. God has said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." Psalm 50:23. David did it, making his affliction brought on by his sin, the occasion of it, having learned the grace that ever abounds over sin when it is confessed. He had first said, "I acknowledge my transgression."

Jacob neither glorified God nor found a well for himself in the valley of Baca. David entered upon the joy of the morning, "I shall go to him"; the other got no farther than the season of weeping unless it were the grave, his deliverance from it. One speaks of going to the house of the Lord as a worshiper, the other of going to the grave, a mourner. Jacob had lost something that his heart was set upon on earth and, like the disciples in an after day, was "sad." They had trusted that it had been He, who now was crucified, who should have redeemed Israel, what they desired; and when they were come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the

kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6. What did He answer them? He told them it was not for them to know the times and seasons, and led their thoughts away from that which their hearts were set upon, and which they could not possibly get, to what was to be their infinite gain and proper portion; the Holy Ghost was coming, and they should receive power, and be witnesses for Him - not "mourning" or "sad," but witnesses in power to a risen, triumphant, glorified Christ, and the grace flowing by reason of the smitten rock, from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth.

That which had palled their sanguine hopes in ignorance and blindness, had really brought to them far richer gain for their enjoyment, and was a necessity to the fulfillment in another day, for another people, for the lesser blessing which they had hoped for. Unbelief ever seeks to legislate but God; we see it all around, and in our hearts - it has been the history of the world. In Eden it was suggested that it would be better to have what God had withheld; and their legislation, put in practice, brought them death.

In Canaan they preferred to be like other nations, and have a king; and yielding to their wish, that they might learn the folly of their legislation, "The LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." 1 Sam. 8:7. What was the result? A long history of failure, and dishonor done to God, with only a few bright spots, entirely due to the grace that pursued them in His faithfulness and love. We hear men daily legislating for God, as to the rain and sunshine, the heat, the cold; and in our daily circumstances, how often we bring in question His providential care: does it bring peace and happiness? on the contrary, such go mourning all their days, and forecasting sorrowful events, as did Jacob with regard to Benjamin, only bringing prematurely gray heads with sorrow to the grave.

Jacob did not doubt the "mischief" which they told him had befallen Joseph, and was very ready to imagine the like for Benjamin at a future time. Thus it ever is; the heart astray from God in unbelief is a ready prey to the caprice of imagination, the lies of men, and the subtle wiles of Satan. It is "the honor of kings... to search out a matter" (Prov. 25:2). Jacob seems to have taken no trouble thus; there is no keenness of faith to discern the lie; but accepting it, and refusing the comfort, thinking only of the grave, and himself as an object surely to be pitied, thus wept for Joseph. There was nothing for God in it, though perhaps he appeared a martyr. It was unbelief, believing only what it can believe - a lie.

Joseph and His Brethren

In Gen. 39 Joseph is "brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh,... bought him of the hand of the Ishmaelites, and the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man." Where is this that Joseph prospers, and that the Lord is said to be with him? Can it be in Egypt, the very place where his great-grandfather had lost, as to all real blessing, everything? Yes it is Egypt, the identical place and among the identical people or their successors. Then why the difference as to God's behavior toward them? This question with all its issues finds its solution in two words - "went" and "brought." Turn to chapter 12, and what do we find? "There was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there." "Joseph was brought down." It all depends on how we get into the circumstances we are found in, as to the approval or disapproval we shall meet with in them at the hand of God.

Joseph is brought down in the wisdom and goodness of God to preserve life, and God makes him to prosper, walking, like the man in the first Psalm, in uprightness, integrity, and godliness. Abram suffered loss because he was there for his own selfish ends, and to escape suffering.

We now find Joseph in prison; and surely if we did not know the sequel we should say, Joseph's day of prosperity is over now. No, it was only God moving in His mysterious way, His wonders to perform; and in the temptation God has proved His servant; and in the prison (because incarcerated there, not through his own sin, but by reason of the cruel, vindictive lies of one whose love turned to bitterest hatred when she found one more righteous than herself, and whose persistent rectitude the more disclosed her lack of it) He kept him company. The Lord was faithful, and through waves and through storms He led along, and in the prison was found with Joseph where, strange to say, he prospered still. Yes, success is certain to the obedient, for the Lord is ever with them.

Joseph does not wrestle and struggle: he can let his gentleness be known to all men, even surely to the prisoners in his care, as well as to those who had cast him there, for the Lord was at hand. (See Phil. 4:5.) How different it would have been with Joseph, had the circumstances of his prison life come about by his own sin or folly. But apart from this, two men may be in exactly the same circumstances, and their behavior be entirely different, the effect on the spirit being characterized by the way these circumstances come about, though the way in each case may be right, and even laudable.

Joseph was innocent of the crime he was charged with, and his deportment bore that mark, and the Lord was with him; and doubtless he had many quiet seasons of great refreshing, though we read not of exuberance of joy, as in other cases. The time of his imprisonment was long, but honors were conferred upon him even there; and like Uzziah, while seeking the Lord, "God made him to prosper." He, even here, is found in active service: and the man, so greatly to be honored soon, serves faithfully in his low estate.

Let us now take a peep into another prison, and learn a lesson from a man of an entirely different character. The Holy God has recorded of the impetuous Peter, in the days of his prison life, that he was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains. Blessed and timely sleep is this!

He had once slept when he ought to have watched; now he is, with unremitting care and unsleeping eye, watched over by the One with whom he had failed to watch one hour, but who had found an excuse for the failure, in the weakness of the body, while He gave him credit for all He could, saying, "The spirit truly is ready." Peter is here putting in practice what he afterward, in his epistle, presses upon others, when he speaks of "casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." The "due time" he speaks of in the previous verse for being exalted, in his case out of very low estate, came very soon.

Surely this scene of a sleeping Peter, in such circumstances, tells us that he at least knew something of the ease of the yoke and lightness of the burden of doing the will of God. To him the words had been addressed, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me"; and the One who had said them was now active in his behalf. Peter's heart seems not troubled, and his cares cast on another, whose pleasure it was to bear them, while the saints are soliciting, and triumphantly procuring, his release - not at the hands of man, but of Him in whom they

unfeignedly believed. Yes, they believed in an unseen Lord as much as in a visible Jesus; as they believed in God, so now they believed in Him (John 14:1). How blessed to be in such exercise and constancy of faith. Their prayers were without ceasing, though as is so often the case, there was a terrible breakdown when the answer came: "They were astonished," and said to the damsel, "Thou art mad."

A third condition of prisoner is found in Paul and Silas. Worse off apparently than all, backs bleeding and in the inner prison - doubtless a loathsome place - and their feet in the cruel stocks, but singing! Not serving like Joseph, nor sleeping like Peter, but singing at midnight!

"Joyful... in tribulation" was what characterized these prisoners, doubtless because t h e y were brought into the circumstances by service for, and in obedience to, Christ. They had witnessed for Him, and now they rejoiced to suffer for His sake. Rectitude and negative innocence, with prosperity, characterized the prisoner Joseph. Positive service, and spiritual - not characteristic - repose was with the prisoner Peter. Positive service, and worship in the Spirit, was with Paul.

As Peter sleeping in prison affords an example for his teaching, and the blessed fruits of its practice, for he had evidently cast his deep care upon another - precious picture of the repose and confidence of faith, portrayed too in the very one who had drawn his sword before, to gain his object, showing how grace mellows the spirit and displaces impetuous self-will - so Paul not only teaches, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God," but is an example of it by his practice, as in prison he "prayed, and sang praises." Happy prisoner of the Lord then is he who can serve like Joseph, though the sphere of it be very limited; or who can sleep or repose like Peter; or sing praises like Paul till "by the skilfulness of His hands" God Himself delivers! In each of these cases before us, how manifest it is that the hand of God delivered them. "He delivered them out of their distresses." Psalm 107:6.

The interpretation of dreams, the direction and guidance of an angel, the earthquake at midnight, could alone be interventions of

God. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men." But if we ask "not counsel at the mouth of the LORD," like Israel in Josh. 9, or pursue our own purpose notwithstanding God's Word crosses it, as in the days of Jehoshaphat and Ahab (2 Chron. 18), we need not look to prosper in our ways, nor for triumphant issues to our tribulations, nor hearts and lips full of praises for "His goodness and for His wonderful works." Anything other than His arm made bare for us, will surely only yield suffering intensified, difficulties multiplied, and spiritual poverty and death. How good and how excellent is the language of Asa when he "cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Low), Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee. So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa... There was exceeding much spoil." (2 Chron. 14:11, 12, 14).

Joseph and His Brethren

In Gen. 40 we get the account of the two men, the king's butler and baker, incarcerated in the same prison with Joseph, and put under his care. Coming in to them one morning, his tender

compassionate eye perceived that they were sad, and he asked them why it was. They told him they "have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." Joseph asked if interpretations do not belong to God, and requested that they tell it to him. Then the chief butler told his dream, of a vine with three branches; it budded and shot forth blossoms, and the clusters brought forth ripe grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in his hand, and he took the grapes, and pressed them into it, and gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. Joseph's interpretation was that the butler would be, in three days, restored to his butlership, and added, "But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house."

The chief baker, seeing that the interpretation was favorable, also told his dream. Truth is often only valued in such a case; the sands of fiction, sentiment, or vaunted groundless hopes being resorted to, to blind the eyes to its pursuit, when it favors not. Vain man! the thirst of truth, for right and justice, is not satiated thus. Unfavorable or favorable, its issues known or unknown, seen or unseen, truth abides the same; and if run counter to, its pursuit will surely end in the disclosure of the folly of seeking to blind the eyes to its approaching claims. The baker said, "I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: and in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats [or the work of a baker - margin] for Pharaoh: and the birds did cat them out of the basket upon my head." Joseph's interpretation of this was that in three days the head of the baker would be taken off, and he hung on a tree, and the birds should eat his flesh.

The ripe fruit of the butler, and the work of the baker, remind us of Cain and Abel and their offerings. Like Abel's offering, there is no human effort; the grapes are brought forth from the vine that budded, and ripe- ready for Pharaoh's cup. The "bake-meats," or "work of a baker," were the fruit of effort, like the produce of Cain's tillage. The baskets too were "white," or "full of holes" (margin).

Oh, how much toil and labor are expended, and only to be lost for lack of spirituality; how much sacrifice made and wasted, carrying with it untold disappointment and remorse, where if obedience had been substituted for it, which to God is so much better, what copious returns would it have yielded of richest blessings. But skill has been put in the place of faith; and the wages, dearly earned, have been put into bags with holes (Hag. 1:6) and wasted.

The birds of the air devoured the work of the baker out of the basket with holes. By works of law shall no man living be justified; it is death to try it. Faith appropriates a "ripe" and accomplished work, yielding revenues of wine to cheer the heart.

The third day, being Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast, and he restored the butler to his butlership, and the baker he hanged, according to Joseph's interpretation.

"Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." Well was it for Joseph that he did. Joseph was not to have his way; God's was far better, and exceeding abundantly more fraught with blessing than he could ever have asked or thought. "Two full years" Joseph waited in prison; and we do not read of his growing weary, or impatient, or fretting over his - humanly speaking, surely, to say the least -adverse circumstances.

He was in perfect innocence as to the charge which brought him there; perhaps there were only three for many a long year cognizant of the fact—the Lord, and Joseph, and the lying woman through whose guilt, though professing innocence and feigning rectitude, he suffered. But the Holy Ghost has revealed it now to us, and "the day" will disclose it to all.

"The LORD was with Joseph." Circumstances are no barrier to the Lord's presence with His people, be they poverty or riches, honor or shame, so long as there has been faithfulness to Him, and a good conscience retained; hence Joseph's composure and success. Paul tells us to be "satisfied with... present circumstances; for He has said, I will not leave thee" (N. Trans.), while at Philippi he provides an example of one rejoicing in apparently most adverse circumstances. They might put him in the inner prison, and make his feet fast in the stocks, but neither devil nor man could stop the flowing of that fountain of living water springing up within; and the Lord was with him. Peter too, in Acts 5, is seen rejoicing in suffering for the sake of His name, having been beaten for his faithfulness. Everything, as we said before, depends on how we get into the circumstances we are in, as to what we suffer or enjoy while in them. Thus two men may be in the same circumstances outwardly, yet the Lord, in this sense, only be with one of them.

The Lord was for Joseph, too, as well as with him—it could not be otherwise. And though the chief butler forgot him, He did not. What a comfort it is to know that we never are in any circumstance, whether we get there rightly or wrongly, through sin, or through piety, or through faithfulness, but God if needs be has ever got a right and a triumphant way out of it. It will call for self-judgment and confession, if it is through sin; much patience and waiting upon God in either case; but it is written for every trial, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13. If we do thus wait for Him, He leads in triumph, and none can stay His hand.

Joseph waited—"two full years" he waited, and like the blessed One of Psalm 40, when the right moment came, he could say, "I waited patiently for the LORD, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit... Blessed is the man that maketh the LORD his trust."

Had Joseph got his way when he made the request of the butler, all very likely that he would have gained as the result of such intercession on his behalf, would have been restoration to the place that he had lost, and most probably not so much as that; but when God's time came, he was brought forth from prison to sit among princes.

Little do we know how much we often lose because of our natural activity and readiness to resort to some expedient of our own, when we miss the incomparable blessedness of being fed by the "integrity of His heart," and guided by the "skilfulness of His hand." Peter, with all his activity and zeal, could never have achieved anything nearly so wonderful as took place for him when he was absolutely powerless and unable to put in practice any plan of his ever-ready invention. But this condition of helplessness made him a fit subject for the benefits of a far more skilful hand; and a greater manifestation of power, as to his temporal need, was exercised at such a time and in such a state, than ever, I should say, before. It was God's opportunity; He could bring in His resources now that Peter had none.

For such opportunities, I believe, God often waits, and often waits in vain; we fill them up ourselves, and the desired result is very hardly, if at all, acquired, and certainly not with the heart and mouth full of worship, for it generally costs leanness and barrenness of soul, disqualifying for all worship.

See that man in Acts 3, absolutely powerless in his crippled state, and no human device could effect a cure for the disease that had withstood the efforts of forty years - man's full testing time - but now entering the temple, leaping and praising God - a real worshiper. All he possessed, he had received; his cup was full - grace, pure grace alone, had filled it. And he was made - what nothing else but grace can make - a worshiper!

Pharaoh dreamed; and the butler remembered his fault, in the forgetfulness of his benefactor two years before. No one having been found able to interpret the dreams, Joseph came to the chief butler's memory; and "Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon"; and he who had been Pharaoh's prisoner was almost immediately found Pharaoh's counselor, and exchanged the dungeon for the "second chariot," and the faithful rule of the prison, for government "over all the land of Egypt." "And they cried before him, Bow the knee."

Are we not often very foolish in the things for which we wish and sometimes make request? And do we not often seek, and sometimes even make, untimely escapes out of circumstances not quite pleasant, or what we deem hurtful, or profitless? Such ways only add to our troubles, and hinder Him whose eye is never unwatchful, or hand resourceless, and whose way with us is ever in blessing. May this knowledge inspire in each of us increased confidence and patience. Joseph's way might have led to deliverance from prison, and there ended; God's way led not only from suffering, but to greatest honor.

Pharaoh decked Joseph with his own ring, vesture of fine linen, and a gold chain about his neck, and gave him Asenath, daughter of Potipherah priest of On, to wife, to share his dignities and honors. The pit and prison were his lot alone - Asenath was not with him there. So it is said of Christ, "He was taken from prison.... He shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Isa. 53:8, 12). He suffered alone. The Church, and Israel by-and-by, will share with Him the spoil. In His shame, the mocking, buffeting, spitting, and nailing to that cross, He suffered all alone - we had no part in that - yea, He suffered thus to spare us from it, whose due it was. He was the only One who could pass under the judgment of God and come out of it having settled its every claim. There is escape for none who get there, and no avoidance of it but by the One who voluntarily took the place in substitution for those who accept Him thus.

The Lord give our hearts to worship more and more, in such boundless love as this, and to rejoice in the marvelous place that grace has set us in, and appropriate the untold advantages and blessings that are ours as we take our Asenath place beside our risen and triumphant Joseph. "All are yours" - "Ye are Christ's" (1 Cor. 3:22, 23). The value too enhanced a thousandfold, as we remember all it cost Him to obtain it for us. And it was not mercy only - it was love! love that was strong as death, which led Him through it to obtain the objects of it, clearing them from every charge that could be brought against them, and enriching them and gracing them suitably to the place and dignity it was the purpose and affection of His heart to set them in.

It is precious to us, and surely gratifying to Christ, to entertain the consciousness in our hearts of what we are to Christ. What He is consciously to us, is no measure for this. In Eph. 5 we are told He "loved" and He "gave." What He gave is the measure of the love - justice claimed all - "Himself." Love yielded it; He "gave Himself." The same love occupies itself now on its precious objects which it nourishes and cherishes, till the day of the consummation of His ways with us, of infinite love and grace, arrives, and He fully gratifies His own heart's desires and affection by presenting to Himself the object He loved - died for - and ever since has occupied Himself about.

Joseph and His Brethren

"And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come,... and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread." Gen. 41:53, 54. Why was it there was bread in Egypt? Joseph was there! The bountiful fruit of Jehovah's hand during those seven years of plenty might have been wasted had not Joseph been resorted to, and his counsel followed. But presently the land of Egypt grew "famished," and the people "cried to Pharaoh."

May the Lord press home, dear reader, on your heart and mine, three words in Pharaoh's reply to those Egyptians. May they ring in our ears in each hour of need, and as a word from the Lord find a ready response, and prove our only resource. Pharaoh said to all who in trouble came, "Go unto Joseph." There was only one in all the land of Egypt who could satisfy those hungry souls with bread - that one was Joseph! The man, as in resurrection, had resources at his command capable of meeting the demands of all; and Pharaoh gave them title to make these demands. The Lord encourage our hearts in this. Is there a thing your soul has need of? "Go unto Joseph." Visit your neighbor in his time of sickness, poverty, perplexity, and trial, and whisper in his ear to "Go unto Joseph." Nothing is too hard for Christ, no demand too great for Him to meet, no desire (if according to His will) too trivial for Him to take all pains to gratify. It is God's delight, as He is also "able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." 2 Cor. 9:8.

How foolish, with such authority and encouragement as these Egyptians had, would they have been had they not gone to Joseph for the bread they needed! Then why such sadness, over carefulness, perplexity, and misgivings, in those who have far more than equal title, more numerous and varying claims, and a vastly superior Benefactor who loves, not merely pities, the objects of His care, and has said, "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it"?

What Egyptian would have thought of going to anyone save Joseph, when Pharaoh's word was, "Go unto Joseph"? We have often proved far more foolish, and fallen back on self, where only disappointment has always met us; or on some arm of flesh, the language of which, in effect, has ever been, though still we trusted it, the language of the king of Samaria to that poor dejected woman, "Whence shall I help thee?" implying that to seek it of him was altogether futile. "If the Lord do not help thee whence shall I help thee?" where is the arm of flesh that can? The Lord help us to "Go unto Joseph." Let us make it our daily practice from early morn, before our busy brains begin to plan the occupations for the day, to the latest minute of our conscious hours, preceding every new arrangement, or the putting in practice some already worked out project, to go to Christ. It is the only way for His servants to do His will and serve effectually. It takes not necessarily long to do; yea, our Joseph can be resorted to, as in Nehemiah's case, in so short a time as the interval

that elapses between the asking of a question and the giving of an answer; "The king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king." Neh. 2:4, 5. What pleasure too does it afford to go to our ever so accessible Friend and Master, leaving our failures and our successes with Him, and returning with all the cheer, help, and refreshing, His presence yields. Oh! there is nothing like it; may the Lord help us more continually to "Go unto Joseph."

But then there was to be obedience; "What he saith to you, do." How often we want to obtain the blessings Christ has for us, and adopt our own way about them. How desponding too we often are because we do not get the answer to our wish, just our way and at our time. Pharaoh implied that Joseph might have something to say to them before they got the bread, and that they would have to "do" what he said, as well as receive the blessing. So the Lord often has to say to us, and often bid us "do," before His grace is free in righteousness to flow; cleansing and obedience in Isa. 1:18, 19 precede eating the good of the land. It often happens that we have to part with something that we most cherish in our poverty, like the Egyptians in chapter 47, before He is free to minister and make us really rich.

We are told to "buy the truth"; in Paul's case he suffered the loss of all for the sake and furtherance of it. Truth that we really get is pretty sure to have cost us something in the getting of it; we have suffered loss - the loss perhaps of something that we prized --for the obtaining of that which, when acquired, gave us to pour contempt on what we prized, yet forfeited. The Egyptians bought and of course retained no longer that with which they bought - they soon spent all! The purchase of a loaf costs us its value; we cannot retain the money, and obtain the loaf. The Lord teach us what it means to "buy the truth," and also help us keep it. We are exhorted not to "sell it" - sad possibility - woeful calamity - thus to part with what is real and of inestimable value for what is vanity, and yields vexation. This is often done.

Obedience and blessing never part company; there will never be the one without the other. Obedience ensures the presence of God. Christ said, "He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 8:29. And again, in chapter 14, "As the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." May we, as a people "elect... unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," obeying as Christ obeyed - the responsive outflow of what we are - be found thus walking; to "do" whatever He says, that He may freely give, and, as we take the benefit conferred, own that it was grace from first to last that brought it to us. The asking anything, and keeping His commandments, go hand in hand in John 14:14, 15. The desire of faith, that was accompanied with an obedient heart and an empty hand, was never yet repelled.

"When Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons,... get you down thither, and buy for us from thence;... Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt." Benjamin was left behind. "Joseph was the governor over the land." The youth that a few years before had been branded with the direst calumny that malice could invent, and the prisoner of Egypt's dungeon, was now seen Egypt's lord and governor. His way to honor, power, and glory, surely lay along a rugged road akin to His, that blessed One, on whom was heaped

all the cruel fruits of envy, hatred, jealousy, and malice, who stood for judgment, God incarnate! but who "because He is the Son of man," is appointed Judge of all the world.

The One who shall presently have the government upon His shoulders, once bore the cross upon them, and stood, gorgeously and impiously arrayed, in mockery, falsely accused and unjustly condemned before governors on earth. But grace was there, abounding over all the sin; it was to save the nation, as Caiaphas the high priest said, "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." John 11:50. The full answer to this will come when that which was His accusation once to prove Him false (John 19:21) is manifestly proved the truth, bringing His accusers and murderers, for whom He made intercession, into richest blessing on the earth.

A remnant of that nation who crucified their king will reap rich harvests, like Joseph's brethren, through the grace that so much more abounds over the abounding sin, and which finds in the occasion of their greatest folly, calamity, and guilt, the opportunity for forming divine titles for those who had forfeited their all - not to the fulfillment of some forlorn or even sanguine hopes of theirs, but to the enjoyment of all the thoughts and fruits of love and grace that were in His heart for them, and which alone could be brought to them by His baring His own bosom to the wound inflicted by divine justice, and thus bearing the judgment they deserved.

Oh, it was love - unbounded love - the love of a single eye that left not God out, as Joseph thinks not of his brethren's cruelty, but said, "God meant it unto good." So Christ finds rest in the welfare of others after crossing those boisterous billows; and having shown them His hands and His feet, wounded in the house of His friends, says, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name." "God meant it unto good."

"Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them." These men were, be it remembered, guilty men - guilty of the foulest of crimes, and murderers in heart.

But Joseph loved them - they were his brethren - and he yearned to make himself known to them, but could not do it in their present state; their consciences must first be reached. This is indeed a patient work with Joseph. Nature would suggest an immediate shower of invective and threats of vengeance; but this would only frighten and, if executed, leave the heart and conscience still more callous than before. Joseph possessed his soul while he spoke "roughly" with his lips. It was the roughness of love; any other character of love would have been out of place - indeed, not really love at all - and to make himself "strange" was the effect of such a love to those in such a state. Aught else would only have been weak and human kindness, and in its results totally barren of all that Joseph yearned to see produced. They "bowed down themselves before him," because he was the governor. But this partial answer to his dreams was not enough to cause him to commit himself unto them; he knew their state, and what was in them. It is written of Christ, He "did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all." But there was a man in the

next chapter (John 3) whose conscience had been reached, to whom He unfolded the love of God. So with Joseph - their consciences reached and righted, he could express the love that filled his heart. But it was the same love that "roughly" spoke before, that presently was marked with the most gentle touches of deep affection, and flowed profusely in manifest, richest blessing.

Doubtless Joseph's brethren did not like the roughness any more than Joseph liked to use it, but it was salutary and necessary for them; so he choked the tender emotions of his heart to display that

which gratified him less but was for their gain. "God is light" and "God is love." As light, He makes manifest all evil. Known only thus, the world would be left in blank despair, doomed to irrevocable judgment, without a single ray of hope to margin the cloud - the death pall enshrouding everything and everyone. But "God is love!" Oh, wondrous tidings! Relief - deliverance from all fear of judgment, all that the

light reveals fully met and adequately atoned for. But more, far more! The One through whom all this is brought to us, uttered words on that night ere His betrayal that speak volumes to our hearts. Just listen to them: "Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." Here is an account opened up for Him and by Him, in which He lets us men for whom He suffered participate in fullest measure. God has been glorified in Him; and we become, in practical enjoyment, the objects of His eternal love and favor. The incense has filled the holy place (Lev. 16:13) - the fragrance of His Person. God is glorified in Him, and His love flows in exhaustless rivers of unmingled blessing.

Oh, who has not felt the roughness, who needed to be convicted of our sin, when in "a far country" with the husks, and amid swine? But what a welcome! what a home! what a banquet! the love had provided them when the light had revealed our darkness and guilt, and the roughness had made us fear because we were not in a state to love. How gladly now we kiss the rod which we did not like, and bow before the One who appointed it, and own the wisdom, tenderness, and grace of all His ways. Yes, it was love that told us what we were, and that all our religiousness which, because it had not Christ for an object, only inflated us with pride, and was most obnoxious to Him. But we did not like that sort of love till we were thoroughly exposed before Him, and we found, like Joseph's brethren, that we were in the presence of One who knew us through and through, and all our history, and the sin and misery we were in, though it was gilded over with a false pretense of truth and uprightness.

Surely we have here a wonderful and vivid picture of God's dealings with His people, not only when they were strangers to His grace, but when they have known it but through carelessness, neglect, or sin, lost the sense of it. With tenderness, patience, and mercy, He passes them through paths of suffering and hardness, in order to bless them. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other in the cross. But how we see the counterpart of this in God's dealings with His people. The mercy and peace are there waiting for the appropriation and enjoyment of every ready soul where the answered claims of truth and righteousness have prepared the way for their enjoyment. What patience Joseph displayed too, and what pains he took to reach and exercise their consciences! What a tale it is - the famine, two journeys from Canaan to Egypt, the sacks with the money and the cup, and the retaining of Simeon, and much more.

Joseph spoke roughly to his brethren, yet never did he love them more, if indeed his absence from them had not made his heart grow fonder. Ardent affection was burning in his heart for them, but the time for its display was not yet come; it must be suppressed till it could flow so that the objects of it could receive it and its benefits untarnished by the bitterness of undiscovered sin, and the pangs of a guilty conscience that would not be quieted.

How did these men come to Joseph - murderers in heart and liars that they were? They styled themselves "true men," and disdained the thought of being "spies," though in the same breath they

say, "One is not," meaning Joseph whom they had sold. This then is the secret of Joseph's roughness - not the lack of love, but the wisdom of it - an abounding love that cleared the way for a permanent benefit, and more agreeable expression of it.

Joseph's way is God's way ever; He reaches the heart by the conscience. Heart work without conscience work will never be permanent. It is like the seed on the rock - there is joy, but no root, and presently (and necessarily) a falling away.

I think we find the spring of all these wonderful ways of Joseph with his brethren in three little words in Gen. 42:18 - "I fear God." It is a holy, blessed fear, answering in character to the fear of Heb. 12 where we are exhorted to "have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:" for our God is a consuming fire." Solomon also tells us that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." Pro. 1:7. Cornelius, the man so richly blessed in Acts 10, "feared God with all his house." Where this proper holy fear is, there is sure to be blessing, and it is such that are invoked to worship in Rev. 19:5: "Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great." Of Israel it is said, in her day of future blessing, "Thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged." Isa. 6:5.

Joseph and His Brethren

Joseph, the man so greatly honored at the end, could well say, "I fear God," for it was what had characterized him all through, and was only the echo of his first recorded words spoken in Egypt when he met the tempter with, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen. 39:9. Joseph's brethren thoroughly lacked this kind of fear; Joseph sought to create it. Then they were boldly protesting their rectitude and faithfulness-that they were true men - and pleading innocence to such a gross charge as being "spies." He told them that he feared God, bringing them into His presence who is light, and their darkness was immediately revealed, their consciences reached, and real fruit produced. What a change! what a contrast! "We are true men" is the language of verse 11; "We are verily guilty" is the confession of verse 21. Greater extremes there could not be - "true," or "guilty" - it is the bringing in of God that made the difference. What a state was theirs! conscience awakened and reproving, and one of themselves soon found reproaching - Reuben Answered... Spake I not unto you saying, Do not sin against the child?" And matters would only grow worse till all was out in the presence of Joseph. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"; but before there is communion, the sins or failures must be admitted or confessed. These men had to do with one who knew their history and sin; but of communion with him they knew nothing till their consciences were reached, and he had revealed himself, and all their sin being admitted, was forgiven.

What cowards had bad consciences made of these wretched men! Their asses were laden with corn, and provision was given them for the way; but in stopping to give their asses provender at an inn, one spied his money in his sack, and exclaimed, "My money is restored." Had they been "true men," according to their own boasted character, surely they would have found in this a cause for joy and thankfulness; certainly full sacks and money returned were no honest cause for producing hearts and tongues like theirs. We read, "Their hearts

failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?" Here we get the other kind of fear. It is not the fear of God that Joseph had. Their fear was

the fear of a bad conscience; Joseph's was in perfect harmony with a good one. They feared because they were offenders; he feared lest he should offend. Theirs was the fear of distance from, and estrangement to, God; his was the fear of nearness enjoyed, and communion too much valued to be lightly treated. Theirs was the fear of judgment; his had a quality in perfect conformity with the favor in which he stood. Those that saw that great light when Paul was smitten down on his way to Damascus were afraid when they saw it, while a holy fear filled Paul's soul as he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22). Such is the sinner's and the Christian's fear! - the fear of distance and of nearness, the fear that keeps us away from God, and the fear that brings us nigh. May God increase this pious fear in all His own who know the nearness, and want to keep it in all its sweet enjoyment.

But though their fear was so different to that of Joseph, yet would he have rejoiced to see such an effect produced. It was just what he was toiling for; and the agony of their souls at this display of the bountifulness of his love and grace, would have been an adequate reward. He had been wounding them, but they were "the wounds of a friend" that he gave them, and much better than kisses, while they were in such a state. It was the divine tact of his patient serving, and he wisely wounded that such a cure might be effected that would leave them forever thankful for the wound. The process seemed long, but it was the only one likely to be effectual. A foolish and inefficient angler will dash at his prey, and effectually drive it away, while the skillful and successful display long patience and silent tact. The Lord help us thus, whether it be with our failing brethren, to "restore such a one in the spirit of meekness"; or poor sinners, to win them wisely, for "he that winneth souls is wise."

Nature might have suggested one of two other courses to Joseph. Self-vindication would have prompted him to tell them how bad they were; and that he was their brother whom they put in a pit and afterward sold; and now that he had got the pre-eminence above them, as he had dreamed, he would exercise it in their destruction. Or nature might have wrought in its other character, displaying nothing but honey; Joseph's heart would have discharged itself of the affection burning in it, regardless of the unfitness for its reception, and left them in a state ten times worse than it was before, and much harder to be cured. No; it is "salt" that is "good," not honey; and what it affects it also preserves. Had Joseph dealt with his brethren in the first manner stated, in anger and judgment, with no grace, instead of there being produced the "fear of God," it would have only produced "the fear of man"; and that we are told "bringeth a snare"; and "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Jas. 1:20. While so-called love at the expense of truth, displayed where wrong is, which remains unchallenged and unconfessed, is only an amiability which reflects discredit on its possessor at every expression of it. Joseph was not going to make for peace at the expense of righteousness.

There can be no real peace which has not a basis of righteousness and truth. Melchisedec was "first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace." Heb. 7:2. We are living in a day of marvelous grace; but it is grace reigning "through righteousness," and that because, in the cross, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace kissed each other." "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." Isa. 32:17.

I do not wish to weary my reader with this part of Joseph's history; but it is a lesson of deepest importance in this day of looseness, and a real feast as one discovers Christ in the picture - though necessarily obscured by reason that every subject of delineation can only meagerly represent the model. Yet the moral dignity of Joseph is grand to a degree. Malice and violence would have been most weak, unmanly, and ungodlike, in their present low estate; but in those three words, "I fear God," there was real moral power.

I dare to tarry one moment more with my reader over this blessed, wondrous picture, and seek to see portrayed therein, the outlines of many a case of discipline through which a greater than Joseph, with unremitting mercy and unerring skill, leads His people, to create the fear He so appreciates where He finds it not. Yet how often do we fail to own whose hand it is that shakes the "sieve" of discipline (Amos 7:9), which will not let the least grain fall upon the earth, in order to deliver from the "fan" of judgment to "bereave" and to "destroy" (Jer. 15:7). He never unnecessarily afflicts; and He prayed for Peter whom He disciplined. A curse is pronounced upon the man "whose heart departeth from the LORD," and surely this is ever where the fear of God is lacking. "He shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness." Jer. 17:5, 6.

How the lack of this holy fear of God deprives of all present gain; and human reason - the carnal mind allowed to work - is the first step to its displacement. The fool says, "There is no God," but the greater fool is he who practically disowns the truth he verbally assents to. It is nothing less than infidel in principle to talk of God, yet live as though He were not. The effect of this lack is the allowance of practices, plans, and inventions which are on a level with the world, if not below it; and every transaction must necessarily be compatible with its tenets and, of course, the fear of God is hardly to be expected there.

The "fear of God" is the Christian's highroad to truest gain and the fulfillment of the Spirit's taught most sanguine hope; and all we need to meet the difficulties we find along it is faith in exercise that, perchance, more in woe than weal, owns there is a God. Let this go, and the road that I have named "the fear of God" is at once most surely departed from for another we may name "the fear of men or circumstances," where unbelief toils, and schemes, and plans, and yields a copious treasure of sorrow, disappointment, and endless remorse.

Mary's prophetic language was (may it ring in our hearts), "His mercy is on them that fear Him, from generation to generation." Luke 1:50. And His ears are seen hearkening to those to which Malachi refers who "feared the LORD, and spake often one to

another; and the LORD harkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name." Mal. 3:16.

In Luke 12 we are told to "fear Him," and to "fear not" (vv. 5, 7). We are of more value than many sparrows; why should we be fearful of circumstances which the same hand overrules that provides for them, five of which are sold for two farthings (one is too worthless to find a measure for its value) and "not one of them is forgotten before God"? The Lord forewarns whom men are to fear - "fear Him,... yea, I say unto you, Fear Him."

This fear seems to be one of the first manifested instincts of the divine nature; and it is beautiful to see it displayed in such a vessel as the thief upon the cross, to whom before, doubtless, it had

been a characteristic most foreign. This malefactor rebuked his comrade, saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" It is evident that he did, and in the next breath owned Jesus "Lord" - "Lord, remember me."

But to return to Joseph's brethren. Marvelous indeed their language in verse 28, had we not the secret of it. Their sacks were filled, their money returned, yet they exclaimed when one was opened, "What is this that God hath done unto us?" It is the language of fear, calamity, and woe, out of place even in the day of adversity, yet found in the midst of unexpected plenty. Ah! it was their wretched, guilty consciences that made them miserable in the presence of that which might have made them glad. The ointment was good enough - yea, very good! - but the dead flies made it stink (Eccles. 10:1).

They passed on to Jacob their father, and told their story; and when the sacks were opened in his presence, and "they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid." Jacob manifested the same character here that was so common with him, and was full of fear, unbelief, and forebodings of calamity; and as he had once found satisfaction in his own invention of an evil beast devouring Joseph, to account for the blood upon the coat, so now already to his unbelief, "Simeon is not," and mischief may befall Benjamin by the way. "All these things are against me" now; and if his "ifs" - the "ifs" of unbelief

-are, shall I say? gratified -for unbelief often carries with it a wretched self-made martyr or morbid spirit which only feeds upon itself like the moth which soon, though outwardly all fair and perhaps beautiful, becomes a corpse - his gray hairs would be brought down with sorrow to the grave. Poor Jacob! when these things came to him, did he pray? No. Did he rejoice in the midst of his tribulation? No. Did he worship? No. Was his language up to God at all? Did he say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"? No. Did he make the valley of Baca a well? No. "All these things are against me," is his woeful cry; he beheld not the hand of God in any of it; and it was true of him, as of his posterity, of whom it is recorded, "They have not known My ways." Heb. 3:10. God was working in all these things for that end which presently made Jacob weep for very joy; and then if he looked back, what a waste must have met his view! The remorse of lost opportunities for glorifying God as each trial or sorrow arose, because he met it with repining instead of in faith, with all its excellent fruits, and all that he had done had only tended to hinder, certainly not to accelerate, the fulfillment of God's purpose.

Joseph and His Brethren

In Gen. 43 the carnal mind was at work again, scheming and planning, doing this, and taking that. Joseph was still in rejection; they knew him not. Famine drove them again to Egypt, for it was "sore in the land." But first there was a little battle between Jacob and his sons as to Benjamin going with them; they argued, "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." Jacob reproached them, for the sake of saying something. They were idle words on the face of it: "Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?" This could not alter circumstances now; but unbelief is always wordy and full of reasoning. A scheme was then adopted to appease the wrath that unbelief doubtless proposed, or to remove difficulties, or secure the safe return of Benjamin. It was Cain's line of things over again - doing, for that which grace alone can bring, and "double money" taken for that which can only be procured without money and without price. The grace of Joseph is

accounted for as an "oversight," and therefore to be returned.

Having arrived in Egypt with their "present" and "double money," they stood before Joseph, whose eyes lit upon Benjamin; and he ordered his course accordingly. The present, fruit of their doings, was apparently disregarded then; they gave it to him at noon, but his thoughts were otherwise engaged, and all was silent as to his receiving it. Joseph ordered the ruler of his house to bring the men home, to slay and make ready, for they should dine with him at noon. So the man brought them into Joseph's house. Were they happy, in such a favored spot? in circumstances that might well answer to the most sanguine hope of glory of many an Egyptian noble who never lived to see it realized. No; it was the same old story; their feelings ever answered to their state. They had not cleared themselves, and the fortune of their circumstances yielded no barrier to their fears: "The men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house." And now that they were again afraid, what will they do? Will

they quietly wait and say with the Psalmist, "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee"? Psalm 56:3. No, they occupied themselves with working out a reason for what they were passing through, and finding no time or inclination to judge themselves, they judged Joseph, saying that he was seeking occasion against them, to fall upon them, and to take them for bondmen, and their asses.

They then told all the story of the sacks and money to the steward, who, though probably an Egyptian, had evidently learned, perhaps from Joseph, more of God and His goodness than these, the seed of Israel, appeared to know. His language was blessed and, like Joseph when he uttered those three words, "I fear God," so the steward brought them again into the presence of God. The holy God whom Joseph feared, was the God in blessing whom the steward owned and reminded the sons of Jacob of, and with emphasis, as peculiarly theirs. "He said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them."

When Joseph returned at noon, they brought their present to him, "and bowed themselves to him to the earth." Joseph then asked of the welfare of their father; and they bowed down and made "obeisance" to him, according to his dream in chapter 37:7. "And he (Joseph) lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber and wept there"; then "they drank, and were merry with him." Yes, they were merry with him; the feast and the wine had for the moment changed their state of fear and humility for that of merriment. How different the merriment in Luke 15. It is the father there who says, "It was meet that we should make merry" - language that Joseph could not utter. In Luke it is lasting, for it is well founded on confession and forgiveness, and ratified in the blood of the calf. Here it is only a covering over, and it soon gave place to fears, and a desire to "clear ourselves."

It is said, "A thing well done is twice done"; with God's things, all badly done must be undone at some time or other; a rent patched up, a flaw glossed over, will never do. Joseph had not called forth the merriment; things looked smooth, but truth was in pursuit of them, and their shameless nakedness must be discovered, for Joseph had blessing for them.

Joseph now put in practice somewhat sterner measures, to effect that which he so much longed to see. He commanded the steward to fill the men's sacks, and put their money in them, and his silver cup in the sack of the youngest. And as soon as morning was light they were sent away, and their asses.

"And when they were gone out of the city,... Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing." So he overtook them, and thus spoke. They replied, "Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing." Then they told of their wonderful righteousness in taking back the money - and how should they steal silver or gold in this way? Ah! how should they? but by the same covetous, natural heart that robbed their father of his son, and sold him for twenty pieces of silver! They were stout in their denunciation of such a charge, and offered the life of the one with whom it would be found, and the service as bondmen of the rest. When search was made, as the reader well knows, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. So they rent their clothes, laded their asses, and returned to the city, and fell before Joseph who was still in the house. He asked them what they had done - "Wot ye not that such a man as I can surely divine?" They knew not what to say or how to clear themselves. They admitted that God had found out their iniquity, and all offered to be Joseph's servants. This he declined, but said that the one with whom the cup was found should be his servant. Then they repeated the story of what they had said to him on their previous visit to Egypt, and what they had said to Jacob, and what he had said to them; and Judah finished by saying, "How shall I go up to my

father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

In chapter 45 we get the touching story of Joseph making himself known to his brethren. He did it in secret, first causing every man to go out. He did not brandish abroad their sin and shame (the revealing of himself was the revelation of all their guilt) - he did it in secret. The disciples were not present in John 4 when the Lord revealed the woman's sins; and in chapter 8 the accusers had departed before the Lord charged the woman there to "go, and sin no more." How much suffering would be saved if the love which Joseph and the Lord displayed, which covers a multitude of sins - yet rightly exposes them when needed - were more in practice! "Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?" The question got no answer; it was the same old story: they were troubled again - "troubled at his presence" - too troubled to answer. They were troubled when they got the money back in their sacks - full sacks and money returned. They were troubled when they were taken into Joseph's house. Now they were troubled in their long-lost, loving brother's presence. Each occasion might well have been an occasion of greatest pleasure. There was only one reason for it all - a guilty conscience! Joseph had revealed himself, and revealed their darkness and distance from him and from God. But this was not enough; their case would indeed be bad if left like this. "Perfect love casteth out fear," and the service of love is not completed till this is done. It is questionable whether these men were ever "made perfect in love," for long after, this fear again arose in their hearts. But this was not Joseph's fault; not the fault of the reconciler, but the reconciled, though of course Joseph was only human after all.

Blessed be God! we have to do with a divine Person, and a reconciliation based on a divine foundation, by reason of which the love flows, and fear, where the love is intelligently known, is

necessarily dispelled. Law and fear could never be divorced; neither can love and fear ever be reconciled, except it be that holy, pious fear which is proper to the love, which its presence ever only magnifies, and hence is by all means to be cultivated.

The tidings, "I am Joseph," carried terror to their hearts. He spoke again, "Come near to me, I pray you," and confidence took the place of fear and trouble. "They came near"; and in this state and place of nearness he found a fitting opportunity to remind them of how they had sold him, their brother, into Egypt. He assured them of his love, then wounded to reach their consciences; then, because all was fully out, he healed the wound, bade them not to be grieved, and, as ever, introduced God into the scene as being over all their cruel ways with him; and at the same time - and how grand the divine tact here - he gave them credit for being angry with themselves. He said, "Be not angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."

Israel, his brethren, and Egypt, the world, were all preserved in life through Joseph; and thus he was pleased to account for all their treatment of him. The Lord said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And again, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." John 12:24, 32. It was necessary for Him to die; yet, though because of it the world is convicted, by the presence of the Holy Ghost, of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come (John 16), the very ground of judgment becomes the ground for pardon and blessing, where there is faith to lay hold of it. "God meant it unto good." God makes the wrath of man to praise Him; and in Joseph's case, the subject of the wrath became the minister of blessing, even to those who inflicted the cruel tokens of the wrath. Nothing brought such praise and glory to Joseph as that which was occasioned by his brethren's wrath. Nothing ever brought such glory to God as that which was occasioned by the sin expressed in the wrath of man against God's beloved Son, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

How complete is the deliverance wrought out by Joseph! It was not only "a great deliverance," as he called it in verse 7, but he spoke in verse 11 of nourishing those he had delivered. It is "forgiveness of sins, and inheritance" (Acts 26:18). The debt paid and a fortune to go on with. But where was this fortune to be enjoyed?

He said, "Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen,... near unto me."

They had been brought near at first (v. 4), and forever, it was his thought, should they enjoy an abiding nearness, enhancing surely to them the value of the fortune.

The Lord says of His brethren in Jer. 32:41, 42, "I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul. For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them." It is Joseph's roughness in order to the good that he had purposed should follow. Our salvation, if only from judgment, would indeed be "great," "a great deliverance"; but nothing, absolutely nothing, in comparison to all the infinite gain that is ours, in that the One who delivered us by dying, now nourishes us in life. Joseph had passed through death in figure, and it had saved them; and now their life, safety, and fortune were dependent on him in life. He lived and prospered - they lived and prospered also. If we have been reconciled by the death of God's Son when enemies, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life

(Rom. 5:10). And we live on account of Him (John 6:57). He has delivered us by death, from death; He nourishes us in life by living for us. He has brought us nigh, and given us to know that it gratifies Him to have us there. It is His will and pleasure, too, that we should be where He is in very fact; and to this end, did Joseph place "his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses." Gen. 47:11. So the Lord Himself shall come and take and place us where He is in the place He has gone before us to prepare. Such is His heart that, like Joseph, nothing but the best befits, in His esteem, the objects of His love and care.

What a blank it would be if deliverance were all and this great gain not in prospect for us! Yet how many a soul never seems to get beyond the deliverance! Joseph spoke to his brethren of their deliverance, their nourishment, and prospects. The Lord give us to hear and love His voice as He speaks to us of all three. The Shepherd who dies to deliver in Psalm 22, nourishes as He leads in green pastures in Psalm 23, and speaks of prospects and future blessing in Psalm 24.

Joseph and His Brethren

It got to the ears of Pharaoh that Joseph's brethren had arrived in Egypt, "and it pleased Pharaoh well." "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land... and the children of Israel did so."

Joseph gave them "provision for the way," and a parting exhortation, "See that ye fall not out by the way." This seems rather a remarkable exhortation, and ungrounded and out of place, did he not know their hearts. Now that he had reconciled them to himself, who once hated him so bitterly and treated him so cruelly, he knew their danger lay in that they might fall out among themselves.

He had known what it was for anger, malice, and jealousy to separate between himself and them; and now his desire was, and he exhorted them to this end, that the same thing might not be found among themselves. There was no fear of falling out among them selves while in his presence, for his presence occupied and kept them, though his keen perception had doubtless observed the rising of it in Reuben's reproach in chapter 42:22. Their danger was, when absent from him, that they would forget him and the grace that had abounded over their sin and, failing to see the beams in their own eyes, would set to work at the fruitless task, in such a case, of casting out the motes in their brethren's eyes - an attempt, under such circumstances, only to be fraught with sorrow and disappointment. God forbid that we should be so indifferent, and so lack spiritual insight, as not to see the motes or beams in our brother's eye when they are there to see, for we cannot assist in the deliverance from them - surely a good thing - unless we see them. Neither let our love be of such a quality that we let them pass, noticed, but uncorrected or unchallenged, for correction is one of the most blessed exhibitions of love, when done in the spirit of meekness, that covers a multitude of sins; but the Lord grant us grace that it may never be done in the spirit that accords with "falling out." We are exhorted - and may it be more constantly before each of us - as far as depends on you, to live at peace with all men. Rom. 12:18; N. Trans.

This is not surely easy, but He who has given the exhortation has also given "provision for the way" for its accomplishment.

When Joseph's brethren arrived in Canaan, they told their father that Joseph was yet alive, and that he was governor over all the land of Egypt. "And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." He always seemed to disbelieve the good and to believe the bad, and surmise bad where there was not certainty of good. The selfish supplanter of youth, at the expense of others, had grown up into the old man, reaping a full harvest of what he had sown.

Whether it be success or failure for the present that attends our faithless schemes and plots, is of little moment when compared with the effect in future suffering such practices have upon the spirit. Jacob's early sorrowful history, in which Rebekah his mother so much figured, bore marks never to be effaced on earth. He had acted as if there were no God, though he was loved by Him when yet unborn (Rom. 9). And now that he was old, he seemed unable to credit God with good, or trace His hand in blessing, or enjoy the sweet repose so grateful to old age, the fruit of confidence in such a heart and such a hand, learned in all the varying circumstances of such a life.

"When he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived." "When he saw." Nothing but seeing was believing with Jacob; when he saw he believed, saying, "Joseph my son is yet alive." Sight produces resolution too - "I will go and see him"; and "Israel took his journey." When he "saw," and not till then did he say, "it is enough."

We do not read of Jacob praying when the famine came, but we do read what he did when he saw that there was corn in Egypt (Gen. 42:1). It is the language of the doubting Thomas, in John 20: "Except I shall see in His hands... I will not believe." Jesus appeared a second time, when Thomas was present, and His gentle rebuke upon Thomas's confession of Him then was, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Sight does not call for faith, and its only advantages are present things. Faith is

far more excellent; it is the substantiating of things hoped for (Heb. 11:1). The world goes on the principle of sight; it knows nothing better; the present is its gain. The Christian lives and walks by faith, with the brightest hopes to buoy him over the adverse' currents of the present, which swamp the boasted freights of sight, but leave him rejoicing ever.

In Gen. 47 Joseph brought his father into the presence of Pharaoh, who asked of him his age. The reply was sad indeed - a pitiful whine, totally devoid of a single chord for God. It was the knell of parting days which would appear to have had no ray of sunshine for Jacob's memory. Ah! he had forgotten, or was too much self-occupied to think of it, that blessed hour when the "sun was set," and on the way to Haran, with stones for his pillow, God had brought before the unconscious Jacob those wondrous mysteries, the ladder, the angels, and the promise; and how he had called it the "house of God," "the gate of heaven." It was a wonderful revelation, though he spoiled the blessing of it to his soul by his vow, and by his bargain; he was ignorant of grace.

Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." And Jacob blessed Pharaoh and departed. How different the language of Paul in Acts 20 where he says, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy," having testified of the "grace of God," and at the end does finish his course with exultation, saying, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7), and looked forward to the loved appearing

of his Lord. It is just the contrast to Jacob who counted his life so dear, so short, and finished it, not with joy, but with groans and sorrow, without a word of the grace ever so abounding over him. How often is our language much the same, ever recounting the so-called "evil" of the days or years, instead of boasting in the grace that has unremittingly pursued us!

The third circle was brought into blessing round Joseph in this chapter. The circles became narrower as they became more intimate. I will name them, beginning with the smallest and most intimate. None can question that of all the recipients of Joseph's favors, beneficence, and love, Asenath, his wife, was first. Nearer and dearer and smaller this circle, if such I may call it, could not be. Her place was unique, without fear of rival. As we said before, she had not suffered with him, but she certainly shared the spoil. His suffering and reward were both her gain, though she only participated in the latter; and of all the objects of Joseph's love and care, she, though little spoken of, we doubt not, was pre-eminent.

Joseph's brethren came next - a larger circle, though barely numbering seventy. These he dearly loved, suffered for, reconciled, and enriched. This circle answers to Christ's brethren after the flesh, who, like John the Baptist, shall rejoice to hear the Bridegroom's voice (John 3:29), which once they not so much as even regarded; but through repentance and Achor's valley (Hos. 2:15) - the "door of hope" - the judgment he sustained for them will have this, their "joy fulfilled." Joseph suffered for them as well as by them (at their hands), then reconciled them to himself by making himself known to them. Truly this was love and grace in Joseph; but they only got the second place, though there was a natural link -they were his brethren. Asenath remained unrivaled still, though a Gentile, where no link according to flesh existed ere she became his wife, a fact that foretells the greater grace to be displayed, which now, in this our day of highest privilege, so enriches the objects of it, bringing them into union with Him, the true Joseph, who, as to fact, is still in rejection by His brethren. But as Joseph in the days of his rejection took Asenath to be his wife, so Christ will - before His brethren according to the flesh, in repentance look on Him whom they pierced, and mourn, and welcome Him back with, "This is our God; we have waited for Him" - present us to Himself, a glorious Church, His bride forever.

The third circle is the Egyptians. His wife was given him. His brethren reconciled. Egypt he bought - and the Egyptians. The field-the world-Christ bought (Matt. 13). His brethren are gathered and associated with, and blessed under Him on the earth. His Asenath - the Church - is given Him. All the money of the land of Egypt passed into the hands of Joseph, and when all their money was exhausted, they came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence?" Why, indeed! Evidently Joseph was most accessible, even to these strangers; their very question suggests it to us. Why should they be wanting, while he had plenty? Yet they had no money. So he told them to give their cattle, their houses, and their flocks, for which he returned them bread. And when that year was ended, they came again and said, "We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent. My lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not aught left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands." At their extremity and wits' end they told him all, keeping nothing back and Joseph's ready ear was open to their complaint, and his services at their disposal. He had their confidence, and they offered their bodies and their land; "Buy us and our land." In Gen. 47:23 he told them, "I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land." When they had "spent all," and had nothing more to sell, and yielded up their very bodies, then, and then only, did they get the seed for sowing the

land, four-fifths of the produce of which was to be their own. How we see the purpose of God as to the pre-eminence of Christ brought out in all this! In all these circles Joseph was supreme. It is like a pyramid with Christ the top and center. He will reign and subdue all things unto Him, and thus ratify in manifested power what He effected in the cross - the purchase of the world, the largest circle, the Gentile in the day of the fullness of the Jew.

Next, and higher in the pyramid, are His brethren, the circumference diminished greatly, yet consisting of a company numerous according to the promise as the sand by the seashore. And higher still, nearest and dearest, the Church - His body now, His bride hereafter, companion and partner in His glory, and first object of His heart's delight. The three companies are found in Rev. 7. The personal pronoun, "I," represents the Church - our Asenath. John was in the place of separation, and state of "in the Spirit," which should characterize all who succeed him and share with him Church privilege. This circle - a unit (the Church is one) - is followed by another circle, consisting of a hundred and forty-four thousand descendants of Joseph's brethren. And then the Gentile

company - a great multitude which no man could number. And "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them," in unchallenged pre-eminence.

Joseph and His Brethren

Gen. 47:25 affords a harvest for thought in three sentences: it gives the summary of a saint's life - "They said, Thou hast saved our lives," "let us find grace," "we will be Pharaoh's servants." Life - grace - service!

Apart from Joseph, they were as good as dead. Joseph was life to them, and they were preserved, for God sent him "to preserve life" (Gen. 45:5). Life is the first thing here; it is the first necessity for all to follow. Faith, as to life, was the first little bit of fruit for God to see after sin, and by sin death had been introduced upon the scene by our first parents. "Adam called his wife's name Eve [living]; because she was the mother of all living"; and the very next verse records, inferentially, how God shed blood, thus providing a righteous ground on which to answer that faith which He had inspired in His fallen creature's heart. Fallen, ruined, and banished from the garden of delight - the scene of the days of his innocence - life is preserved in the death of another.

How thankful may we be, who have learned our deep necessity to be "born again," that Christ is our life - the eternal life - the gift of God.

To "find grace" was the next thing they desired. This was very blessed! The people belonged to Joseph - he had bought them. But to be his by right, and his in grace, were two different matters, though the grace accorded to them for their comfort would in no wise forfeit his title to them. We can understand their feelings, whose hearts doubtless turned with deepest gratitude to the one who had been so used in blessing to them. To know him only as their benefactor who had saved their lives, would have been terms far too cold to meet the emotions of their gratified hearts. He had dealt in righteousness with them, returning to them for their money and cattle and lands and bodies the bread and seed they needed, saving their lives. But they wanted more - his favor! God has acted thus to us: Christ was delivered for our offenses, raised again for our justification, thus forever settling the claims of righteousness. But by Him also we have access into this grace wherein we stand. Oh, what should we be without this standing in grace! Even the Egyptians

required it before Joseph, and I doubt not he accorded it to them; and the relation between him and the people he was over, was not only established in righteousness, but enjoyed in grace. It is the cold, heartless invention of humanity that acts the benefactor and maintains the benefactor gait toward the object of it. None could have acted in greater measure toward us as benefactor than the One who has righteously brought us to Himself, and then set us in the closest intimacy and relationship that love could suggest, or grace provide.

We are exhorted by the Apostle to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Doubtless the preserved of Joseph from famine and death, found also in him a constant friend - "grace to help in time of need." How foolish if they did not avail themselves of such a friend and such a privilege; how ten times more foolish we who, having a much, by far, better place and title to be at it, are so often found away, weaving our own plans and getting entangled in their meshes, disowning the grace, denying the truth, and reaping in shame the results of our folly.

The next thing they spoke of was service: "We will be Pharaoh's servants." The order was perfect; not service first - serving in order to become Joseph's, or gain his favor - but serving because they were his. They found unconditional grace, and volunteered their service for the debt they owed, for the grace that had first served them. The terms too were theirs, not Joseph's - the expression of their thankful hearts. What a contrast we find in the relation between Joseph and the Egyptians, and the Egyptians and the Israelites, Joseph's brethren, in after days. The grace of the one calls forth the ready service of those under his control; while the arbitrary, cruel, and exacting bondage of the other makes its subjects groan and wrestle for deliverance from the thing the others sought - service. The service of grace is perfect freedom; it is of the Spirit, and "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Service, so-called, which is not this, is not really service at all, but the fruitless toil of will, or the restlessness of nature, or_ legality of spirit, or an opiate for an uneasy conscience, which it may often for the moment prove, blunting its sting, and drowning its voice, and abiding meanwhile the chief barrier to restoration of communion, and to the path of real service and fruitfulness to God.

In chapter 48 we get the only point in Jacob's history of which Paul makes mention. In dying, faith makes Jacob a blesser- he "blessed both the sons of Joseph." He had the agreeable surprise of seeing Joseph's seed when, as he admitted, he had not even thought to see Joseph's face. Jacob was in the act of blessing others and, as is surely ever the effect of such a service, it shed a ray of sunshine over everything; and the story of his days being "few and evil" is changed for the following acknowledgment of good, and benediction on his grandsons: "He blessed Joseph, and said, God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed [or shepherded) me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." There is nothing like occupation with good, and the abundance of the grace that surrounds us, and the blessing of others, to gladden our hearts and lighten our burdens and quicken our steps as we pass through the valley of the shadow of death. "It is more blessed to give than to receive"; it was Jacob's happiest moment, to judge by his language.

In chapter 49 we get the interesting account of what should befall the sons of Jacob in the last days, as he tells it to them when gathered around him. It is a prophetic stream of time of Israel's history from its apostate state before our Lord's first coming to His return, when He who was

rejected by His brethren will sway His blessed scepter over them and the Gentile world - "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Jacob then gave commandment as to the place of his burial. Canaan was the only fitting place for this, for those whose hopes were for the earth, to be realized in their seed, though they themselves were heavenly. Thus Jacob died, "and Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him." Long were the days of mourning, and long indeed the train of mourners that accompanied Joseph and his brethren to the funeral - all Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the

land of Egypt, all the house of Joseph and his brethren, and his father's house, all except the little ones. There went up also chariots and horsemen, "and it was a very great company." And at the threshing-floor of Atad "they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation." Yes, it was true - "Jacob have I loved"! It was not his ways that had won the love, or obtained the favor in Egypt or anywhere. It was the sovereignty of God in grace, and Joseph the means to its greatest display.

"And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him." This is another time we read of Joseph weeping. He wept when he saw his brethren at their first interview with him; he wept again when he saw Benjamin on their return to him, and again when he made himself known to them. On all these occasions, though there was sorrow mingled with the tears of joy, a heart full of thankfulness and praise was the source, doubtless, from which they sprang. But this time it was unmingled sorrow, and the outflow of a pained heart and grieved spirit. They mistrusted him; he was not really known by those who should have known him best. His fidelity was doubted by these unfaithful ones for whose reconciliation, and far more, he had suffered years of shame and pain and sorrow. But where was the source of this last wound for his tender, loving, and compassionate heart? If what they said was true, it was in the unbelieving Jacob. It may have been a lie; at any rate, he got the credit of it here; they said their action, base and cruel, was at his command. So if the story of his sons to Joseph was a lie, it was easy to be believed; if true, not wondered at. And so it ever is; the saint, however high the ground he takes, if walking badly, may expect to be credited with much, not true, that is very bad; and what is true and bad readily received without doubt or question; and all the good, whether much or little, is choked by the true or false report of evil, which not only easily obtains, but ever multiplies where it obtains, to almost the entire extinction of all credited good.

Joseph told them not to fear. Once they knew nothing of fear; now it was of a wrong sort - they put him in the place of God, and he reproved them for it, and told them they had thought evil against him, but "God meant it unto good." How different this to the language of his father - "All these things are against me"! Joseph got to the other side of the clouds that God, not accident or misfortune, had brought across his path, and discovered the mercy, love, and goodness that were there. Surely his language was:

"With mercy and with judgment

My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lustered with His love."

All had appeared ill, very ill! The bud had indeed had a bitter taste, but "much people" were saved alive by it, so Joseph was satisfied, and the bloom was sweet; "God meant it unto good." Joseph satisfied them too, saying, "Fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them." How often would we, in such a case, so seek to speak as to make so grievous an offender as one who had drawn forth tears of pain, feel bitterly the indignity put upon us, or misjudgment of our motives. Not so Joseph! he reprov'd at the reproach of supplanting God by another, though that other be himself, and overcame the evil of their false judgment of him with good. He bared his heart by speaking kindly with his tongue, and dispensing the blessings of his hands, covering, yet reprov'ing, their iniquity.

At dying, Joseph's faith was still in blessed exercise; and though all seemed exceedingly well in Egypt - had almost in reverence of the Egyptians, and with all the plenty of the best part of the land - much, very much more was needed before the full answer to the promises of God would be realized. Boundless stores of far richer grace were still laid up for the heirs of promise, and faith could be satisfied with nothing less than this - the full development of promises partially fulfilled. The land of Canaan, rich with its teeming full-ripe fruits, and royal display, is Israel's hope; and the faith of those

whose portion this is, alone rests there.

The Christian's portion is heavenly, and a Person there, and to win Him is the only true destination of Christian desire, and to "know Him" his present gain. When God has promised, faith alone is satisfied with the attainment in fullest consummation of the promise made, though it also yields patience to wait His time for its enjoyment. Thus it was with Joseph, who declared when about to die, "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." This was not said in the days of Joseph's low estate in Egypt, but in the day of honor and prosperity; and it is that which makes it so precious, and in the sight of God, surely, of great price; it is the faith that only counts as really gain, and the fruition of all hope, what God has promised and bestows.

May God add His rich blessing to these simple lines, and prove Joseph indeed to be "a fruitful bough" (Gen. 49:22).

Judgment Seat of God and of Christ

I am not aware that this expression, "The judgment seat of God" (N. Trans.), or "The judgment seat of Christ," is found anywhere else than in Rom. 14 and 2 Cor. 5; in the first of these two passages with a view to present individual judgments; in the second, with a view to provoke to do good. The subject in itself is one of the most solemn and, at the same time, most blessed, and this so much the more as we understand it rightly. I believe that each act of our lives will be manifested then before the tribunal, according as the grace of God and His ways with us in connection with our own acts will be known then. We read (Rom. 14) that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God," and the word in this passage mentions the tribunal in connection with the exhortation to brethren not to judge one another in respect of days, meats, or any other such thing.

I am disposed to think that the acts alone will be subject to manifestation; but all the private acts of our life depend so intimately upon our inward feelings, that it is in a certain sense difficult to distinguish the acts from the inward thoughts. The acts manifest the power of the thought, or of the feeling. I believe that the whole of our acts will be detailed there, before the judgment seat; not for us, however, as if we were in the flesh, and thus to our condemnation, but to make evident to our own eyes the grace that occupied itself with us, regenerate or unregenerate. In the counsels of God I am elect before the foundation of the world; hence, I think that my own history will be detailed before the judgment seat, and parallel with it the history of the grace and of the mercy of God toward me. The why and the how we did this or that will be manifested then. For us the scene will be declarative - not judicial. We are not in the flesh before God; in His eyes, by His grace, we are dead. But then if we have walked according to the flesh, we must see how we lost in blessing thereby, and what loss we have incurred; and, on the other hand, the ways of God toward us - all ways of wisdom, of mercy, and of grace - will be perfectly known and understood by us for the first time.

The history of each one will come out in perfect transparency; it will be seen how you yielded, and how He preserved you; how your foot slipped, and how He raised you up. Again, how you were drawing near danger and shame, and how He by His own arm interposed. I believe this is the bride making herself ready, and I consider that moment is a wondrous one! There will be no flesh then to be condemned; but the new nature will enter into the full knowledge of the care and of the love which in true holiness and in righteousness, and even in grace, have followed us step by step all through the running of the race. Some parts of our life, till then entirely unexplained, will be fully disclosed, and become altogether plain; some tendencies of our nature that perhaps we do not judge to be as pernicious and deadly as they are, and for the mortification of which we are perhaps now subjected to a discipline that we may not have interpreted aright, will be then perfectly explained; and what is more, the very falls that plunge us now into such bitter anguish, will be seen then to be that which God used to preserve us from something more terrible.

I do not think that until then we shall ever have a full knowledge of the badness of our flesh. How blessed for us to know that then it will be not only all over with the flesh in the counsel of God, but

that the flesh will no longer be attached to us! On the other side, I doubt not the manifestation of God's grace toward us individually will be so magnificent that even the sense of the perversity of the flesh that we had, if it could possibly enter there, would be excluded by the greatness of the sense of divine goodness. Why do we not deny and mortify the flesh when we think of that hour? The Lord grant that we may do so more and more to the glory of His grace. The great subject of the judgment seat brings the soul to a very full knowledge of our individual standing.

King of the North and the Roman Empire

The question is often raised -What does the Word of God say about Russia? In comparison with the prophetic pronouncements concerning the Roman Empire, and concerning another confederacy located just north and east of Palestine - called in Scripture the "king of the north" in some instances, and the "Assyrian" in others - very little is given concerning Russia. The reason for this should be obvious: Russia has never once come into direct contact with Palestine, nor will she do so in the future (as far as prophecy is concerned) until the very end; that is, until after both the Roman Empire and the "king of the north" have met their doom at the hand of the "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

As for the kingdom just north of Palestine, it was Syria in the days of David and Solomon, and was subject to them, but it afterward revolted and was hostile to Israel. Later this territory became part of the Assyrian Empire, and after that of the Babylonian; then it passed to the Persians, and came under Alexander the Great of Macedonia after his conquest of the Persians. On the death of Alexander, Seleucus Nicator took over that section of his empire and founded a kingdom which lasted for many years. This kingdom often battled Egypt for control of Palestine and ravaged "the pleasant land." The first 35 verses of Dan. 11 give some rather detailed prophecies about the "king of the north" in his relations with the "king of the south" (Egypt), and with the land of Palestine. All of these were accurately fulfilled so that even open skeptics marvel.

In B.C. 63 the "king of the north" was conquered by the surging power from the west - Rome -and then Palestine passed under the Roman Empire's control. The future holder of the power in this locality (a confederated Moslem state) will also be the implacable foe of the Jews. Dan. 8:23-25 and 11:40-45 foretell what is still future of this power, and its doom.

The Roman Empire of the past also had much to do with Palestine: it was in the day of its dominance that the Lord Jesus came into this world; in fact His birth is dated according to the Roman rulers (see Luke 2:1); and under a Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was cast out of the world. Later the Romans under Titus destroyed Jerusalem and slaughtered the inhabitants according to the prophecy of the Lord spoken in a parable (see Matt. 22:7).

And in a time for which the world is getting ready, there will be a confederation of Western powers which will assume a protectorate over that unhappy land of Palestine and make a league with the Jews for the re-establishment of their religious observances (see Dan. 7:19-26 and 9: 27). This will pit the kingdom north of Palestine and the revived Roman Empire against each other, but both will be summarily dealt with by the Lord when He returns to claim the kingdoms for His own - the first to be judged will be the Roman Empire, and then the "king of the north" (see also Rev. 19:20, Isa. 30:31-33, and 31:8, 9).

Thus we see why these two great powers have been the subject of revelation which has been fulfilled, and of that which will yet be fulfilled - they have had to do with the seed of Israel and with Palestine. We must bear in mind that prophecy is not God's foretelling what is going to happen in

order to interest the speculative minds of men, but He is concerned with His earthly people and that land on which His eyes are continually (Deut. 11:12), and it will be the earthly center of Christ's millennial kingdom.

God has decreed, "Yet have I set my King upon My holy hill of Zion." Psalm 2:6. Jerusalem is the center of God's prophetic map.

In all this Russia does not enter as an active participant; she may aid and abet the "king of the north" in his opposition to the Jews and their backers - the Roman Empire - but she and her satellites will not come into the prophetic picture until the very end of man's day.

Because of the daring idolatry and open blasphemy of the apostate Jews in Palestine when working together with the revived Roman Empire, and with Satan, God will send that "king of the north" (the Moslem hordes) against the Jews and their leader. Isa. 10:6 says, "I will send him [the Assyrian] against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath... to tread them down like the mire of the streets." And in Dan. 9:27 we read: "because of the protection of abominations [or idols] there shall be a desolator" (N. Trans.).

But when Russia decides to come against Palestine, the case will be very different. The Lord will have put down the other enemies, purged the Jews, and brought the remainder of them from many lands back to their own promised land. They will be dwelling safely under "Messiah the Prince." Now let us turn to Ezekiel 38 and 39 and note some points of interest concerning the Russian invasion:

"Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal." (Note the similarity of these names with Russia, Moscow, and Tobolsk.) "And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them thoroughly equipped, a great assemblage with targets and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Cush, and Phut with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah from the uttermost north, and all his bands; - many peoples with thee... At the end of years thou shalt come into the land brought back from the sword and gathered out of many peoples, upon the mountains of Israel which have been a perpetual waste: but it is brought forth out from the peoples, and they shall all of them be dwelling in safety." Eze. 38:3-9; N. Trans.

When the Lord calls His earthly people back to their land, they will bring their silver and gold with them (Isa. 60:9). They will be prosperous and seemingly (to atheistic communism) dwelling without protection. They will look like an easy prey for such a mighty array of military might as Russia and her satellites will possess. God says that their leader will "think an evil thought; and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages; I will come to them that are in quiet, that dwell in safety, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to seize a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thy hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and against a people gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the middle of the land." Eze. 38:10-12; N. Trans.

God will prompt them to come up against that land that He might deal with them there. They shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, and so great will be the slaughter that it will require seven months to bury the dead; and so great will be the destruction of implements of war that it will be

seven years before the land is cleared. It is quite evident that Russia will still be a land power when overwhelmed at the hand of Him whom they have defied.

God is not unmindful of the bold atheism of that vast nation which has sought to eradicate any thought of Him, and to obliterate His name from under heaven; but "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." Pro. 11:21. No device of man can avert the complete catastrophe which shall befall her millions in Palestine. Nor will the destruction be limited to the men of war of Russia and her satellites, for God "will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the LORD." Eze. 39:6.

The land of Magog is Russia from which the armies came, and the isles are the distant places of her satellites - they shall be visited by divine judgments. Surely the triumphing of the wicked is short (Job 20:5).

Judgment is on the way, both for the openly godless, and, alas, for those also who make a nominal assent to Christianity, but reject the Christ of God.

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions [instructions] which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." 2 Thess. 2:13-15.

The Kingdom of Heaven — What Is It? Leaven Hid in the Meal

My dear Friend,

A more complete study of Matt. 13 will enable you to see your mistake. No doubt most of us have had the same idea with regard to "leaven" as that to which you have given expression. It arises from not understanding the true meaning of the term "kingdom of heaven." When this is seized, all difficulty vanishes.

To what then does the term apply? To the condition of things during the absence of the King. Is this a condition of unmixed good? Alas! far from it. "An enemy" has been at work. He has introduced "leaven" into the "meal." He has sowed "tares" among the "wheat." Are "tares" good? No; they are false professors. Is "leaven" good? No; it is evil doctrine, evil principles, evil influence. The "meal" is good; the "wheat" is good; the "pearl" is good; the "treasure" is good; some of the "fish" are good. But there are bad and good in the kingdom - in the professing church - in Christendom. Christianity is like the beautiful snow as it descends in its purity from the clouds. Christendom is the odious and unsightly slush produced by the mixture of earth's pollutions with the pure material.

But we must not confound the Church or assembly of God with the kingdom of heaven, or the body of Christ with Christendom. The most disastrous results flow from this confusion. It leads to the denial of all godly discipline in the assembly. We are told that the tares and the wheat are to grow together. True; but where? In the field. But is the field the Church? No; the Lord distinctly tells us, "The field is the world." Are we to root up the tares? No; angels will do that by-and-by. Are we to suffer known tares in the assembly? God forbid! "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." 1 Cor. 5:13.

May I ask you to give Matt. 13 your prayerful study? Come to it with your mind free from all your preconceived ideas, and Christendom's false teachings. Most of us have had to unlearn a lot, to unship a quantity of mere rubbish, in order to take in the pure and precious truth of God.

I am, dear friend, faithfully yours,

Leaving Us an Example: Part 1

"What was it, blessed God,
Led Thee to give Thy Son,
To yield Thy well-beloved
For us by sin undone?
'Twas love unbounded led Thee thus
To give Thy well-beloved for us."

There is a remarkable verse in the 2nd chapter of 1 Peter (v. 21). I am reading a part of the verse: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example." Perhaps we will turn to several scriptures this afternoon if the time does not slip by too rapidly. In our meditations in the readings that we have been having in Philippians, we were reminded that we are to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." That is very practical, isn't it?

Part of the mind that was in Christ Jesus, we have in this verse. He was minded to suffer for us, and in so doing He left us an example. One thinks we should stress this kind of thing, as we find it in other portions of the Word; that is, the spending of ourselves for the sake of that which is dear to the heart of Christ. "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it." "Christ... suffered for us, leaving us an example." He loved the Church, and He gave Himself for it. We want to weigh that expression. We want to seek, if we can, to have it stand out before us clearly - the love of Christ for the Church and our privilege of being imitators of Him in the manifestation of that love to the Church - the Church so dear to His heart.

Our first illustration we will take from the 32nd of Exodus. For the sake of brevity we will not read this long chapter. A resume of it is something like this: Moses is called of God into the mount of God to receive at the hand of God the law. He is there forty days and nights, and in the meantime, down on the plain below, are the children of Israel.

They wait for Moses to come back. Growing weary of the delay, they say, in substance, "As for this Moses, we don't know what is become of him. Let us order our lives as though he were never coming back. Let us make our own gods." They lost confidence in Moses because he was unseen. He was hidden there in the mount. Now Moses was a type of Christ, and the tendency in our hearts is, that as our Lord tarries, if I may use that expression, as our Lord waits for the moment of His return, we are apt to become lax, and one of the first signs of that letting down is that we become careless in our affections toward the Church of God.

Remember in the passage in Luke's Gospel where our Lord speaks of the servant who says down in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," immediately he begins to eat and drink with the drunken and to beat the menservants and the maidens. His attitude changes the moment he relinquishes the hope of the near return of his lord. There is nothing that keeps our steps ordered

in the path of holiness more than constantly keeping before us the fact that before the day is over, before the sun rises on the morrow, we may be called home to be with our blessed Lord. That moment will wipe out all the difficulties of the journey, all the trials that are ours in our family, in our work, and in the assembly.

Growing weary waiting for Moses, they made them a golden calf. Moses came back and found them engaged in a carnal worship. They weren't up to spiritual worship. They had dropped down to the plane of carnality. Moses, the man of God, filled with zeal, breaks those tables of stone, comes into the camp, and sees the execution of the judgment of God upon the guilty rebels. Where the glory of God is at stake, the honor of His name, God Himself deals severely. So it is that the Son of man in the midst of the golden candlesticks in the 2nd and 3rd of Revelation views the churches with a scrutiny that is pure and that is true: "Holiness becometh Thine house, O LORD, forever."

Moses put the tribe of Levi to a severe test; they were to take the sword and go in and out and slay their own flesh and blood. Yes, beloved, loyalty to God comes first. Look at the 14th of Luke, verse 26: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children,

and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Is that severe? Remember, those are the words of the blessed Lord Himself. He demands allegiance above every earthly tie. So in the 32nd of Exodus, end of the 27th verse: "Go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." 28th verse: "And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." Moses didn't cover up their sins; no he did not; but in the rest of this chapter, beloved (and that is what I had before me), there is something exceedingly lovely.

30th verse: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." He didn't soften their sin. He didn't mitigate their guilt: "And now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." Oh, the love in his heart for those poor, sinful people! He is not going up into the mount of God to entreat against them. He is going up into the mount of God to entreat for them.

31st verse: "And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin." He didn't minimize the sin. They had sinned greatly. They had made them gods of gold. 32nd verse: "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin -,

and then he stops. Eventually it sweeps over his soul - oh how can He forgive a sin like that? How can He? And then this great man of God throws himself into the breach and says, "If not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou halt written."

Ah, brethren, how much do we know about a spirit like that? Moses bears the whole guilty race on his heart before God. He pleads for God's forgiveness for them. "Oh," he said in substance, "forgive them, and if not, blot me out of your book." How he identified himself with their sin, with their awful condition before God! Now our blessed Lord Jesus was in a position where there was no "peradventure." When He went up the slope of Calvary to intercede for us, to die for us, there was no "peradventure" there, for He

bared Himself to the wrath of God, and He did what Moses couldn't do. He took the wrath on His own Person and stayed the storm of God's judgment - the waves and billows beat upon Him, and we go free! Moses had a heart like the heart of Christ; he wasn't in a position to do what Christ did, but he had a heart that was filled with that kind of a longing.

Yes, brethren, Christ died for us, leaving us an example. How dear to our hearts are the people of God?

In the next chapter, down toward the end, 12th verse: "And Moses said unto the LORD, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight." 13th verse: "Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people." Isn't that grand? He is casting that people back upon God, so he reminds God that they are His people. That is faith, beloved.

14th verse: "And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." 15th verse: "And he said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." Moses is determined to connect the people of God with God Himself. His attitude is, "We can't go up without Thee." So he insisted that God should acknowledge that link with His people. 16th verse: "For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people [Moses doesn't say my people, but Thy people] from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." How can God resist pleading like that? God delights to hear a man bear on his heart the burden of the people of God. Many characters in Scripture have done it, not only Moses. Daniel did it. Nehemiah did it. Oh, yes. Many a servant has borne on his heart the burden of the people of God.

17th verse: "And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight." If I may say it reverently, God capitulates, God gives in. He can't stand out before pleading like that. Not one grain of self was in that petition of Moses'. It was God's people he was thinking about - not himself.

Ah, beloved, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who... made Himself of no reputation." Why did He do it? For you and for me. "Christ loved the church." He died for it - left us an example. What do we know about giving ourselves for the Church of God?

Shall we go, for another example, to 1 Chron. 21:1 - "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." 7th verse: "And God was displeased with this thing; therefore He smote Israel." 8th verse: "And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech Thee, do away the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." We will notice a few things here. Satan was the one that thought up this scheme to get David to number the people, and David lent himself to the devil as a tool well fitted to the devil's hand. Someone might say, "Well, if Satan moved him to do it, he couldn't help himself." Oh, nothing of the kind! Satan knew before he ever moved David to number his people that David was in an attitude of pride of heart that made him easy prey. All that Satan had to do was whisper the suggestion into his ear and David was in a state of soul that caused him to give in immediately. So he ordered the people numbered.

David had a nephew by the name of Joab, a clever man of the world, an unsaved man, but a man experienced in reading human character - a clever politician, and quite a general. That man of the world sensed that David his king was making a blunder. Brethren, isn't it a sad thing that we children of God, when we get out of communion, can do such stupid things that worldlings can see it and rebuke us for it? A child of God out of communion seems more stupid than a worldling, and so Joab rebuked David for his folly, but he went ahead just the same.

Self-will is an awful thing. Oh, it has wrecked multitudes of God's people. David went ahead and numbered the people; he got his way. When the whole thing was over, and he had what he thought would make him happy, how did he feel about it? Oh, his conscience smote him!

Why is David called the man after God's own heart? I believe it is for this reason: that David had a conscience that was operative, and when he sinned he was willing to admit it one hundred per cent. When he made his confession there were no conditions attached to it - I have sinned. I have done very foolishly. I offer no excuse. That is a man after God's own heart.

Now if you are to see a contrast with this, look at Saul. Saul sinned and the prophet came to him and pointed his sin right in his face. What did Saul say? "I have sinned," and what was the next thing? "Honor me now... before the elders of my people." Oh, the shallowness, the hypocrisy of it all! What is the difference? His language was almost word for word the language of David. What was the difference? One man was exposed before the eyes of God, and conscience was at work, and he was smitten in contrition before his God. The language of David on another occasion was, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." Psa. 51:4. How was it with Saul? Saul was sorry that he was caught. He was found out, but the only thing that concerned Saul was, "Honor me now... before... my people." About whom was he thinking? He was thinking of Saul. All his thoughts revolve around Saul.

Now let us see how it was with this dear man of God. 13th verse: "And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me now fall into the hand of the LORD; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man." Oh, that dear saint knew the heart of his Lord. The evil servant in the Gospels when brought to account said, "I knew thee that thou art a hard man." He didn't know the heart of his lord. "Very great are His mercies." The Lord sent pestilence upon Israel, and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. One of the saddest things I know about is that when a saint of God gets away from God, gets into sin, he oftentimes drags with him into the path of sin, corruption, sorrow, and suffering many others of God's dear people. That is one of the tragic things about it. When you and I miss the path and go wrong, the likelihood is that we are going to lead somebody else.

In the last chapter of John's Gospel, Peter went back to his

fishing. The Lord had called him away from that occupation, but the yearning for that old trade comes back and he says, "I go a fishing," and he took six men with him. Ah, yes. He took six men with him into a, fruitless night of toil. All night, yet they took nothing. When we go wrong, we take others with us into a fruitless departure. How sad!

17th verse: "And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let Thine hand, I pray Thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on Thy

people, that they should be plagued." O brethren, there is something majestic in that prayer. What a clean, blessed confession it is - I have done the sinning. I am the one that is guilty. He doesn't lay the blame on Satan. He doesn't say, "The devil made me do it and I couldn't help myself." He says, "I have sinned... but as for these sheep, what have they done?" Oh, that is the heart of Christ!

Leaving Us an Example: Part 2

You remember, beloved, when our Lord made that last march to Jerusalem, the mob came out for Him with lanterns and staves. Judas in the front betrays Him with his kiss. Our Lord said, "If... ye seek Me, let these go their way." The heart of Christ would spare His own. He would throw Himself into the breach. So, dear saints, if you and I have God's thoughts about the Church, we will set aside every vestige of self. - self-importance, self-interest- and we will say, "O God, let the thing fall on me, but spare Thy people." Thy people! Oh, we will have the heart of Christ about the Church.

For the next example, I wish to turn to the 3rd of 1 Kings. Solomon had ascended the throne, and God had tested Solomon by saying to him, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon made a noble request. He said, "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in" - he asked for wisdom. God was pleased with that request because he hadn't asked for riches, he hadn't asked for fame, but for wisdom. So God said, in substance, "I am going to give you wisdom, and I am going to give you the riches too." Thus Solomon became, I suppose, the wisest man that ever lived. Then the very next thing is that God tests his wisdom. That is the part of the chapter we want to read.

"And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof."

Now let us think of that for a few minutes. It is one of the most remarkable incidents in all the Old Testament, familiar to the most of us here in this room. There was a woman who had no real interest in this infant. It wasn't her child. Her heart was cold, unfeeling, unsympathetic. She was moved by two of the cruelest motives of which the human heart knows anything - jealousy and envy. She had lost her own child, but the second woman still possessed her offspring. She stole the babe, but when she saw that she couldn't have her way, she was willing to have the other's babe divided by the sword of Solomon. She was willing to stand there and see that little body

severed and its life taken, rather than be defeated in her own willfulness. This put the true mother to the test, and out of the depth of her heart's affection she cried, "Give her the living child!" Yes. It was the heart of a mother yearning over that that was dear to her. The other woman said, "Divide" it.

God is here teaching us the difference between pretended and real affection. He allows this test case to come before the throne of Solomon that He might vividly demonstrate the essential distinction between genuine and feigned love.

This false claimant, the woman whose the child was not, was brusksly willing that the child be severed. This cruel possibility discovered the true mother's heart. She would give up her all, that the object of her love be not divided. Brethren, this incident is marvelously appropriate to the theme of our meditation here this afternoon.

Let us apply this. Suppose a question comes up that is threatening to divide the Church of God, to divide and scatter that which is dear to the heart of Christ. The one who is away from God, the one who is out of tune with the mind of God, will say, "Use the sword; divide the saints. I want my way, and if I can't have my way, use the sword; split the saints, I don't care." But oh, God would have us to be like the true mother. She was willing to throw herself into the breach rather than see that child divided, for her affections toward it were genuine.

Christ died for us. He left us an example. "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it." O dear saints of God, are we in tune with the heart of Christ about His Church? Are we? You know, the dear Apostle Paul said, when writing to the Thessalonians, "We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." What did he mean? He virtually said, "My life and happiness are wrapped up with seeing the saints of God go on in the truth." Isn't that lovely? In the 12th chapter of 2 Corinthians he says (v. 15), "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Oh, that is the heart of Christ. Do you and I yearn over the Church of God like that? Paul did. Paul's welfare, his happiness, his life, all were bound up with the prosperity of the Church of God.

Then in the 20th of Acts, on his last interview with the Ephesian elders, he looks down through the vista of the future

and sees divisions coming into the Church of God. Was it a light thing? Did he treat it carelessly? He says, "I ceased not to warn every one of you night and day with tears"-with tears! Ah, he wept over it. The Church was dear to him because it was dear to the heart of Christ.

Let us turn to the 3rd chapter of John's 1st epistle, verse 14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 15th verse: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer bath eternal life abiding in him." 16th verse: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." There is the standard. We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, yet as you look back over the sad history of the Church of God, it is the story of Acts 20. It is men arising, seeking a following, seeking to establish themselves, seeking their own way. Such have divided the saints. They have divided the flock of God. How does the heart of Christ feel toward a spirit like that?

One thinks back on the history of gathered saints, when a brother in the meeting was beginning to teach something that distressed his brethren. His brethren admonished him on the ground that his projected course was threatening the peace and unity of the saints. But all expostulations were of no avail. He pursued his willful course and split the Church of God. To apply our illustration above, Was that the heart of the true mother of the child? No, that is the cry of the other woman, Let the sword "divide." Why? Because that man would rather have his way and have the Church of God divided than surrender his will that the Church of God might be preserved. How does that sound in keeping with this verse: "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren"?

Look at the last chapter of Romans, verse 3: "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus"; verse 4: "Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." Ah, there is a lovely spirit. Here is a man and his wife who are carrying out the admonition that we read in John's epistle, "We ought to lay

down our lives for the brethren." This man and his wife had laid down their very necks for the sake of dear Paul, and so he says, as it were, "I give thanks for them, and every other church gives thanks for them."

As I stand here, I think of a dear man and his wife whom I have known for nearly forty years. They are here in this company this afternoon. God in His providence has seen fit to place them in different assemblies over the country, and everywhere they have lived, the saints have thanked God for them. O beloved saints of God, isn't that the heart of Christ? "Not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles." I will tell you something else, and you know it is true. There are certain brethren that if we heard they were coming to live where we do and be in our little meeting, Oh, we would draw a sigh; we would feel sad. Why? Because what characterizes them is that they trouble the children of God, and distress the saints. They are a burden, a care, a stumbling block.

Beloved, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren! If it is something that concerns me, I ought to put myself in the dust rather than stumble my brethren! rather than divide them; rather than scatter the people of Christ. Ah, far better! far better! Is it not true that if we have the mind of Christ we would rather be taken home to glory today than be left here to scatter and distress the flock of God? Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. Are we willing to sacrifice ourselves - not someone else, but ourselves?

"Who... made Himself of no reputation" - no reputation! If my brethren come to me and say, "Brother, the course you are on is distressing your brethren; it is leading to disaster. We warn you, we beseech you." Brethren, if I have the heart of Christ, what will I do? If I have the heart of Christ, I will humble myself in the dust. Indeed I will. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

We don't realize how dear the Church is to Christ. God hates division. He is not the author of confusion. He hates the scattering of the sheep of Christ. Oh, someone says, there must be divisions that they that are approved may be made manifest. Yes, there had to be a Judas, that is true, but it had been better for that

man had he never been born. God in His wisdom may find it necessary to let a sifting come in, but woe to the man that brings it in, regardless of who he may be.

Oh, may God keep us, give us the heart of Christ. Brethren, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, for the Church of God. Oh, let us be in communion with the mind of Christ: "His be 'the Victor's name'

Who fought the fight alone;

Triumphant saints no honor claim,

His conquest was their own.

"By weakness and defeat

He won the meed and crown,

Trod all our foes beneath His feet

By being trodden down.

"Bless, bless the Conqueror slain,

Slain in His victory;

Who lived, who died, who lives again -

For thee, His Church, for thee!"

The Letter L: World and Word

"Just one letter of the alphabet makes all the difference between us now," said a recently converted young woman to an unsaved neighbor who could not understand the great change that had come over her.

"You love the WORLD, and I love the WORD."

How much there was in this simple way of putting it! The Word speaks of Christ, so the true Christian loves it. The world cast Christ out, yet the worldling still loves it.

Looking Ahead

"He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Heb. 13:5.

Looking Back

"Hitherto hath the LORD helped us." 1 Sam. 7:12

The Lord Is My Helper: Jonathan

1 Sam. 14

In the doings of Jonathan, we get energy of faith in the midst of sad confusion in Israel. The people of God had sought in a carnal way to establish themselves against their enemies. A people of no faith to lean immediately upon God, they had asked for themselves a king; and, while testifying to His own rejection by them, God had instructed Samuel to hearken unto their voice in all that they said, and make them a king. "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations," was their cry, as again (even after the prophet had warned them as to consequences in accordance with the divine testimony), "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." (Chap. 8.) The carnal desire is met, and Saul set up to war against Israel's enemies.

Such is the state of things in the midst of which we find Jonathan; and though he enters not into the full mind of God, he is able to act in the energy of faith.

It is hard for faith to endure the afflictions of God's people, and the dishonor done in it to God Himself. Jonathan endures it not - he has faith in the God of Israel, and he makes up his mind to attack the Philistines. He calls to his armor-bearer, and says, "Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side." v. 1. The sin of the people of God may have subjected them to the power of the "uncircumcised," but that cannot subject the rights of God. Such is faith's reasoning. And nothing is more simple. The moment there is separation unto God, a standing with Him, there is zeal for God and strength in His service. But he confers not with flesh and blood; "He told not his father." There was no faith in Saul; and had he consulted him, Saul would most probably only have discouraged - with faith, he would have gone himself - he would either have stopped or hampered him. When he does act, it is only to trouble. Faith has to act on its own responsibility. One way in which we very constantly fail, is in asking counsel of those who have not the faith or the light we ourselves have; we thus sink down to their level.

All that could give authority, or accredit it, in the eyes of the people, religious too, was with Saul. The king, the priest, the ark, were all there. But Jonathan waits not for the people. He has none but his armor-bearer with him; and so much the better for him, for he is not troubled with the unbelief of others. Where there is a single eye, there is ever confidence in acting, and not hesitation. The flesh may be confident, but its confidence is in self, and therefore only folly. Faith makes nothing of circumstances, because it makes God all. It is not that difficulties in themselves are lessened, but that God fills the eye.

The Philistines' position is a strong one; amidst precipitous rocks, what could human energy avail? Jonathan has to climb up upon his hands and feet (v. 13). The oppressors are there too in great numbers, and well armed. But faith, with a single sword, counts God sufficient. "Come," is the unhesitating word, "let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us." v. 6. The "uncircumcised" have no strength when looked at thus; they have

not the God of Jacob for their help; their hope is not in the Lord. "There is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." The enemy may be as the sand of the seashore for multitude - that is nothing, and faith knows it. He can give strength to one sword to subdue a host.

Jonathan seeks not other help. Happy in his companion, a man of a kindred spirit (his answer bearing him the witness, "Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart" v. 7), he at once discovers himself to the Philistines (v. 8).

We have already remarked on the strong, simple confidence of Jonathan in the Lord's power; another thing that characterizes his faith is the consciousness of the impossibility of the link between God and His people being broken. Sad as the condition of that people is - the Philistines in power in their midst, pillaging a defenseless land; no means of resistance left to them, not a sword or a spear (except with Saul and with Jonathan) found in Israel (chap. 13: 19, 22); the very king they have in their midst, one they have sinned in setting up - this touches • not His faithfulness. The Philistines are delivered into the hand of Israel (not into his own), in the judgment of the man of faith (v. 12). In isolating itself with God, faith identifies itself with His people. It loses sight of self, passes over their desolations, and recognizes all that is theirs in God. Jonathan is as the Lord's hand. And see what boldness. Though Israel be not able to sharpen a mattock, in the name of the God of hosts, the Lord, God of Israel, he goes straight on his way.

But then while he goes forward thus, conferring not with flesh and bloods there is nothing of boastfulness, no acting in fleshly haste and excitement. His expectation is from God. He can discover himself plainly to the garrison of the Philistines, telling them, as it were, Here am I, an Israelite; but we will wait and see. If they say, "Tarry until we come to you," he will stand in his place, and will not go up to them. But if they say, "Come up unto us," he will go up; the Lord hath delivered them into their hands. There is to be the sign (vv. 9, 10). In other words, he will wait for them to come to him, or he will go throw himself into the midst of their camp, just as the Lord may bid. He will not make difficulties for himself; but he will not turn away from difficulties which meet him in the path. His is the real dependence of faith.

Having done this, the very haughtiness and scorn of the hostile power instruct him as to what to do. "Behold," say the men of the garrison one to another, "the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves"; and then, indolently and with fleshly confidence, taunt these true Israelites, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing" (vv. 11, 12). It is the sign for Jonathan; "the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel." Saul's summons of the people (chap. 13:3) is by their name of Hebrews, the name the Philistines called them by. Jonathan calls them by their God-given name, Israel.

In the energy of faith, Jonathan goes forth and climbs the rock, his armor-bearer following. The Philistines fall before him; it is comparatively easy work for the armor-bearer to slay after him. The power that inspires Jonathan acts for him. The Lord is really there; he uses Jonathan as an instrument, He puts honor upon the arm faith has strengthened, but He manifests Himself. The terror of God falls upon the enemies of Israel. (vv. 13, 15.)

But what of Saul? He has been left tarrying under a pomegranate tree in Migron, while God is triumphing over the Philistines through Jonathan (v. 2). "And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one

another. Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us." vv. 16, 17. All that is regular as to form is with Israel, but not faith. "And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there."

That is all they know about it.

"And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God." v. 18. here again there is form -the form of honoring the Lord in seeking His guidance. It seems all right. yet it is but the form. Saul will have the ark brought; but while he talks with the priest, the tumult of defeat in the host of the Philistines still going on and increasing, he bids him stop: "Withdraw thine hand," he says. (v. 19) There is no simplicity of dependence upon God, but the uncertainty and bewilderment of unbelief.

He joins the battle (v. 20). But it is not as entering into the spirit of the thing. He has no sense of that on which Jonathan had counted, the secret of Jonathan's strength - "There is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." He calls the people around himself, and adjures them, saying, "Cursed be the man that cateth any food until evening that I may be avenged on mine enemies." v. 24. "So none of the people tasted any food." There is great apparent energy, it is true; but it is not of the Spirit of God, so that when he gets into the tide of victory he is in reality only a troubler, distressing Israel, and hindering the pursuit. It is a carnal and selfish zeal. We may get into the path of faith, but we shall find there that nothing but faith can walk in it; let the flesh mix itself up in the work of faith, and it is only for weakness.

The people came to a wood, there is honey upon the ground, yet no man puts his hand to his mouth, for they fear the oath (vv. 25, 26). Jonathan has not heard that oath; wherefore he puts forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dips it in an honeycomb, and puts his hand to his mouth, and his eyes are enlightened (v. 27). When made acquainted with the curse, and seeing the people faint around him, he at once exclaims, "My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if happily the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they had found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

Happy Jonathan! Faith is so occupied with its work, and has so the sense of God's love and grace, that it has full liberty, and whatsoever God presents in the way, it can thankfully avail itself of, taking it and going on; while the carnal zeal of that which is but an imitation of faith, and which never works with God, makes a duty of refusing it. Had Jonathan not been occupied heart and soul in the Lord's work, he might have stopped to think about the honey; as it is, he merely takes it for refreshment, and passes on. Through the energy of faith, he is carried clean out of the knowledge of the oath (v. 27), out of the reach of this unbelief. He can avail himself of the kindness of his God with joy and thanksgiving, and pursue his course refreshed and encouraged, while the people (who had not the faith to go with him) are under the curse, and cannot. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Saul has put both himself and the people under this miserable restraint (if the flesh puts itself under bondage, it must keep its oath), and, in result, they are led into sin; for they are so hungry that when the time of the oath is expired, they fly upon the cattle taken as spoil, and slay them, and eat the flesh with the blood thereof, thus violating a direct command of God (Dent. 12:22, 23).

The effect of all this is that of making faith guilty for acting in liberty. Such is ever the way of the flesh in its mixing itself up with faith.

At a moment of manifest outward blessing Saul must build an altar, and make much of the Lord's name, just as previously he had professed to seek counsel at the ark. He builds his altar (v. 35). But let us mark the emphatic comment of the Holy Ghost, "The same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD." Then, through the priest, he consults God as to pursuing the Philistines; "But He answered him not that day." v. 37. On this he seeks, by an appeal to the "God of Israel," to discover the hidden and hindering sin (vv. 36-41). The Lord indeed acts, yet it is only to manifest the folly of the king; the "perfect lot" is given and Jonathan is taken (v. 41).

"Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die. And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan." vv. 43, 44.

The people do not allow this. They interfere, and say, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day." That is self-evident. "So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not." v. 45.

He had "wrought with God." His was the simple, happy path of unhesitating faith which counts on God, on His faithful connection with His people, and walks in the blessed liberty of taking the refreshment He may give by the way - liberty for refreshment, not for licentiousness, while the flesh is making its solemn resolutions not to touch, not to taste, nor to handle, and then, the occasion serving, setting aside the authority of God. Faith of this sort confers not with flesh and blood; it acts from God, and it acts for God.

All the religious actings, all the forms of piety, are with Saul. He has the ark and the priest. He makes the vow to abstain from food; manifests zeal for ordinances; prevents the people eating flesh with the blood; builds his altar, when others have got the blessing, and takes the credit to himself. He can be religious when he has comfort and blessing; but there is no reference to God in faith, so as to go through difficulties with God. There is energy, but it is energy in the flesh; deliberation, when God is acting; and action, when he does act, is in haste and bewilderment.

The Lord preserve His people from the guidance and help of unbelief in the work of faith, blessed in the simplicity which acts with Him.

Are the Lord's Supper and Baptism for Jews Only?

"I enjoy 'Christian Truth' very much. I am sending you a paper which recently came into my hands. The one who sent it believes that the Lord's supper and baptism were for the Jews only. This has bothered me somewhat. I want to be established in the truth."

ANSWER: Dear reader, the paper you sent us contains numerous inaccuracies and misstatements. Its erroneous teaching is a part of a system that has been built upon false premises. The foundation of sand upon which it stands is that there was a separate dispensation in the early Church - during the time mentioned in The Acts - which was for Jews only, and that to this period belong the miracles, gift of tongues, baptism, and the Lord's supper. We unhesitatingly say that this is without basis in fact. Certainly the sign gifts - tongues and miracles - ceased after a time, for they were only to intro, duce Christianity; after it was established they were altogether unnecessary. But the truth for the Church has never been affected; it stands today as perfectly as in the days of the apostles.

We would refer you to Lev. 23 where God has given us a panoramic view of His ways from the death of Christ on to and through the Millennium. There you will find the Church's formation pictured on the day of Pentecost as the "two wave loaves" presented to the Lord. From that day in the third month there were no more feasts until the -seventh month. Then the first one in the seventh month symbolizes the calling of the Jews back to their land by their Messiah when He returns to the earth (Isa. 27:13 and Matt. 24:31). There is no place during the Church period for another dispensation.

The Church of God was and is composed of believers from among both Jews and Gentiles, although the ratio has changed. The Acts give accounts of the bringing in of the Gentiles, and of the work of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, and of one assembly that was predominantly Gentile - Antioch, Syria. If the saved Jews of that day clung to the old forms and ceremonies, it was because of their failure to apprehend their Pew estate; it was not because they were in a special dispensation. Such failure is still prevalent in Christendom.

Baptism never saved anyone's soul, and millions have been baptized, and died in their sins. It is, however, the outward mark of Christianity, and many converted and baptized Jews and pagans have felt the sting of this very keenly, for their families have borne with them until that moment. Baptism for them has been the dividing point between them and their unsaved relatives.

The paper you sent confounds John's baptism, Christian baptism, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It would be charitable to attribute this hopeless confusion to ignorance. John's baptism was unto repentance; Christian baptism is unto the death of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19:1-5 is irrefutable testimony to their being different. Certain disciples at Ephesus had been baptized unto John's baptism, but when Paul instructed them they were baptized with Christian baptism. (Contrary to your paper, a Jew's being baptized with John's baptism was not fulfilling the law in any wise - it was a confession that he was a sinner and had broken it.) The baptism of the Holy Ghost is again

another thing, and was what took place on the day of Pentecost in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came down and indwelt the believers (Acts 2). Prior to that moment they were individual believers; after it, they were all united together, and to the Head in heaven - the Church had been formed.

In conclusion we would add, we would have every right to refuse to recognize anyone as a Christian who refused the outward sign of Christianity.

As for the Lord's supper not being for us, we believe the very suggestion comes from the enemy of our adorable Lord and Savior. It is the most blessed privilege a saint of God can have on earth. What must be the state of one who claims to be sheltered by His precious blood who can slur or lightly esteem such a privilege?

On the "night in which He was betrayed" the Lord Jesus kept the last Passover feast with His disciples; the Passover had looked forward for centuries to His death. At the conclusion of that Passover feast, the Lord instituted the remembrance of Himself in death, which memorial was to look back to the same great central point - the cross. The truth of Christianity had not yet come in, and the Lord made mention of the coming kingdom, but later the Apostle Paul was given a special revelation for the Church, and he was told that it was to continue "till He come." Read 1 Cor. 11:23-26 and note how he says, "I have received of the Lord"; he did not get it from Peter, James, or John; they could not have given him what he received. Yes, it is to go on until that blessed moment when He calls His Church home to be with Himself. Happy thought for every true heart! (Note that I Corinthians was not written to converted Jews - it says, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols." chap. 12:2).

We might note that the cup is spoken of as the blood of the new covenant, for surely that shed blood is the basis upon which will rest the new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. In fact, every blessing for man must stand on it. While Christians are not under the new covenant, we come in now in all the value of the same precious blood of Christ; and who have more right than we to remember His body given unto death for us, and His blood shed for us? Cold indeed must be the heart of one who can hide behind a theory, a doctrine, an interpretation, or anything else, to give up that which recalls to us His death. Shall not even the contemplation of it cause our hearts to rise up and say, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,... to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever"? Let us say with the poet:

"Till Thou dost come, we still would be

With grateful hearts rememb'ring Thee."

We would also caution our correspondent to beware of all such literature. There are many religious nostrums abroad in the land, and their labels are deceptive. It is wise to "avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."

We haven't time or space to go into all the gross errors contained in the paper you sent, but the statement that the righteousness that the Lord Jesus had as a Jew under the law is credited to us, is absolutely false. Not one thing He did in all His holy life under the law is credited to us. Remember that He "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). He, Himself, is our righteousness - not something He did. One other

grievous mistake is that of quoting John 1:29 as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." This is not true, and Scripture does not say "sins," but "sin." It is the thing itself, not some acts. He "bear the sins of many," not of the world; but He will ultimately remove the thing - root, branch, and fruit - from God's creation. Then instead of God being dishonored by sin, He will be manifestly and eternally glorified by its removal. At present we who are saved have the forgiveness of sins, for which we bless His holy name, and gladly remember Him in death, in His own appointed way. During the Millennium there will be a further display of His work in taking away the sin of the world, for sin will be restrained, and Satan bound. Then in the eternal state every trace of sin shall have been removed, for it will be a scene "wherein dwelleth righteousness"

(2 Pet. 3:13).

"Blest Lamb of God, Thy precious blood

Shall never lose its power."

As Many As I Love I Rebuke and Chasten

It is still true, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." You may be quite sure you needed all you have passed through, for He loved you too well to let you suffer more than needful, or less than was for your good. When we reach home we shall look back and see how perfectly wisdom and love worked together in allowing all that happened to us on the way. But it is well for us not to leave the unraveling of the "why" and "wherefore" till "that day," for it is meant for our present profit; and I believe we may save ourselves from many a sore trial by more readiness to learn the lesson and yield to the discipline.

There are two things that help us to discern what our Father is doing. One thing is the knowledge of ourselves; for instance, if I am of a grasping, covetous disposition, I may for a long time be deceiving myself by thinking it is prudence and thrift, etc., and so never discover that He who loves me and knows me so well is seeking to bring me to judge this covetous disposition. But as soon as I have my eyes open to the truth about myself, I see what my Father is about with me. The other thing is a knowledge of Christ, and that all God's ways with us are forwarding the one end, to conform us to Christ, and we may be sure that all in us contrary to Christ or unlike Him will not be allowed to pass; there will be patience and long-suffering, but no indifference on these points. So the more we learn of Christ, the wiser we shall be as to God's dealings with us.

Then there is another thing we might mention - the thorough surrender of our wills. We are more slow to do this than we think we are. We are given to all kinds of shifts and schemes to have our own way without seeming to go against God's will. We deceive ourselves in this, but we cannot deceive Him. So He is ever teaching us that His will alone is the "good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

The Middle East

In all the great areas of world unrest there is none that is more likely to break out into real trouble at any time than the Middle East. It is there that the rich oil deposits, which are at present supplying Western nations, offer a great prize to Russia if they can be acquired by any means. The backward nations of this part of the world are being wooed by both Russia and the Western powers, and the struggle has been going on behind the scenes for a long time.

But beyond even the need and greed for oil, there is another important factor which may fan an anti-Western movement at any moment; that is, the resurgence of Mohammedan fanaticism. This is an outlet for the emotions of these nations and peoples who are being dragged into the growing international turmoil by the persistent strife of the cold war between Russia and the West. It is not of their own choice that they find themselves strategically located, or living over vast oil pools. Steadily mounting Mohammedan fanaticism, therefore, is more or less connected in their minds with abstraction from both sides and identified with their own nationalism. It seems to offer them a way of controlling their own destinies so as not to feel that they are mere pawns in the great international struggle.

This feeling extends throughout the Mohammedan countries of the Near and Middle East. The Arabs are deeply resentful of their defeat at the hands of the rising nation of Israel, and with some measure of truth blame the whole affair on the Western powers. It is in this section that East meets West; it is here that the cultural distinctions of East and West are brought into sharp focus. The nation of Israel, while Semitic, is basically Western in background. Its constituents have come back from the Western world, and are developing their part of Palestine along Western lines.

Victorious Israeli armies have displaced 700,000 Arabs who formerly lived in that section of Palestine which Israel now controls. They lost their homes, their farms, their possessions of whatever kind, and today are living in refugee camps in Arab Palestine in dire poverty. They are huddled in caves and tents, and are dependent on the mercies of the United Nations and the Red Cross for food. This condition is a background and breeding place for ill feeling, not only toward Israel, but toward the West in general, and resurgent Mohammedan militarism has a great appeal. They remember that Mohammed's followers once carried his crusade far and wide by the sword, and by that method made it supplant Christianity, Judaism, and various religions in large areas.

What may be ahead for that part of the world was indicated by the assassination of March 7th, at Teheran, of General Ali Razmara, the premier of Iran (Persia). The assassin belonged to a fanatical religious body whose members pledge themselves to any sacrifice for Islam, Mohammedanism; and Ali Razmara was suspected of complicity with Western agents. These extremists talk of the liquidation of all foreigners and a return to the stern principles of Islam. All this bodes ill for the West, and also for Israel. That area is one of the world's real danger spots, perhaps more so than Berlin, Korea, or other key points.

One thing seems quite evident: the "king of the north" who is to come and be the foe of Israel, and consequently of the West, will be a leader of Islamic forces. The confederacy of the "king of the north," mentioned in Psalm 83, will be welded together by the religious ties of Mohammedanism. There is a possibility that Persia (Iran) might come under complete Russian domination, and more or less discard Mohammedanism, for she is mentioned as a Russian ally in Scripture; but that would not affect the general trend in the Middle East.

The great confederacy of the far north, Russia and her satellite hordes, will be in the main atheistic. (For this confederacy see Eze. 38 and 39.) Communism and any form of religion do not mix; communism is basically opposed to any god, true or false, except their own communistic theories. Russia, however, will not hesitate to foster a great Islamic campaign if it will serve her purposes of separating the Near and Middle East from the West, thus bringing the much coveted oil within her grasp.

The other great confederacy of the last days will be the revived Roman Empire, and its religion at first will be Romanism. Rev. 17 describes "Babylon the Great," that corrupt woman, in her relation to the beast - the Roman Empire. She is said to sit upon "seven mountains"; this can be no other place than the city of Rome; she is also said to sit upon many waters, for she will control the streams which flow to many peoples. She is further mentioned as reigning over the kings of the earth, and no other religious system ever attained to supremacy over the earth's rulers. She is to be supported by this gigantic confederacy, and she will assert her leadership over them, until at length, as the last three and one half years begin, the confederate rulers with their wicked head, the beast. will resent her interference and overthrow her.

It becomes clearer every day that the events of the time of the end are almost here, so our going to be with Christ at His coming is "at hand." Let us lift up our eyes and watch for His coming as Rebekah did for Isaac at the end of the wilderness journey. We have the work of Christ for our consciences, the Person of Christ for our hearts, and the coming of Christ for our hope. How good it is to have Christ and not religion. There will be plenty of that after the Lord has taken His people home: there will be Romanism, as Babylon the GREAT, sparking the fires for the Roman Empire; apostate Judaism with Israel in Palestine; Mohammedanism controlling the "king of the north" confederacy; and atheism and a false god of communism with Russia and her hordes.

"Thou art coming, loving Savior;

Coming first to claim Thine own.

Thou art coming, faithful Savior,

Thou couldst not abide alone.

In Thy Father's house in glory,

Sinners saved shall dwell with Thee;

Oh, the sweetness of the story;

Love's own record we shall be.

"Thou art coming, gracious Savior,

Ah, to see Thy face we long;
Thou art coming, blessed Savior,
Righting all creation's wrong.
Nation rises against nation,
Trouble spreads from shore to shore.
Thou art God's supreme salvation,
Come, and chaos shall be o'er.”

My Conversion: Personal Story

Good instructions, as to the contents of the Bible, were mine at school. At seventeen I was under a John the Baptist ministry; but I never knew the gospel till, at nineteen, I went abroad, full of the animal pleasures of a military life. I and my comrade spent a long and tiring day on the field of Waterloo in June 1824.

Arriving late at Lens, I soon went to my bedroom. It struck me, "I will say my prayers" (it was a habit of childhood, neglected in youth). I knelt down by my bedside, but found I had forgotten what to say. I looked up, as if trying to remember, when suddenly there came on my soul a something I had never known before. It was as if someone, Infinite and Almighty, knowing everything, full of the deepest, tenderest interest in myself, though utterly and entirely abhorring everything in, and connected with me, was making known to me that He pitied and loved myself. My eye saw no one; my ear heard no one; but I knew assuredly that the One whom I knew not, and never had met, had met me for the first time, and made me know we were together.

There was a light no sense or faculty of my own human nature ever knew; there was a presence of what seemed infinite in greatness, something altogether apart and supreme, and yet at the same time making itself known to me in a way that I as a man could thoroughly feel, and taste, and enjoy. The light made all light, Himself withal, but it did not destroy, for it was love itself; and I was loved individually by Him. The exquisite tenderness and fullness of that love appropriated me myself for Him, in whom it all was; while the light, from which it was inseparable in Him, discovered to me the contrast I had been to all that was light and love.

I wept for awhile on my knees, said nothing, and got into bed. The next morning's first thought was, "Get a Bible." I got one, and it was henceforward my handbook. My clergyman companion noticed this, and also the entire change of life and thought. We journeyed on together to Geneva where there was an active persecution of the faithful going on; he went to Italy, and I found my own company - stayed with those who were suffering for Christ.

I could quite now, after fifty years trial, adapt to myself those few lines as descriptive of that night's experience:

"Christ, the Father's rest eternal,
Jesus, once looked down on me,
Called me by my name external,
And revealed Himself to me.
With His whisper, light, life-giving
Glowed in me, the dark and dead,
Made me live, Himself receiving,

Who once died for me, and bled."

The Mystery of the Gospel

As the gospel is a mystery of faith, it enables the godly to believe strange mysteries; to believe that which they understand not, and hope for that which they do not see. It teacheth them to believe that Christ was born in time, and that He was from everlasting; that He was comprehended in the virgin's womb, and yet the heaven of heavens not able to contain Him; to be the Son of Mary, and yet her Maker; to be born without sin, and yet justly to have died for sin. They believe that God was just in punishing Christ, though innocent; and in justifying penitent believers, who are sinners; they believe themselves to be great sinners, and yet that God sees them in Christ without spot or wrinkle.

Again, as the gospel is a mystery of godliness, it enables the godly to do as strange things as they believe; to live by Another's spirit, to act from Another's strength, to live to Another's will, and aim at Another's glory; it makes them so gentle that a child may lead them to anything that is good; yet so stout that fire shall not frighten them into sin; they can love their enemies and yet, for Christ's sake, can hate father and mother; they are taught by it that all things are theirs, yet they dare not take a pin from the wicked by force or fraud; it makes them so humble as to prefer every one above themselves, yet so to value their own condition that the poorest among them would not change his estate with the greatest monarch of the world; it makes them thank God for health, and for sickness also; to rejoice when exalted, and not to repine when made low; they can pray for life, and at the same time desire to die!...

The gospel opens a mine of unsearchable riches, but in a mystery; it shows men a way to be rich in faith, rich in God, rich for another world, while poor in this....

Again the real professors of the gospel are hated because they partake of its mysterious nature. They are highborn, but in a mystery; you cannot see their birth by their outward breeding; arms they bear, and revenues they have to live on, but not such as the world judges the greatness of persons and families by: no, their outside is mean, while their inside is glorious; and the world values them by what they know and see of their external part, and not by their inward graces; they pass as princes in the disguise of some poor man's clothes through the world, and their entertainment is accordingly. Had Christ put on His robes of glory and majesty when He came into the world, surely He had not gone out of it with so shameful and cruel a death. The world would have trembled at His footstool, which some of them did when but a beam of His deity looked forth upon them. Did saints walk on earth in those robes which they shall wear in heaven, then they would be feared and admired by those who now scorn and despise them. But as God's design in Christ's first coming would not have been fulfilled had He so appeared, neither would His design in His saints, did the world know them as one day they shall; therefore He is pleased to let them lie hidden under the mean coverings of poverty and infirmities, that so He may exercise their suffering graces, and also accomplish His wrath upon the wicked for theirs against them.

Here we learn our knowledge of heaven little by little like one that reads a book as it comes from the press, sheet by sheet; there we shall see it altogether: here we learn with much pain and

difficulty, there without travail and trouble; glorified saints, though they cease not from work, yet rest from labor; here passion blinds our minds, that we mistake error for truth, and truth for error.

When that blessed hour comes, thou shalt no more hear what a blessed place heaven is, as thou were wont to have it set forth by the poor rhetoric of mortal man, preaching to thee of that with which he himself was little acquainted, but shalt walk thyself in the street of that glorious city, and bless thyself to think what poor low thoughts thou hadst thereof when on earth thou didst meditate on this subject. One moment's sight of that glory will inform thee more than all the books written of it were ever able to do.

The Name of Jesus

Look where you will, whether it be in the domain of science, of religion, or philanthropy, or moral reform, and you see the same sedulous and diligently pursued purpose to banish the name of Jesus.

It is not said so in plain terms, but it is so nevertheless. Scientific men, the professors and lecturers in the universities, talk and write about "the forces of nature" and the facts of science in such a way as practically to exclude the Christ of God from the whole field of nature.

Scripture tells us (blessed be God!) that by the Son of His love "were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Col. 1:16, 17.

And again, speaking of the Son, the inspiring Spirit says, "Who being the brightness of His [God's] glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3.

These splendid passages lead us to the divine root of the matter. They speak not of the "forces of nature," but of the glory of Christ, the power of His hand, the virtue of His Word. Infidelity would rob us of Christ, and give us instead the "forces of nature." We vastly prefer our own beloved Lord. We delight to see His name bound up indissolubly with creation in all its vast and marvelous fields. We vastly prefer the eternal record of the Holy Ghost to all the finely spun theories of infidel professors. We rejoice to see the name of Jesus bound up in every department of religion and philanthropy. We shrink with ever increasing horror from every system, every order, every association, that dares to shut out the glorious name of Jesus from its schemes of religion and moral reform. We do solemnly declare that the religion, the philanthropy, the moral reform which does not make the name of Jesus its Alpha and its Omega is the religion, the philanthropy, and the moral reform of hell.

This may seem strong, severe; ultra, and narrow-minded; but it is our deep and thorough conviction, and we utter it fearlessly in the presence of all the infidelity and superstition of the day.

Obedience to God and Love to the Saints: the Characteristics of Divine Life

Perfect obedience characterized the life of Christ here on earth. He was ever the dependent One, ever the obedient One. "In the volume of the book" it was written of Him, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." And when on earth, He could say, "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." And again, "I do always those things that please Him." This was perfect obedience.

But His path of obedience to the Father was also the perfect exhibition of God's love to man. His words, His ways, His acts, all spoke of God's love to His guilty creatures. And the cross was the full revelation of this, together with the infinitely perfect expression of His obedience to God the Father. In the life of Christ as a man on earth perfect obedience and perfect love were united; and the life in which these were displayed in Christ is the life which, through grace, is imparted to the believer.

In Christ there was no imperfection. His was a life of perfect obedience - perfect love. In us there is much to hinder the manifestation of this life; yet the life in us is the same in its nature, its traits, and its characteristics - it is the same life. And whether in Him or in us, it is characterized by obedience. Obedience is the state in which it subsists. "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." 1 John 2:3. No matter what our pretension may be, it avails nothing unless there is this obedience. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." v. 4.

The other characteristic of the divine life is not separated from this. Where there is obedience there will also be love, because they belong to the same life -the same nature. "Whoso keepeth His word" - this is obedience -"in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that

we are in Him." v. 5. His word is the expression of what He is, of His nature; and "God is love," so that if we keep His word, His love is perfected in us.

But "His commandments" are not only the expression of what He is, but of His authority as well. We are called to obey, and to obey as Christ obeyed. We are sanctified unto the obedience of Christ. And if we say that we abide in Him, we ought also to walk even as He walked; that is, in obedience to God, for His whole life was that. There was not a single movement in His soul, not a single act of His life, that was not obedience to His Father's will. Blessed indeed it is to behold that perfect One in His path of perfect obedience! And happy they who follow His footsteps, who walk even as He walked!

The commandment to obey as Christ obeyed, to walk as Christ walked, was not a "new commandment." It was the word they had heard from the beginning in connection with the manifestation of the divine life in Christ. It was the Father's commandment to Christ, according to Christ's own words: "For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a

commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak." John 12:49, 50. So John says the commandment was "old." Again, it was a "new commandment," because true in Him and in us. The commandment was the expression of the divine life - "His commandment is life everlasting," and was first seen in Christ. But now it is true in us too, "because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." God had come out through the cross, and the light of life was now shining for man, and dispelling the darkness. This life, for man, and in man, as the fruit of redemption, life in Christ, life in the Spirit, was a new thing. It is Christ in us, Christ as our life. The commandment is "old" because the obedience which characterizes this life was seen in Him which was from the beginning, "the word of life." It is "new" because the same thing is seen in the believer now. If they were seeking something new, according to the Gnostic philosophy, the bane of Christianity in that day, the Apostle John gives them this; but he would not disconnect it from

Christ, the believer's life, "that which was from the beginning." "Which thing is true in Him and in you."

Until redemption was accomplished Christ remained alone. Now He is no more alone; we are in Him, and He in us. This is a wonderful truth, and it gives a wonderful character to the children of God. The Holy Ghost in us is the power of it all - the divine answer in us down here to all that Christ is in glory as a man. It is no longer Christ as a man walking alone in this world, but Christ in the saints, and the "eternal life" displayed in them. In John's epistle, Christ is seen as "eternal life" down here in this world, first alone, and then in the saints; "which thing is true in Him and in you." And this life, whether in Christ alone, or in Him and in us, is first an obedient life, and second a life of love.

1 John 2:3-8 is obedience and disobedience.

Verses 9-11 are love and hatred.

Obedience and love characterize those who are in the light. Disobedience and hatred characterize those who are in the darkness. A man may say he is in the light, but if he hates his brother, he is still in darkness, and has never seen the light. He knows not "the light of life." But if we see the outgoings of divine love toward a brother, we can say, There is a man who dwells in the light. He has found God who is light; and having found the light, he has the love also, for "God is light," and "God is love"; and we cannot have the one without the other, just as you cannot have the sun without having both light and heat.

The light casts out the darkness, and then there is no occasion of stumbling. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And He who has shined in our hearts as light is love also. Wonderful grace to such as were once "darkness," but now "light in the Lord."

Have our eyes been opened to see the light? Have our hearts tasted the love? Oh! then to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor"; and to walk "as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." Eph. 5:2, 8-10. Let us walk in the light and sunshine of His presence who could say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O

God," never swerving from this path, and who, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

Obedience to the Word: the Apostles in Council

Acts 15

We turn to the inspired account of the only council at which Peter and the other apostles were present. Paul and Barnabas, with others whose names are not recorded, went up to Jerusalem, delegated by the church at Antioch to confer with the apostles and elders there. But Paul went up by revelation (Gal. 2:2). God's mind as to his journey thither, and conference with the apostles, had just been clearly expressed. He went as delegated by the church, but he went because divinely directed. Neither Peter, nor James, nor John summoned a council and invited Paul and Barnabas to come up to it. It was the arrival of these laborers, with others from Antioch, which brought the question to a point, and made the apostles and elders come together about this matter.

It was an epoch of great importance in the Church. The truth had spread among the Gentiles, and the great center of missionary work was removed from Jerusalem to Antioch. Peter and John, at an earlier day, had gone out from Jerusalem, to Samaria, seen the work there, acknowledged it, and returned to the metropolis of Judea. Now Paul and Barnabas had started from Antioch on a journey fruitful in blessed results, and returned to that church with tidings that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. To stop this work, if possible, was the aim of the enemy, and means were shortly found for attempting it. Certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." The din of controversy was now heard, to be silenced only by the letter from the council at Jerusalem. There, and there alone, could the evil which threatened the Church be averted. To it, therefore, Paul and Barnabas went up, where the full results at which false teachers aimed were unequivocally brought out. At Antioch they had only urged on the Gentiles circumcision after the manner of Moses. But at Jerusalem the real aim of this teaching was fearlessly divulged: "It was needful to circumcise them [the Gentiles], and to command them to keep the law."

There, if anywhere, the supporters of this doctrine could carry their point. The apostles and brethren met to settle this. The discussion was doubtless earnest; it was certainly free. And though Peter was present, he did not preside or interfere with the freedom of speech of any others; many apparently spoke before he did, and Paul, and Barnabas, and James spoke after him. Peter's speech was important, but the remarks of James were most needful. Peter's address was a fitting prelude to the recital by Paul and Barnabas of the miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them, as that of James was a fitting conclusion. Peter reminded them of what God had done by him for the Gentiles, and how those from among the Jews who believed should be saved even as the converts from the Gentiles. James took different ground, and turned to Scriptures which threw light on the subject.

They were subject to the Word and, after James had spoken, all discussion ceased, and the conclusion he expressed was adopted and committed to writing. "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write unto

them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood."

But the use of the Word here demands more than a passing notice. The question was one which evidently stirred many hearts. It was felt on both sides to be a vital one; hence, God's mind about it was most important. Never before had there been such a gathering of the church for consultation; apostles and prophets were there with the Holy Ghost in their midst (v. 28), yet no fresh revelation was that day vouchsafed them. The wisdom of this we can surely discern; God would teach us the competency of the written Word to decide questions of doctrine and practice which concern the welfare of the Church. No new interpretation was then brought out, nor the passage quoted opened up by any new light which James threw on it. He quoted Amos, who had predicted that on some of the Gentiles the Lord's name should be called. Hence the work of grace among them was not a matter on which the Word was silent though they at Jerusalem, till that work began, might not have anticipated it.

Whose Word was it? It was His who makes these things known "from the beginning." But what about circumcising the Gentiles? On this the Word was silent. It clearly intimated blessing for the Gentiles without their becoming Jews; but, though this was foretold, there was not a word about their being circumcised. Should they then supplement the Word? No, they bowed to it. They interpreted its silence correctly. It said nothing about the question, so they imposed no such condition upon the Gentiles. Thus the very silence of Scripture was shown to be expressive and, must we not add, instructive? And in this assembly where four, certainly, out of the eight writers of the New Testament were present, three of whom took a prominent part, all bowed to the silence of the Word as expressing God's mind on the subject.

But, while giving a voice to the silence of Scripture, they could not allow anything it had said to be disregarded; so the word of God to Noah and his sons was brought forward as binding on believers from among the Gentiles, as it had been on the Jews. God was wiser than man. Man's deductions from analogy as to what was suited for God's people were all wrong, for the Word had said nothing about it; but to what it had said, though for ages the Gentiles had lost it, not that they owned the authority of the Lord, they must submit. How carefully the door was closed against all theories of development to bind men's consciences where God had not enjoined it, and how clearly they taught that what the Word did say, believers must hearken to and obey.

Thus the council ended, to the discomfiture of the pharisaic party in the Church, and the joy of all the Gentile converts, and an example of perfect subjection to Scripture, as containing His mind, who makes things known "from the beginning."

Obedience Without Reasoning

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Cor. 11:2, 3.

What does that mean? Ah, brethren, it means to obey without reasoning. Way back in the garden of Eden, that the Apostle refers to here, when Eve was tempted, the serpent got her to reasoning instead of obeying. She looked at that tree, and it looked pleasant to the eye. That was perfectly true. It was good for food, and that was perfectly true. It was a tree to be desired to make one wise; that had its truth in it too. But what did the serpent hide from Eve? That the act would be disobedience, and the fruit would be death. In other words, Eve began to reason instead of obeying.

Remember always, beloved Christian, that the Word of God is given to us for the obedience of faith. That is said twice in the epistle to the Romans - in the first chapter, and in the last chapter. It is given to us for the obedience of faith.

One Mediator

A distinctive and basic truth of Christianity is that there is one (and only one) Mediator between God and men, "the man Christ Jesus." Man had sinned and was at a distance from God morally, and there was no possibility of his making his way back. God is holy, yea, "of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. 1:13), and man could not, and dare not, approach.

It is true that God is love and that He loved poor fallen, degraded man, but His absolute holiness precluded any allowance of approach by one in his sins. Man, on his part, had become an enemy of God; instead of love to his Creator there was positive enmity. The creature had believed the devil's lie in the garden of Eden, which said that God was not good, and thus came to distrust God. Then in rapid sequence came the sin of disobedience, followed by fear and the regarding of God as an angry God and one to be appeased.

While God had dealings with His people of old as is clearly seen in Heb. 1:1, approach to Him was possible only on the ground of faith in the coming Mediator. Moses was the mediator of the law (Gal. 3:19, 20), and pointed forward to Christ (Deut. 18:15), the mediator of a better covenant (Heb. 8:6: 9:15, 12:24). (See also Heb. 1:3.) And it was not until the Lord Jesus Christ had finished His work of redemption that God was declared righteous in having allowed any approach whatsoever. Rom. 3:25 is a remarkable statement on this point: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." God had treated the individual on the basis of his faith, wherever faith existed, but He acted in anticipation of the time that was coming which would manifestly declare that He was righteous in doing so - that all His holiness had been satisfied.

Job, at an early date, cried out in his despair, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." Job 9:23. He, in his measure, felt his sinfulness, the distance that existed, and the lack of one to stand between him and a holy God. But it is obvious that if one were to stand in the breach he must of necessity be equal with God, for none but One who is God could "lay his hand upon" God. No creature, however great, would dare to do this. The mightiest angel ever created could not meet the requirement here. None but One who was God could reach up to God in behalf of the sinner; likewise none but One who was a man could reach down to man, stooping to the lowest depths into which the human race had fallen.

The revealed truth of Christianity is that God has provided that Daysman - a mediator - to stand between God and men: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. A mediator need no longer be sought, nor even longed for; He has come. Phil. 2 gives us that beautiful and amazing story of the descent of Him who subsisted in the form of God - down, down, down, all the way to death, and that the death of the cross. None but the One who was both God and man could span that otherwise impassable gulf and lay His hand upon God and upon man.

There is, however, another part (and a very important one) of His being a mediator; He had to give Himself as the ransom. It was not enough that one be found who was both God and man, and one who was willing to stand in the gap and reach to both God and men: sin was there, and it must be atoned for - it must be put away before a relationship could be established between a holy God and sinful man. That blessed One had to die, the Just for the unjust, before man could be brought into God's presence. God is light, and dwells in the light, and man must be cleansed and made fit to be brought into that light. The Mediator had to die, for there was no other way to satisfy the claims of God's holiness. Blessed be God, He devised a way in which His banished could be brought back righteously (2 Sam. 14:14).

If Israel had the truth committed to them that there was one God, in contrast to the many deities of the heathen, Christianity was supposed to bear witness to the fact that there was now a mediator, but only one, between God and men. But, alas, as in everything entrusted to the hand of men, failure soon came in. Christendom added many mediators of their own choosing. What must God think of this dishonor done to His Son!

So-called Church History bears witness to the early introduction of various and sundry mediators. Men did what angels would not dare to do; they set up angels as mediators. Of course what man seeks to establish has nothing whatever to do with God and His ways; the only result of such presumption is to deceive souls. It is recorded that in the 10th century churches dedicated to Michael were thronged by multitudes seeking the intercession of Michael the archangel, for it was said that he held mass in heaven every Monday - what utter folly, to say the least! for when it was Monday in one part of the earth it was Tuesday in another. Alas, what wickedness!

Nor has Christendom stopped at making mediators of angels; men have taken upon themselves to make saints of departed souls in heaven (being ignorant of the scriptural fact that every true child of God is a saint already, and never will cease to be), and to them many pray. Surely it is the work of the enemy of God and men to suggest that anyone could share in the glorious work of the one Mediator. Among these man-made mediators (who are not mediators), the first and foremost is the Virgin Mary. What would she herself say of this? She who, when told of the birth of the Savior, said, "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." Luke 1:47. Yes, she too needed a Savior (and later had one in the Lord Jesus Christ), and rejoiced in the prospect. She would be the last one to sanction this form of idolatry.

Again, and again, and again, let it be affirmed that there is "One [and only one] mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. 2:5, 6. By His blood the way into the "Holy of holies" - the presence of God - has been opened, and we can draw near, and sing:

"The veil is rent -our souls draw near

Unto a throne of grace;

The merits of the Lord appear,

They fill the holy place.

"His precious blood has spoken there,

Before and on the throne;
And His own wounds in heaven declare,
Th' atoning work is done.
" 'Tis finished! here our souls have rest;
His work can never fail!
By Him our Sacrifice and Priest,
We pass within the veil.
"Within the holiest of all,
Cleansed by His precious blood,
Before the throne we prostrate fall,
And worship Thee, O God!
"Boldly the heart and voice we raise,
His blood, His name, our plea,
Assured our prayers and songs of praise,
Ascend, by Christ, to Thee."

Our Capacity Is Being Formed Now

How solemn is the thought that the present time is that in which our capacity is formed for our place and enjoyment in the glory of God! No doubt that all is foreknown and prepared of the Father; but still, just as the soul has learned Jesus here, so will you be able to enjoy the glory.

You find this illustrated in Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, in John 11. Just as each one learned the Lord in this scene where death reigned, so each one had a place in the lovely typical and yet real scene of chapter 12, where the glory is portrayed. Just as we constantly find that the character of a person's conversation gives a tone to his walk, so his walk will determine his place in the glory! The present, then, is the time of preparation for that scene in capacity and growth; the enjoyment of it will be by-and-by; yet, as we have said, all will be as ordained of the counsels of God.

The Lord by moral cleansing is preparing us for the glory. This action detects what is in your heart, by the entrance of His Word giving light there. Now that may be done without your having a bad conscience, for you may never have thought that the thing detected was unfit for the light. Many things and associations that are not according to the light may never have been thought of as not suited to it, and hence the conscience is not defiled. They are shown you in this mystical washing that you may cast them off. If you do so, the conscience is undefiled, and it is not then the removal of a stain, nor the restoring the soul when defiled, but our moral education by the Lord in the suitability needed for the new place.

But supposing you were to go on with them after they have thus been detected, you would need to be restored. The Lord's thought is that you should go on with nothing between Him and you, and by the action of the Word He is discovering to you what would come between, that you may be the better able to enter into the enjoyment of the Father's love in communion with Himself as well now as by-and-by.

Under the law, at the brazen laver the hands and feet were washed. The laver stood between the altar and the holiest. Both hands and feet had to be washed because the Lord was taking cognizance and forbidding the actions and walk of the old man there under the law; here it is to a man who has the divine nature, but who has also a principle within him which loves sin, and whereby he becomes defiled. Then the Lord deals with the conscience; and "we have an advocate with the Father" (1 John 2). How important it is then to bow immediately to the washing of water by the Word; there is then instant restoration. Keep a thing that the Word has detected still on the conscience, and it corrodes there. One's felt state will show him surely that communion is lost, while all the time you have not got to your real state. The longer it is there the more difficult to have the sense of restoration. Remember too that the moment you are made conscious of failure, it was the Lord who did it.

Our Example: One Who Ran the Whole Race

In Heb. 12 the epistle enters upon the practical exhortations that flow from its doctrinal instruction with reference to the dangers peculiar to the Hebrew Christians - instruction suited throughout to inspire them with courage. Surrounded with a cloud of witnesses like those of chapter 11, who all declared the advantages of a life of faith in promises still unfulfilled, they ought to feel themselves impelled to follow their steps, running with patience the race set before them, and above all looking away from every difficulty to Jesus who had run the whole career of faith, sustained by the joy that was set before Him and, having reached the goal, had taken His seat in glory at the right hand of God.

This passage presents the Lord, not as He who bestows faith, but as He who has Himself run the whole career of faith. Others had traveled a part of the road, had surmounted some difficulties; the obedience and the perseverance of the Lord had been subjected to every trial of which human nature is susceptible. Men, the adversary, the being forsaken of God, everything was against Him. His disciples flee when He is in danger, His intimate friend betrays Him; He looks for someone to have compassion on Him and finds no one. The fathers (of whom we read in the previous chapter) trusted in God and were delivered; but as for Jesus, He was a worm, and no man; His throat was dry with crying (see Psalm 22). His love for us, His obedience to His Father, surmounted all. He carries off the victory by submission, and takes His seat in a glory exalted in proportion to the greatness of His abasement and obedience - the only just reward for having perfectly glorified God where He had been dishonored by sin. The joy and the rewards that are set before us are never the motives of the walk of faith - we know this well with regard to Christ, but it is not the less true in our own case - they are the encouragement of those who walk in it.

Jesus then who has attained the glory due to Him becomes an example to us in the sufferings through which He passed in attaining it; therefore we are neither to lose courage nor to grow weary. We have not yet, like Him, lost our lives in order to glorify God and to serve Him. The way in which the Apostle engages them to disentangle themselves from every hindrance, whether sin or difficulty, is remarkable, as though they had nothing to do but to cast them off as useless weights. And in fact, when we look at Jesus, nothing is easier; when we are not looking at Him, nothing is more impossible.

There are two things to be cast off: every weight, and the sin that would entangle our feet (for he speaks of one who is running in the race). The flesh, the human heart, is occupied with cares and difficulties; and the more we think of them, the more we are burdened by them. It is enticed by the objects of its desires; it does not free itself from them. The conflict is with a heart that loves the thing against which we strive; we do not separate ourselves from it in thought. When looking at Jesus, the new man is active; there is a new object which unburdens and detaches us from every other by means of a new affection which has its place in a new nature: and in Jesus Himself, to whom we look, there is a positive power which sets us free.

It is by casting it all off in an absolute way that the thing is easy - by looking at that which fills the heart with other things, and occupies it in a different sphere, where a new object and a new nature act upon each other; and in that object there is a positive power which absorbs the heart and shuts out all objects that act merely on the old nature. What is felt to be a weight is easily cast off. Everything is judged of by its bearing on the object we aim at. If I run in a race and all my thought is the prize, a bag of gold is readily cast away. It is a weight. But we must look to Jesus. Only in Him can we cast off every hindrance easily and without reservation. We cannot combat sin by flesh.

Our Prayers: Expressions of Dependence and Confidence

God exercises our hearts and our faith in delaying at times to give the answer to our prayers. The earnestness of our prayer will be according to the exigency of our need, and the consciousness that He alone can give the answer. The heart is exercised and kept in dependence, waiting on Him for the reply. Faith is kept alive. Other sources are not looked to when the soul has learned that He alone can do what is needed. It is a mighty engine - that of prayer - fitting expression of the newborn soul's dependence on God in contrast to that nature which ever would be independent of Him, though it cannot escape His righteous judgment.

Daniel had to wait in fastings and mournings for three whole weeks at one time before he received the reply (chap. 10). At another time, "While I was speaking," he says, the answer came (chap. 9). It marks the fact that we are not indifferent to the result when the heart can in earnest entreaty wait on God.

We may find, like Paul, that it is better for us that our desires are withheld. He learned also the reasons why they were withheld, after his thrice-repeated prayer; thus he could boast in that which was the taunt of his enemies, and the trial of his friends (2 Cor. 12).

We need to be "filled with the Spirit." We need that our faith may grow. Many are the needs of our hearts, and of others; and if God is pleased to bless His people, He exercises their hearts in prayer. Paul could agonize in prayer for those he never saw (Col. 2:1) and Epaphras too could labor earnestly (agonize) in prayer for those he knew and loved (Col. 4:12).

In the midst of our cares and conflicts we have to "be careful for nothing," but to let our "requests be made known unto God." He who has no cares - God - keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. But we have to "continue in prayer." We have also to "watch in the same," and withal "with thanksgiving" for His ever opened ear. One of the exhortations in Rom. 12:12 is "continuing instant in prayer" - "pursuing" as it might be.

The very importunity of the man at the unseasonable hour of midnight, was the occasion of his obtaining the loaves (Luke 11:8). One can lay down no rules in such cases. The truly exercised heart gets its own answer from God. At times we can with simple confidence make known and commit the request to God. At others the heart is conscious that it cannot but cry to God until it is at rest in the petition. He will not give it till His own time, and meanwhile the soul is 'kept in earnest exercise; faith is tested, and patience tried, and the heart watches and waits on Him. Again, such is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; and if we know that He hears us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him (1 John 5:14, 15). He listens to everything which is in accordance with His will. He cannot fail in power, and we get the reply. The true heart desires nothing contrary to His mind and will.

Suitable Supplement to the Hymn

"Praise The Savior"

Lord in glory, we'll adore Thee,
Cast our crowns in joy before Thee,
Praise and homage render to Thee,
In those courts above.

Out of Weakness Were Made Strong

The Lord's plan to deliver His people is sometimes to draw out wickedness against them in all its force. This is very alarming in itself, but it is God's way of delivering, because the effect is to break down the flesh, to show that we have no strength at all. And this is our victory, for then the question is between God and Satan, and not between us and Satan.

In Egypt, the Lord delivered the Israelites by bringing all Pharaoh's host against them. They saw that they had no strength themselves, and they cried unto the Lord, and they were comforted with the promise, "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." (Exod. 14:10-14.)

In the time of Jehoshaphat, the children of Israel were like two little flocks of kids, while the Syrians filled the country; but the Lord promised, "Therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD." (1 Kings 20:27, 28.)

The Jews had a country on earth, and he that killed them would remove them from earth; but the saints are strangers on earth, having their country in heaven; therefore they need not the same kind of deliverance the Jews did, and should not look for it.

The prince of the power of the air, the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places are the enemies of the saint, trying to hinder heavenly-mindedness, and keep him from communion with the Father and the Son.

If the weakest saint is only leaning on Jesus, he is stronger than all the powers of Satan, because Jesus is stronger.

May He who works in His people to will and to do of His good pleasure, work out His own truth each day in our souls, delivering us from that great work of Satan - a form of godliness without power.

The Passover: the Red Sea

Redemption, as presented in the type of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, has two aspects. The one is seen in the feast of the Passover, the other in the passage of the Red Sea.

The history and circumstances of the two disclose in a wonderful manner the redemption which
12-14

God has wrought for His people in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Passover the deep question is met of how God's power can be thus displayed on behalf of those whom His holiness has condemned as sinners.

"God is light" - "There is none holy as the LORD." He cannot, therefore, link Himself with sin, nor can He bring a people into association with Himself until He has put away their sins.

Hence the Passover comes before deliverance at the Red Sea, even as Jesus must be known as dying for our sins before we can say, through His resurrection, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Passover, which answers to Christ's death, brings redemption before us in connection with God's righteous holiness. The deliverance at the Red Sea, which answers to Christ's resurrection, shows how God's power in Christ is on His people's side, because His death has met the claims of all the holiness of God.

The Israelites were delivered, it is true, on the night of the Passover; but from what were they delivered? Not from the pursuit of Pharaoh, but from God's judgment for sin. The blood was sprinkled on the lintel and on the doorposts to bar the way of God's entrance as a judge. It is not power that delivers in the Passover, but weakness, death, the blood of the Lamb!

The question to the Israelite on that night was how God should be stayed from entering his dwelling as a judge. And God showed him that nothing but his trusting to the sprinkled blood of the lamb would cause the angel of death to pass over his dwelling. He entered every dwelling of the Egyptians, where the blood was not sprinkled. For "without shedding of blood is no remission." "For," says the Scripture (v. 23), "the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you."

Peace — What Is It? Helpful Word for Young Believers

Have you found peace? is a question frequently put to people, and it may be there are many who do not exactly understand the question, or know how to answer it. They look upon "peace" as a certain feeling of calm repose in their own minds; and inasmuch as they feel anything but that, they come to the conclusion that they have not yet found peace.

Further, there are many, we doubt not, who think that unless they experience this feeling of repose they cannot be Christians at all; and, seeing they have it not,

they conclude that they have neither part nor lot in the matter.

Finally, there are many who think that if only they possessed this peace they should never again have to bewail the inward workings of evil. They imagine that true gospel peace and indwelling sin are wholly incompatible; and seeing, alas! that they are painfully conscious of a mass of evil within, they conclude that they have yet to wait for the enjoyment of peace. Thus do all these three classes of persons, by harboring wrong ideas on the subject of peace, only augment their sore trouble.

1. First then let me say distinctly and emphatically that true gospel peace is not a mere feeling of calm repose in the mind. It is something far more solid and settled than that. It is a certain condition into which the believer is introduced by the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Take the following passage of Scripture: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1.

Is this a mere feeling in the mind? Clearly not. It is a blessed condition into which the soul is introduced by the death and resurrection of Christ. No doubt the heart will feel happy and peaceful in proportion to the simplicity of its faith in this grand truth that all sins are forgiven, and that the soul is as justified as God can make it, as justified as Christ Himself. But the Apostle does not say, "Being justified by faith we have a happy feeling of peace in our minds." This would never do. Our feelings are as uncertain and changeable as the winds. The peace of which this noble passage speaks is as stable as the throne of God itself.

Again: "Preaching peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts 10:36). Does this mean preaching a certain feeling in the mind? No, but a glorious proclamation of peace between God and man, founded on the accomplished work of Christ who, having "made peace through the blood of His cross," is Himself our peace in the presence of God. It would be a very serious mistake to suppose that "peace" as spoken of in the above passages is only a calm and comfortable frame of mind. It is far more. It is not our feeling of peace, but God's foundation of peace. This makes all the difference. We should never confound our sense of a thing with the thing itself, a plain fact with the effect which that fact, when known, may produce upon us.

In the gospel I get divine truth, to be received in a divine way, and to be productive of divine results. It is not an intellectual assent to a certain proposition which I receive as true because I

have no reason to doubt it. It is a poor, guilty rebel, a slave, an enemy, receiving from God, through grace, pardon, liberty, and reconciliation, through the precious sacrifice of the cross.

Will such a one not have happy feelings? No doubt; but the feelings must never be mistaken for the blessed truth which gives them birth. Peace is a divine, independent, changeless reality, based upon the blood of Christ, proclaimed on the authority of the Word of God, and received by faith through the power of the Holy Ghost.

If, therefore, I were asked the question, Have you peace? should I look in at myself, and shape my reply according to what I find there? By no means. What then? I should say, Yes, thank God, I have peace, perfect peace, peace as perfect as Christ could make, or God could give. Nor can anything ever disturb my peace, inasmuch as God has preached it to me "by Jesus Christ... Lord of all." If anything could disturb my peace, then Jesus Christ would not be "Lord of all"; for whatever caused the disturbance would be lord of Him, which it were blasphemy to suppose for a moment. My feelings could be easily disturbed but God's foundation never can.

2. And now one word to those who think that unless they have this inward feeling of repose they are not Christians at all. I do not believe their idea is borne out either by Scripture or Christian experience. It is not that I want to justify doubts or fears, or lead any to be satisfied with themselves or their present practical state. Far from it. I fully believe that doubts and fears are as dishonoring to Christ as they are subversive of our own true peace of mind. They are wholly unwarrantable. They spring, in many cases, from a false apprehension of the real nature of gospel peace; from looking at self instead of at Christ; from confounding our enjoyment of peace with the peace itself; from looking at what we are to God, instead of looking at what God is to us. But, from what cause soever they spring, we should judge and disallow them just as we should any other evil thought or feeling that might spring up in our minds.

But while it is unquestionably wrong to harbor doubts when God has spoken peace, or to harbor fear when Christ has made peace, it is much more wrong to call in question our personal interest in Christ because we do not feel quite as happy as we might or ought. This is just allowing Satan to gain his end. Should I doubt my natural existence because I have headache? Surely not. And why doubt my spiritual existence, my life in Christ, because my heart is not as happy as I wish it to be?

Very many true Christians, genuine, earnest, devoted souls, are afflicted with doubts and fears at times. Indeed, in proportion to their seriousness will be their anxiety until they learn to look away, from themselves and rest simply in Christ. Not to feel anxious until I know on divine authority that Christ has put away all my sins, and perfectly satisfied, on my behalf, the claims of the throne of God, would only prove hardness of heart and indifference as to sin and holiness. May God preserve my reader from aught of this! God forbid that he should ever cease to be anxious until his anxiety is hushed by the blood of the cross! It is to be feared that many have a flippant way of talking about peace, and finding peace, which argues a very shallow apprehension of the evil of sin, the claims of divine holiness, or the solemn reality of the cross. We should ever remember that though peace has been made, without any demand upon us, yet it cost Christ everything. We do not lose aught of the simplicity and certainty of divine peace by having a deep sense of its solemnity. Quite the opposite. The more fully I apprehend what had to be done, the more thankful I

am that Christ has done it. But I must never forget what it cost Him to do it.

3. In conclusion, let me add a word for those who are troubled with the thought that the enjoyment of settled peace is incompatible with the sense of indwelling sin. This is a serious mistake which must produce great darkness and heaviness of soul. The most advanced believer upon earth has sin dwelling in him. "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," must be our language to the very end of the chapter. "If we say that we [believers] have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8.

It is interesting and consolatory to see that in the law of the peace offering leavened bread was to be offered because of the evil in the worshiper; for leaven is, without so much as a single exception, only symbolic of evil (Lev. 7:13).

So also in the "two wave loaves" leaven was permitted because they were typical of the people of God who have evil in them, and who will have it so long as they are in the body (Lev. 23:17).

God knows all about us. He knows the very worst concerning us, but yet He loves us, and has made provision for the evil which He knows to be in us, so that it should not in the smallest degree interfere with our peace. If the evil be suffered to act and show itself, it will very seriously interfere with our enjoyment of peace, and put us upon our faces before the Lord in confession and self judgment. God the Holy Ghost who dwells in us cannot sanction a single thought of evil indulged. All must be judged. The struggle must be maintained. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Gal. 5:17.

This conflict will never cease in the believer until that blissful moment when he shall lay aside his body of humiliation. Hence, if indwelling sin were to hinder our peace, it would come to pass that not a single member of the family of God could ever enjoy one moment's peace. Thank God, such is not the case. Our peace does not rest upon sinless flesh, but upon the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

The Perfect Will of God

Be very careful never to press the Lord for anything which is not quite clear to your conscience to be His will, lest in righteous anger at your mistrustful solicitations and dictations, He lets you have your own way, and that may prove a disastrous loss. "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." Psalm 106:15. No good thing, but certainly every evil thing, will He withhold.

Wait then upon God from day to day, from hour to hour, in perplexity, in temptation, in depression, in need of every kind. He will not be dictated to, but He loves the appeal of faith. Be not cast down, nor think your power limited, when you have no power whatever. You' do not need it. Dare not to think or act for yourself at all, but refer everything to Him, wholly trusting His will and wisdom (which is infinite) to make all things - yes, all things -work together for your temporal, spiritual, and eternal good.

A Personal Letter: a Needed Word on Reading Novels

The following is an extract from a letter by James Hudson Taylor to his younger sister, Louisa, whose spiritual welfare was much on his heart.

"There is one thing I would specially warn you against... one of the greatest curses I believe of the present day - the practice of novel reading. If you value your mind and soul, avoid it as you would a dangerous serpent. I cannot tell you what I would give to be able to forget certain novels I have read, and to efface their influence from my memory. And I firmly believe, though some would deny it... that no Christian ever did or ever will read them without injury, very serious injury too, if the habit is indulged in. It is like opium-smoking; it begets a craving for more that must be supplied.

"Better books are neglected, and no one can estimate the mischief that results.

"None, I believe, could honestly ask God's blessing upon the reading of a novel, and few would venture to assert that they read them to the glory of God.

-The only safety lies in avoiding them as one of Satan's most subtle snares."

Political Parties

I need hardly assure your readers that I have no desire that they should meddle in politics; I do not do so myself, nor do I think that a Christian ought. He believes that God governs, and governs with a view to the glory of Christ, and that He will infallibly bring about His purpose....

Parties are all alike to me; they are all alike guilty, and have all alike had their part in what is going on.... We must remember that politicians have no idea of principles, but only of existing influences to which they must be subject.... I take no side with any party - I distrust them all....

God holds the reins or loosens them. The Christian may walk in peace through it all, waiting for God's Son from heaven, and keeping the word of His patience; yea, having a specially blessed place of testimony in the midst of it all, but a lowly one, content to be nothing in the world which has rejected Christ, and is ripening for His judgment. Their part is to keep His word and not deny His name.

Poverty and Riches: Two Dangers

"Give me neither poverty nor riches" (Prow. 30:8) was a wise request, and "Be content with such things as ye have," is often a needed injunction; for we are not always mindful that He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." None perhaps know the trials connected with poverty or riches, but those who are actually brought into such circumstances. But many of the Lord's people have been tried by one or the other. Poverty is easily understood to be a trial. When it really comes, its pinch is keenly felt. To be rich is more congenial to human selfishness, and often gives the owner a place of honor and distinction among men, so that it is only realized to be a trial by those whose consciences are exercised before the Lord.

In poverty, if God be not the refuge and strength, if He be not trusted for sustainment and deliverance, the heart soon becomes despondent, or busy to invent contrivances, sometimes not very honorable, to force a way of escape. Efforts of this kind, under such circumstances, are by no means uncommon, and the painful nature of the trial is often pleaded in justification of unbelieving ways. But worldly wisdom is not the wisdom that comes down from above, nor is carnal stratagem after the pattern of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. The contrivances of unbelief only cripple faith and, sooner or later, bring dishonor on the name of the Lord; such actings also spoil the Christian's testimony for the Lord, and often embitter his path for the remainder of his wilderness journey. A sense of the grace of God in not having spared His own Son, but in delivering Him up for us all, often wakes up faith, and puts unbelief to shame. But how many have dishonored the Lord in time of poverty!

In earthly prosperity, if God be not hearkened to and obeyed, some may have painfully to learn that "riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away" (Prow. 23:5), or their path may be beset with humblings, disappointment, spiritual leanness, and regrets, with faith weakened, and hope sadly dimmed.

That soul alone is happy who knows he is the Lord's, and can truly say, He loved me, and gave Himself for me. Assured by the Word of God that he is accepted in the Beloved, and loved by the Father as He loves the Son, he enters into the truth that he is kept here only to do His will. To such, every question resolves itself in this, What is the Lord's will? and a dependent, obedient heart lives not to itself, but to Him who died and rose again.

Perhaps there is no greater trial to which a child of God can be exposed than the rapid pouring in of wealth. Few have been able to bear it. Many have fallen grievously by it. Some have become so intoxicated by it as to plunge themselves into foolish and pernicious occupations. Others have been drawn back again into the world, who seemed for a while to have run well in ways of separation from it; while some who began this new responsibility as God's stewards have grown up to be patrons, and even to seek a place of honor among men by it. In fact, whatever be our circumstances, all God's people have painfully to learn that in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing, and that we cannot bring forth fruit except we are abiding in our Lord Jesus. Nothing else can possibly preserve us in the path that glorifies God. Whether we have poverty or riches,

each believer has alike to cry, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." To be happy in the Lord day by day, in the lowly path of dependence and obedience, is of the highest importance, for nothing can be ministered by us for His glory without this. We do well to remember His precious words, "Abide in Me,... for without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:4, 5.

How many poor saints have been sweetly sustained and comforted by remembering that Jesus was poor! When He went about from place to place ministering the glad tidings of the kingdom, are we not told that certain women "ministered to Him of their substance"? (Luke 8:2, 3). And, when He died for us on the cross, what earthly possessions did He leave? All we read is that they parted His garments among them, and for His vesture they did cast lots.

Some years ago a Christian friend was lovingly visiting a cobbler who was very poor, and residing in the west of England. An earnest servant of the Lord accompanied him, who sometimes gave words of hearty counsel in the form of lines of poetry. They both sought to comfort the tired cobbler in his poverty, but before taking leave of him one said, "I will give you, dear brother, a couple of lines:

When cruse and barrel both are dry,

We then will trust in God most high."

After pausing a moment the other said, "Finish it; you have not completed your words of counsel." But he replied, "I have nothing more to say," and intimated that he wished to convey to the poor cobbler that, like Elijah, he should put his trust in God. Then said the other, "I would like to add,

When cruse and barrel both are full,

To God we'll consecrate the whole."

These surely are words in season for rich as well as for poor. To trust in time of need, and to yield ourselves and all He entrusts us with, to Himself in time of abundance, are alike the path of faith. Happy those who under all circumstances are so before the Lord, and constrained by His love, as to be wholehearted for Him at all times and under all circumstances!

Prospects

When a number of men talk together you will find that they soon begin to speak of their prospects. What are our prospects, fellow believer? Christ is coming into the air. This is our peculiar hope - riot His coming to the earth. When He comes for us, all the thousands and millions of saints from Adam and Abel downward will be raised, and their souls reunited to their bodies. Then you and I will be changed, and we shall all be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. That precious dust, beloved, of the saints, of your loved ones and mine, will be raised. We shall see Him, be with Him, and be like Him. Death may come, but the Lord will come.

Purchase and Redemption

Redemption supposes taking us out of one condition, and putting us into another. In Christ's death we get two questions - God's glory and our sins. Redemption is eternal, but not universal. We get the blessings of the new covenant, but there is no covenant with us; the letter of it is for Israel.

There is universal purchase but

not universal redemption. The believer is the only one who owns the purchase, and acts upon it. Everyone may come as to the presentation of the gospel; but this does not interfere with God's sovereignty. Men will be judged for not believing the gospel, and for sins.

Purpose of Heart for Christ: Two Beautiful Instances

John 12 and 20

What I want to see among us, dear friend, is a purpose of heart. We need not mere knowledge, but purpose of heart, individuality of love to Christ, that He, and He alone, should be the magnet; every heart turning to Him; the Lord satisfying the heart; Christ the polestar drawing up all our hearts to Him as we go through the wilderness.

As to Mary of Bethany, there was no particular light in sitting at His feet; she simply loved her Lord. In John 12:3 she gave an expression of love, of the most costly order - not only the box, but she wiped His feet with her hair (hair given to woman as an ornament), and "the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." In Mary's mind there was only one thought; and only one Person present could read the enigma of her strange doings. Did she wish to make a perfume? Did she even think of His death? No, personal attachment to the Lord alone, and the heart drawn up to God to know what to do to express it, to hear from Him how to put honor on Jesus. Her thought was, What most costly can I give Him? Judas was quite the opposite - How much shall I put in the bag? and out of the abundance of the heart both spoke. (How strange the way human nature works. He bids them gather up the fragments, that they may see that with God there is more in the end than in the beginning, for those who need; and now, when the One that God delights to honor is present, they think of the poor!)

Then she got such a guidance from God! She did not know that He was going to die, but she heard from Him first that she was anointing Him for His burial. Her whole mind being set on Christ, God suggested to her the suited act that she had not the intelligence to understand. The power of the Lord let her into something new. Oh what a beautiful thing is the retired walk of one full of Christ, and she a woman! A channel prepared of God for His own purposes. What could have been wiser? It was in beautiful season too. God honors His people by letting their loving purpose do the very thing He wants for His Son. She did the very thing that showed she was in practical fellowship, because Christ was the object. What a beautiful subject to speak with her upon - One whom God had thus put honor upon.

Where there is purpose of heart, it is brought into a most blessed place of privilege (chap. 20). As to Mary of Magdala, her thought was, My Lord lies buried; I will go and visit the spot. But all her hopes were blasted when she found the stone gone. She went to the disciples; "We have lost the object of our love," she says in effect.

The disciples had not the purpose of heart Mary had (v. 10). "The disciples went away again unto their own home" shows how low in love even the best of His disciples were. Mary's home was the sepulcher of her Lord! No sympathy or interest lay elsewhere, and she was riveted to the spot. No doubt the Lord kept her there to reap the reward of her unwearied love.

There was more attractiveness to her in Christ than in anything else; the angels did not surprise her (v. 12). What were they to the One she wanted? Nothing could turn her off. The needle of her

compass was quite true to the one point; her soul was in a state for all that honored Christ to pass before her (v. 13). They drew from her the spring of her sorrow. "My Lord," as if hers alone.

What a touching scene follows (vv. 14, 15). The Lord risen from the grave, cognizant of the state of all His disciples, saw this poor woman absorbed with Him, and communed with her to prove to her that His love for her was greater than hers for Him. "Whom seekest thou?" "If thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou halt laid Him, and I will take Him away." Though dead, she still wanted to have Him. Poor, stupid thing that she was, she told her living Lord, Oh but you are dead! But He said, "Mary." Whatever there was in that word, whatever the manner of naming her, she turned around with "Master!" She had now a living Christ. Mark how she got there. The Lord interfered - "Touch Me not" (v. 17). She got the place of messenger of resurrection-blessed post! How did she get it? With full purpose of heart, occupied so with the Lord that she was above all objects, and neither angels nor disciples turned her aside. What a heart she must have had in going forth with the message to gladden and console the disciples! Here was her reward; all through she had no thought of personal devotedness; she thought of Christ. He had her heart. If your eye be single, you cannot divide between having an object and following it.

"Touch Me not;... but go to My brethren." In heaven He could recognize them in this new relationship. "My Father, and your Father; and... My God, and your God" - blessed position of sons of God brought out at Pentecost! A woman got that truth first of all simply by purpose of heart, beyond faith. Himself the object of worship in heaven increases the quantity of truth revealed, God finding and bringing souls into purpose of heart, into scenes where Christ came. Knowledge is useless without the heart, but they ought not to be divided. I would rather have less knowledge, but real purpose of heart for Christ, and Christ Himself.

These (I mean women) are not vessels to be put forward outwardly, but Christ ought to have been anointed for His burial, Christ ought to have had someone to watch His tomb; and God used them to honor Him. These are perhaps the two greatest instances of Christ attracting the heart after Him, and their following in purpose of heart; therefore God uses them to anoint Christ, and to greet His Son after His resurrection. Oh, for more purpose of heart for Christ among all the children of God!

A Reader Suggests Concerning False Teaching

Our correspondent referred to some of the recent subjects taken up in "The Editor's Column" regarding certain evil teachings that have crept into the professing church, and suggested that we quote the scriptures that are used by those who teach error, and then that we explain how these same scriptures are misused.

ANSWER: It scarcely falls within the scope of this publication to take up the misapplied and distorted scriptures that are used by the false teachers of the cults. It would be an almost endless task, and eventually we would have to come back to the firm foundation on which our faith rests - the plain, incontestable statements of Scripture.

All of the teachers of false doctrines have fixed but delusive paths through the Scriptures. They will lead one on from place to place, verse to verse, and quote passages that have no connection with the subject being attacked. Practically all of the false doctrines are supposedly built on the statements of Scripture. But none of this need alarm us, for the Word of God never contradicts itself, so if we know a certain truth from a plain statement of Scripture we need never fear that anything else in that blessed volume will ever alter what we know. We can take our stand there with all confidence.

It is of these heterodox teachers that the "babes" in the family are warned in 1 John 2:18-27. Their danger is false doctrine, but even they need not be misled by it, for they - the babes - "have an unction from the Holy One, and... know all things." The Holy Spirit who indwells the one who was saved only yesterday will teach him what is not the truth. What the young convert needs is simple faith and confidence in God. He may then be like the lady of whom we heard; she was truly saved, but not deeply taught, and when some of the so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses" came to her with their false doctrine she simply replied, "I do not know what is wrong with it, but it is not the Shepherd's voice." The Spirit of God gave her to be conscious of the defects in their speech; their speech always betrays them. It reminds us of the greatest of all false teachers - the false prophet who is to come, the antichrist - who will have a deceptive appearance, but a telltale speech:

"He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." Rev. 13:11.

It is not wise to allow these people to take the lead in conversation; in fact it is wiser to leave them alone. Those who have gone into these fundamental errors and become teachers of it are almost without exception irrecoverable. They seem to be given over to it as by the government of God, somewhat in the same manner in which the false profession of Christianity will be given over in the day now speedily approaching: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:11, 12.

There may be times when one would not be sure that the person who mentions such errors is a teacher of it, and so would want to answer him. But in any such case it is always prudent to stay fast by what you know the Word of God says; do not be led about by a fast scampering through

the pages of the Bible, but make all stand or fall on a simple statement that you do know. Keep to it, and keep the questioner to it.

We might illustrate this by naming a few points: suppose the one who comes to you is suspected of holding to the false teachings of "Jehovah's Witnesses"; challenge him on the ground that the Lord Jesus is truly God (watch that he does not admit that He is the Son of God and yet deny that He is truly God Himself) and this will bring out the seriousness of the error.* You do not need to know all the misuse he will make of Scripture in an attempt to prove his point, but stand fast as to what you know; for instance, John 1:1, 2. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Here we find the eternity of His being (He was in the beginning), the distinctness of His Person (He was with God), and His own deity, for He "was God." Your acquaintance, being a deceiver or a deceived one, may refer to the fact that the Lord Jesus as born into the world was declared to be the Son of God - "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (Psa. 2:7) - or that in Matthew 3 He was declared to be the Son of God after His baptism. All this in no way nullifies the fact of His deity and eternal existence, but merely brings out that as a man in this world He was called the Son of God. Rom. 1:4 connects this with His being declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from among the dead.

If the perfect sinlessness of the Lord Jesus as a man down here is attacked, you need not know more or press more than, He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22), and that He "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21), and "in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). He is a liar who denies this, and one may safely cut any conversation short with such a person. It would be hard to imagine all the twisting and turning of the Scriptures that would be done to refuse these simple, clear, and precise statements. Much error along this particular line has come from a bad use of the Psalms. There are some psalms in which the language is that of the Lord Jesus Himself, but in others He identifies Himself with a suffering Jewish remnant. It will be obvious that if you take the language of the remnant in their sin, and make it apply to the Lord, it is basic error.

If the subject be "soul-sleeping," the false teacher will probably refer to Ecclesiastes where the language is that of a man "under the sun" who sees all here, and no more. It is apart from a revelation. But here again, stand on what you know - "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" for the saints, and Luke 16 which draws aside the veil and lets us see the misery of the lost, even before the resurrection and final judgment.

If the deluded soul seeks to assure himself that there is no hell, you need not try to answer all his "foolish and unlearned questions," but stand by what you know, as in Mark 9, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," and "the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are [they will have been there a thousand years then, and are not annihilated], and shall • be tormented day and night forever and ever." Rev. 20:10.

When the Lord Jesus was down here the devil once came to Him with (as it were) a Bible in his hand. He sought to have the Lord tempt God to see if He would be as good as His word, and then quoted a part of the 91st Psalm. What he did was to quote only a portion of it, which in reality falsified what it did say. The devil said, "It is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a

stone." Matt. 4:6. But the devil left out that the angels who were to take care of the Messiah were "to keep Thee in all Thy ways." Now the enemy craftily applied a psalm to the Lord that properly applies to Him, but it certainly was no authority for Him to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to see if the angels would take care of Him in so doing. The word said that they would keep Him in all His ways, not just in some unwonted test. Now the Lord might have said to him, "Satan, you have misquoted that scripture," but He did not; He merely replied by quoting another scripture; namely, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The Lord knew the devil was misusing the Word, but He also knew, from another statement, that the thought he suggested was wrong. And so with us; we may not know that a certain scripture is actually being misquoted, or misused, but we should know from other portions of the Word of God by what principles we should act; and so we would be kept. Stand by what you do know, and do not reason, but accept the veritable language of Scripture in all simplicity.

The Record of God: Trustworthy Evidence

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.... And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:9, 11, 12.

There are few scriptures which contain more comforting testimony for anxious, troubled souls than the above; they present the very truth which can meet the poor burdened heart, writing bitter things against itself. Nothing can be more distinct than this fact, that the evidence of the soul's acceptance is outside of us altogether; nothing we can either do or feel is any ground of security or rest for our souls; what an unspeakable mercy and comfort that it should be so! For, just reflect a moment. This day all might be favorable and bright around me-happy frames, sweet experiences, and the like, simply produced by my circumstances; then tomorrow, on the contrary, all is as dark as yesterday it was bright - coldness and deadness within, and all that I prized so much and valued as evidence has vanished in a night. What a state of destitution and misery I am now plunged into, in a moment too!

Reader, this is not a supposed case; it is a real and a common one. I have heard of someone who formed his judgment of the sun by looking at it in a pool of water; now and then the water was moved and agitated; every breath of wind troubled it more or less. Consequently this man thought the sun moved as often as it appeared to stand still; but as soon as he learned to judge of the sun no longer by the water on which it shone, then he discovered his mistake, and that the sun was

ever the same - steadfast and fixed. Oh, how blessed for poor weak things like us to know that our security is in what God has done, and our consciousness of security, or certainty of it, in what God has said; this cannot be too often insisted on, or pressed upon souls - this alone can meet the rage and fury of Satan - this alone can silence the troubles and thoughts of the heart.

"Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." Luke 24:38, 39.

The risen Savior knew well what perplexed the heart-troubles and thoughts - how does He meet them? By turning the mind out on Himself, from themselves.

Let us look a little at the testimony I have spoken of and found in the scriptures given above.

First, we have "God hath given to us eternal life." What a sentence that is! It begins with the Giver - "God hath given"; it closes with the gift - "eternal life"; and this, bear in mind, is God's own witness, record, testimony. What is eternal life? Nothing less than the very life of the One who died on the cross as substitute for His people, and rose again from the dead; in His death He closed their history as children, not only of wrath, but of Adam; and in resurrection He became the Head of a new race, and as such communicates His own life. "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." John 20:22. So now, of all who believe in Jesus, who receive the

record, testimony, witness of God, it is true they have passed from death unto life-they have eternal life - they are not in the flesh. So then under the first head or testimony we have God's record of Himself, His Son, His gift - the blessed Giver, God Himself, the source and spring of it all. His Son the Lord Jesus Christ, the One in whom it is all made good, for it is in Him all that God bestows is found - and then His gift, eternal life.

Now the second testimony or record of God is found in verse 12, "He that hath the Son hath life." It is similar to that beautiful verse, the word of Christ Himself, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. Now observe in the first record which has been before us, God Himself, His Son, and His gift, were all presented; here in the second place, it is God's pledged word. God Himself affirms that he that believeth hath; God has given me testimony not only to the love that was in His heart toward me, but also to the fact that in believing in Christ I have present eternal life. Faith hears Christ's word, believes the Father who sent His Son, possesses Christ, and has

everlasting life. Do you not see how the eye of the soul is turned out on God, and on Christ, not in on self? and do you not see that it is the heart of God, the Son of God, the gift of God, and the Word of God, that are all the subject of testimony? Can you not trust such testimony rather than your feelings, frames, experiences, all of which are like the surface of yonder lake, agitated and swept by every wind, even in its gentlest whispers or its wildest fury?

But there is something even beyond the comfort and satisfaction of my heart, and that is that I do not make God a liar; "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." We receive in this world everything, for the most part, on testimony; when in ordinary conversation people say they cannot believe such and such a thing, it is because the testimony is deficient in some way, generally because of the character of the persons bearing testimony; and on the contrary we find no difficulty in giving credit to testimony from one who is trustworthy and reliable. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater."

"That which can shake the cross,
May shake the peace it gave,
Which tells me Christ has never died,
Or never left the grave.
"Till then my peace is sure;
It will not, cannot yield;
Jesus I know has died, and lives;
On this firm rock I build.
"I change, He changes not;
My Christ can never die;

His love, not mine, the resting place,
I on His truth rely."

A Record of God's Grace and Holiness: Paul Preaching at Antioch

"Now when Paul and his company... departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought He them out of it." Acts 13:13-17. (Read carefully through verse 41.)

As Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue at Antioch, they were invited, after the reading of the law and the prophets, to give the people a word of exhortation. Paul had readiness to address them in his heart, for he carried and represented the gospel of God, that system of divine active love that is ever waiting on sinners. But when out of the abundance of such a heart his mouth speaks, it is in such a way as the synagogue could not have expected. He does not make the people his subject, giving them exhortations as out of the law or the prophets, but he makes God and His acts his subjects out of the historical books. He details a series of divine acts from the day of the exodus to the resurrection of Jesus (acts of grace, every one of them), in which God had been rising up in the supremacy of His own love and power over all the various sad and evil conditions of Israel, whether such had been brought on them by themselves or by their enemies; through their own folly and wickedness or by the hand of them that hated them.

He deals with facts - such facts as displayed God in grace, and humbled man. He brings God into the synagogue, and makes Him the great object of notice to the soul. And this, let me say, is God's own way in the gospel. He makes room for Himself, as I may express it, in both our hearts and our consciences. He breaks us to pieces, leaving us without a word to say for ourselves, exposed, convicted, and condemned, that He may introduce His own salvation to the conscience and to the heart --that the one may find peace made by Himself for it, and the other be forever drinking of a love that flows to everlasting, as it has been flowing from everlasting.

This story of grace which Paul rehearsed in the synagogue at Antioch brings out various actings of God's hand in behalf of His people. After choosing the fathers, He had of old delivered Israel out of Egypt in spite of Egypt's strength and enmity. He had then carried them through the wilderness for the space of forty years, well supplying all their need in spite of their manners and their murmurings. Then He had beaten down the nations of Canaan before their face, and divided their lands among them. After that He had raised up a long line of judges, or deliverers, for them, to deliver them out of the hand of those oppressors whom their own folly and faithlessness had armed against them. And still further, He had given them David, a man of His own choice, to be their shepherd after they had proved the bitterness of the days of Saul, who had been the man of their choice. Thus, in so many ways, and for so long a time, had He magnified His grace, and continued in it, unwearied by their need, changeful as it was; and unhindered by their faithlessness, persevering and rebellious as it was.

With this tale of grace, Paul fills the synagogue at Antioch. But there was still another chapter in that story. Jesus the Messiah had been given to the nation, and was refused and crucified by the nation, but was by God raised up and given again to them; and, in the name of this crucified and risen Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is now preached, and Israel called on to accept it.

Now this was a tale of the constancy and variousness of the grace of God. Israel is seen to have enjoyed a series of accomplished blessings at the hand of God. Redemption, support, victory, deliverance, and a kingdom all had been theirs in spite of the strength of enemies, and of their own unfaithfulness. And now, added to these, there was provision for the forgiveness of all their sins.

And blessed to tell it, this crowning mercy, the forgiveness of sins which Paul now preached, was a blessing as sure as any, established by as sure an arm, and made theirs by as clear a title. It was set upon the resurrection of Jesus. Redemption, and inheritance, and deliverance, and the like, had been, each and all in their day, infallible, and each and all in their turn and time enjoyed by Israel. And all had stood on solid ground and in good warranty. The rod of Moses, adapted by the God of all power and might, was equal to work redemption, and Israel enjoyed redemption. The presence of God had supplied the camp, and the sword of the Lord in the hand of Joshua had conquered and divided the land. Judges could deliver from all oppressors, since the Lord of heaven and earth had raised them up; and the man after God's own heart had guided the flock of God with integrity and skillfulness. And now "the forgiveness of sins" takes its place among these blessings, for Jesus in resurrection in like infallibility can secure and dispense it. The manna from heaven had no more virtue to feed the camp morning by morning -and who could question that? -than the resurrection of the Lord Jesus has to publish the forgiveness of sins to all that believe. Death is the wages of sin, and cannot be put away, but by sin being put away. To get rid of death we must get rid of sin. But Jesus had risen. He was alive from the dead and on the ground

of such a fact as that, of such accomplished victory as His resurrection bespeaks, the forgiveness of sins is as infallibly named, as surely and boldly published, as redemption was wrought by the rod of Moses, or victory and the division of the land by the sword of the Lord, and of Joshua.

Forgiveness of sins thus takes its place among the sure and accomplished blessings of grace. We can account for it as simply as for any of those wrought out of old for Israel by Jehovah. We can see why sins may now be forgiven, as once we saw why Pharaoh's host lay dead on the seashore. Jehovah looked from the cloud then, and that was enough; Jesus is risen from the dead now, having been made sin for us, and that is enough. The danger is in despising - as the Apostle closes his preaching, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." This was the Apostle's exhortation.

The law and the prophets had been read in the synagogue, as we noticed, and the apostles were invited to give the people a word of exhortation. But Paul read to the synagogue from the history of Israel. He stated facts, God's facts, such as told what He had done for His people, and thus what He was to them. And his exhortation is, not to despise those acts of grace. The resurrection is one of those acts. Jesus had died to sin. On the cross He owned the claim and fruit of sin, and answered it, and bore it. Sin was never, we may say, in so intense a sense, the sting of death as then; nor was death ever, in so solemn a judgment, paid as the wages of sin. But armed as it was in that hour of its power, it was slain. Sin was put away. The veil of the temple was rent, and the

graves of the saints were opened. "Made sin, He sin o'erthrew." The claims of God in judgment upon sin were all vindicated, and he that had the power of death was annulled. So that we may well say, with our Apostle; looking at the death and resurrection of Jesus, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

This preaching at Antioch thus gives us a sweet witness of how grace has been abounding in the ways of God from the beginning hitherto. But for further confirmation of our souls in God, let me observe that both holiness and grace have had their several witnesses from the beginning, for God cannot but be just, while He is a justifier, and the stability and rest of our consciences before Him come from this, that "truth" and "mercy," "righteousness" and "peace," together dispensed, salvation to us. God is never more holy than when forgiving sins, as has been long since said.

The ordinance of clean and unclean told of God's holiness from the beginning, separating Him from the fallen and defiled creation. This ordinance, we know, is recognized as early as Gen. 8; His promise had already witnessed His grace, and that we get in Gen. 3 And so all through, that He is a just God and a Savior, has been His memorial here. He has ever had His two witnesses in this world of corruption and of misery a witness to His holiness, and a witness to His grace and goodness. And the cross has redeemed all these pledges, for clean and unclean were distinguished there, and separated forever; and yet forgiveness of sins was secured, and the soul ruined of old by the serpent is delivered forever.

Thus Paul brings God into the synagogue. The rulers would have had the people exhorted, but the Spirit in the Apostle will have God revealed - revealed too, as is His way, by His own acts - that simplest, surest, most blessed way of revealing Him - the way in which "the wayfaring man" may not err, in which a child may not mistake the lesson. It is not by treatises or discourses, but by acts, that God makes Himself known to us. We might miss our lesson, had the former been His method; but His method is such that the simpler we are, the surer we shall reach Him and find Him and know Him. And Paul thus deals with the synagogue at Antioch. He brings God in, Christ in, and that too in the divine way, in the light and revelation of His doings in the midst of us and for us. The law and the prophets had already been in the synagogue, as Moses and Elias were on the holy hill. But the voice from the exalted glory would draw Peter away from Moses and Elias, and fix him on Jesus, saying, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him," when Peter would have made equal tabernacles for Moses and Elias; and so here, Paul will leave the law and the prophets, and fix the assembly on God and His Christ.

And what was thus done in the synagogue at Antioch is not only like what had been already done on the holy hill, but it is after the manner of the divine wisdom in all dispensations from the beginning, that the Christ of God should be the great object of faith, and the one great issue and result of all the education and learning of our souls - that we should be brought to Him, and then left with Him.

Repentance

We may say that repentance is the intelligent judgment we pass, under grace, upon what we have done and are. It is not merely sorrow, for sin, for in Acts 2 when the people were pricked in their heart, the Apostle called upon them to "repent." Repentance involves the claims of God. All men everywhere are called on to repent because they have not acted up to God's claim. It is more than a change of mind, though it is a change of mind; it is connected with our judgment of self as in the sight of God. It is therefore the goodness of God that leadeth to repentance. Repentance is to be preached in Christ's name (Luke 24:47).

The Revived Roman Empire

Last month we considered how the present world situation could easily, and on short notice, produce that rider on the white horse mentioned in Rev. 6:2. He could come out of the present rearmament program as the unifier and leader of combined Western military might waging conquests in the name of peace or holding other forces in check by balance of power so successfully that he is acclaimed a ruler in his own right - "a crown was given unto him." In some such manner "the beast" - the head of the revived Roman Empire - may rise. He will then champion the cause of the Jews, giving them their temple and religious rites as heretofore, according to Dan. 9:27. His agreement with them will be for seven years, but in the middle of that time, after three and one half years have run their course, he will break his word with them insofar as their worship is concerned. This is also mentioned in Dan. 7:25 where the laws given into his hand are the Jewish religious ones. At that point the revived Roman Empire will become diabolic in form, for Satan will give to its head "his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev. 13:2).

This will be the suitable time for Satan and his two willing agents, the Jewish leader (often referred to as the antichrist) and the beast (the empire's head), to seek to eradicate from the earth any semblance of the worship of the God of heaven, and to replace it with the deification and worship of man. This is foretold in Rev. 13 and 2 Thess. 2:4, and is seen in a historical event of a prophetic nature in Dan. 6 where Darius signed the decree that no man could ask any petition of any God or man for thirty days, except from this king.

Just as in Dan. 5 the fall of Babylon precedes the worship of man in the sixth chapter, so "Babylon the great" will likewise meet its doom at the hand of the kings of the Roman Empire and its wicked head before man is set up as above God. "Babylon the Great," the wicked and apostate ecclesiastical system that is left in Christendom after the true believers are taken home to the Father's house, will be consumed "in one hour." Read Rev. 17 and 18 for the details of the false church's condition and destruction. God will put it into the hearts of the world's rulers to fulfill His word in the utter destruction of that which has falsely named the name of Christ; the wicked system is described in those chapters as a wicked city and a corrupt woman.

How blessed it is to turn our eyes away from this distressing sight which caused the Apostle John to wonder with great wonder (not with any admiration), and to fix our gaze on the true

Church which at that time will be safely housed above, both with and like Christ. In great contrast to that hated and hateful thing, it will fully answer to Christ in all He desires and is, and because He has constituted it so.

"Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25) - the past - "that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26) - the present - "that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27) - the future.

How blessed to know that love that caused Him to give Himself for the Church of which we are a part, and to know His present gracious offices of cleansing from defilement that for which He gave Himself, and to look forward to that blessed moment when He shall present us to Himself, fully and forever in accord with all His mind and heart.

The true Church is also described both as a city and as a woman, but oh, in what contrasts to the false! Instead of Babylon, which name means confusion, and which in principle has been, from Gen. 11 on through to Revelation, connected with evil, and has been the bane of the faithful in all ages, the true Church is the "holy city, Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:10; N. Trans.), or the holy city of peace.

Then instead of a corrupt woman we have the true Church presented as a spotless bride in all purity. Surely nothing less will ever satisfy the heart of Christ; it was for this purpose that He died, and for this cause that He is constantly engaged for her purification even now. And when we consider the purity and perfect spotlessness of the condition in which we shall be presented to Himself as His bride, shall we be careless about our walk down here now? Oh, surely not! shall it not rather increase our desire to answer even now more fully to that which His heart desires? Should we not hate "even the garment spotted by the flesh"? In that day of our being presented to Himself there will not be one spot of defilement; may we abhor spots even here.

In further contrast between the false and the true we see the corrupt woman "arrayed in purple and scarlet color" - that which is gaudy and calculated to allure the eye and heart of the unregenerate - but to the bride it is granted that she should be "clothed in fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." Rev. 19:8; N. Trans. May we revel in the grace that picked us up in our defilement, put all our sins away through "the precious blood of Christ," cleanses us now by the water of the Word, and will yet have us white and pure in His own presence, forever and ever.

"And when Thou, Lord and Savior,

Shalt come again in glory,

There, by Thy side,

Thy spotless bride

Shall crown the wondrous story."

A Right and a Wrong Use of the Eye

The first great point to establish in order to ascertain the error of anything is to obtain a perfect knowledge of what is true and right. That which is right must be singular, while the counterfeits may be endless in number and variety. A banker once said, on being asked how he knew a bad note, "I never consider whether a note is a bad one; I ascertain whether it be a good one." If I know what is right, it is very easy and simple for me to reject that which does not answer thereto. Many weary themselves to no profit in examining the suspicious to see whether the grounds for suspicion exist, whereas if they had simply adhered to that which they knew was right they could have discerned and rejected the pretender at once, even though they might not have been able to tell the exact grounds on which they rejected it. I may add that when I have rejected any pretension as spurious, I may then, in order to convince others, examine the imperfections which prove its unguineness; but the first occupation of my eye, whether in choice or in discernment, should not be with the imperfection or evil.

How then ought the eye to be occupied? If I am not able to determine this, I shall not find it very easy to determine how it ought not; whereas if I can decide the right occupation for my eye, I can easily perceive what is not so.

Here lies the cause of so much indecision and inconsistency. People have not defined to themselves what is right, and hence they make a trial of every offer on its own merits instead of on the merits of an ascertained standard. Now the right occupation of the eye must be determined by reference to the power that has a right to control it. If the Lord has this right, then its occupation must be in accordance with His mind and appointments down here while in the body. The engagement or occupation of any organ is characterized by the power which controls it. If the Lord controls my eye, it is occupied and engaged with what is interesting to Him. If my eye is controlled by my own will, it will be characterized by my carnal tastes and likings; and it is a very active agent in furnishing the natural mind with provision for its enmity against God. Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the eye; and this promoted in her heart an inclination to act in independence of God. It is wonderful how the verdict of the eye affects us about everything, and how much that judgment is the fruit of our own state of soul.

Two persons may see the same thing with totally different impressions, but the impression imparted to each is in relation to his own peculiar state and condition before his eye thus acted. One admires, while another turns away pained from beholding the very same scene. The body is the Lord's, and the eye is the Lord's.

Either the Spirit of God is using my eye to embrace and survey all that is important for me to see in my course, or the natural mind is using it to furnish materials for its own support; and therefore the "lust of the eye" is classed with the "lust of the flesh," though no man ever thinks that they could be placed together as morally equal. Both link us to the world which is not of the Father, and the "lust of the eye" is even the more dangerous of the two, because least feared or discountenanced, although Scripture abounds with warnings touching the dangers for the eye. Remember the eye

sends back a message to the soul corresponding to the power which used it. If the Lord uses it, then an impression furnishing materials for His will is conveyed to the soul; if my own mind has used it, the impression will, on the contrary, furnish materials for its own promotion which, to a Christian, is a double loss; for not only does it deprive him of what he might have gained for the Lord, but it acquires for him that which hinders and shuts out his sense of the Father's love. How little do our souls ponder these things and take them to heart!

Service

We have to learn that we are not agents to act for the Lord so much as instruments by which He acts - pipes through which He waters. We must learn our nothingness in order that we may be simple, in no way occupied with ourselves, whether in success or failure. Our work is to deliver our message, and we are rewarded for doing our work - the success is not ours to control. When we learn our nothingness, that we are only the instruments which He takes up as and when He pleases, and for what He pleases, we shall be content to work on simply.

Service

Connect your service with nothing but God - not with any particular set of persons. You may be comforted by fellowship, and your heart refreshed; but you must work by your own individual faith and energy, without leaning on anyone whatever! for if you do, you cannot be a faithful servant. Service must ever be measured by faith and one's own communion with God. Saul even may be a prophet when he gets among the prophets; but David was always the same - in the cave or anywhere. While the choicest blessings given me here are in fellowship, yet, a man's service must flow from himself, else there will be weakness. If I have the word of wisdom, I must use it for the saint who may seek my counsel. It is "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." But also "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." There is no single

place grace brings us into, but is a place of temptation, and that we cannot escape though we shall be helped through. In every age the blessing has been from individual agency; and the moment it has ceased to be this, it has declined into the world; it is humbling, but it makes us feel that all comes immediately from God. The tendency of association is to make us lean upon one another.

When there are great arrangements for carrying on work, there is not the recognition of this inherent blessing, which "tarrieth not... for the sons of men." I don't tarry for man, if I have faith in God; I act upon the strength of that. Let a man act as the Lord leads him. The Spirit of God is not to be fettered by man.

All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the individual. Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13) were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, recommended to the grace of God by the Church of Antioch, but they had no communication with it till they returned; then there was the joyful concurring of love in the service that had been performed - he that had talents went and traded. Paul says, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Where there is a desire to act, accompanied by real energy, a man will rise up and walk; but if he cannot do this, the energy is not there, and the attempt to move is only restlessness and weakness.

Love for Jesus sets one to work - I know no other way.

The Spirit, Not Fear, but of Power

2 Tim. 1:3-8

Such exhortations are never given unless there are circumstances to require it. They are intended to meet some tendency in the flesh, that we may guard against it. It is well to remember how the Lord deals with us, just as we are; how in all His ways He takes into account the circumstances we are in, and does not, like philosophy, take us into other circumstances.

With regard to our cares and trials, Christ does not take us out of them - "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world." While He leaves us in the world, He leaves us liable to all that is incident to man, but, in the new nature, teaches us to lean on God. The thought with us often is that (because we are Christians) we are to get away from trials, or else, if in them, we are not to feel them. This is not God's thought concerning us.

The theoretical Christian may be placid and calm; he has fine books and nice sayings; but when he has something from God to ruffle his placidity, you will find he is a Christian more conscious of the difficulties there are in the world, and of the difficulty of getting over such. The nearer a man walks with God through grace, the more tender he becomes as to the faults others; the longer he lives as a saint, the more conscious of the faithfulness and tenderness of God, and of what it has been applied to in himself.

See the life of the Lord Jesus; take Gethsemane, what do we find? Never a cloud over His soul - uniform placidity. You never see Him off His center. He is always Himself. But take the Psalms, and do we find nothing within to break that placidity? The Psalms bring out what was passing within. In the gospels He is presented to man as the testimony of the powers of God with Him in those very things that would have vexed man. He talked with God about them; and so we find Him in perfect peace, saying with calmness "Whom seek ye?" - "I am He." How peaceful! How commanding! (for peace in the midst of difficulties does command). When by Himself, in an agony, He sweat as it were great drops of blood; it was not a placidity because He had not heart feeling within. He felt the trial in spirit; but God was always with Him in the circumstances and, therefore, He was uniformly calm before men.

We are not to expect never to be exercised, or troubled, or cast down, as though we were without feeling. "They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Psalm 69:21. He thoroughly felt it all. The iron entered His soul. "Reproach," He says, "hath broken My heart." But there is this difference between Christ, in suffering and affliction, and ourselves - with Him there was never an instant elapsed between the trial and communion with God. This is not the case with us. We have first to find out that we are weak, and cannot help ourselves; then we turn and look to God.

Where was Paul when he said, "All men forsook me"? His confidence in God was not shaken, but, looking around him by the time he got to the end of his ministry, his heart was broken because of the unfaithfulness. He saw the flood of evil coming in (chaps. 3 and 4) and the danger of Timothy's

being left alone, looking at the evil, and feeling his own weakness; and so (lest Timothy should get into a spirit of fear) he says, "Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee... for God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." If we have the spirit of fear, this is not of God, for God has given us the spirit of power. He has met the whole power of the enemy in the weakness of men, in Christ, and Christ is now set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

"Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." What! a partaker of afflictions? Yes. Of deliverance from the sense of them? No - a partaker of afflictions that may be felt as a man, but "according to the power of God."

This is not in not feeling the pressure of sorrow and weakness. Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12), and did he not feel it, think you? Yes, he felt it daily, and as "the messenger of Satan to buffet" him withal. And what did he say? "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities [in those things in which I am sensibly weak], that the power of Christ may rest upon me." The power of God coming in on our side does not lessen the feeling to us, but we cast all our "care upon Him, for He careth for" us. Not that at the very moment we refer it to God we shall get an answer. Daniel had to wait three full weeks for an answer from God; but from the first day that he set his heart to understand and to chasten himself before his God, his words were heard (Dan. 10). With us the first thing often is to think about the thing and begin to work in our own minds before we go to God. There was none of this in Christ. "At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father," etc. (Matt. 11). We weary ourselves in the greatness of our way.

"Be careful for nothing." Phil. 4:6. That is easily said. But what? not be careful about the state of the Church, or about the pressure of a family? etc. "Be careful for nothing." Whatever produces a care in us, produces God's care for us; therefore "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." So, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" - not your hearts keep the peace of God, but the peace that God Himself is in, His peace, the unmoved stability of all God's thoughts, keep your hearts.

Further, when not careful, the mind set free, and the peace of God keeping the heart, God sets the soul thinking on happy things. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest,... just,... pure,... lovely,... of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." God is there the companion of the soul, not merely "the peace of God," but "the God of peace."

When the soul is cast upon God, the Lord is with the soul in the trial, and the mind is kept perfectly calm.

Spiritual Propriety: Understanding of the Times

There is such a thing as divine propriety, and the action that would suit one time will not do for another. We must know the time, and let our action be in harmony with what the Lord is either doing or permitting if we are to observe the suited proprieties of the situation.

When King David was in his palace at Jerusalem, the proper thing for young Mephibosheth to do was to have his feet nicely dressed, his beard properly trimmed, his clothes cleanly washed, and be sitting in his privileged place at David's royal table, eating bread there continually as one of the king's sons; but when David was thrust forth from his kingdom by the rebellion of his unnatural son Absalom, and was an exile from Jerusalem, the suited thing for Mephibosheth, who had tasted of the royal grace of David, and had been living in his palace, was to go into mourning, and sit apart from those who had cast him out, and had usurped his throne and kingdom; and this was just what he did. He could not accompany him in his flight because of his lameness, or perhaps because of Ziba's perfidy; but we read this of him (2 Sam. 19:24) when the king returned, that he came to meet him "and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace." He observed the conduct suited to the sorrowful character of the time. He went into a state of self-imposed mourning until the king returned; for he it was who had won and kept his heart all through the time of his rejection and exile.

This too is the suited conduct for us who are in the place of our Lord's rejection. They have crucified and slain Him, and God has raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand. And Jesus said, "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.... Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." John 16:20, 22. If this had its immediate fulfillment in the case of His eleven disciples, the principle of it holds good for the saints of the assembly who still stand in the place of their Lord's rejection. We are waiting for God's "Son from heaven,... even Jesus"; and it is ours to wear the garments of mourning and be in the place of rejection with Him until He shall come again.

There is a spring of joy in the Holy Ghost opened so that we can be filled with all joy and peace in believing, and rejoice in the Lord always, and thus show the Christian enigma, "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Yet if we are to be in harmony with the sad and solemn circumstances in which we are placed as associates of the murdered Prince of Life whom they "slew and hanged on a tree," our place necessarily is that of lonely mourners until our Lord returns. As Mephibosheth had no place in Absalom's kingdom, so we have no place here below under "the god of this world." Our hopes and joys are all bound up with the coming back of the King, the advent of our long-exiled Savior and Lord. Are we, indeed, all sitting apart in the place of separation, or are we mixing with the world that rejected and crucified Him?

"We rejoice in hope" when we look heavenward, for the day of His coming draweth nigh. The cry has gone forth: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Are we all truly rejoicing

in the anticipation of seeing Himself, and being like Him and with Him forever?

Spiritual Strength: Something That Has Waned

No one will deny, and very many will sorrowfully own, that Christian vitality is at a low ebb. On the one hand, there are numbers of true Christians scattered over the land; on the other, Christian life expresses itself but feebly. The doctrines of grace are widely known; great and glorious truths are on the lips of multitudes, but the practical exposition of the truth is but little manifested. A few years ago the truth of the coming of the Lord was, comparatively speaking, strange to evangelical Christendom; here and there one rejoiced in it: now thousands accept this truth. The believer's standing in a risen and ascended Christ, not so long ago, was almost unknown language to multitudes of God's people who at this present day accept the fact of this as their position. We might enumerate other truths, now generally received, which a few years ago were only recognized by a handful of God's people. In the presence of unquestionable evidence we have the acknowledged fact of knowledge widely distributed, and also of spiritual vigor feebly existing.

Perhaps the solution to this anxious question may be indicated by the way in which truth is laid hold of. The few gained it by prayerful search, and by digging into the treasures of God's Word for themselves; the many gain it by the means of availing themselves of the labor of the few. The number of Bible students is not large. That is but little valued which costs but little to acquire. Again, there is a vast difference between laying hold of the truth, and being laid hold of by it. The truth makes free those whom it actually holds. The truth is strong, and strengthens our spirits.

There is, however, beyond these things a grave reality to which we now desire to call our reader's attention; that is, the little spiritual power which one finds in himself, and also around him. It is the fact that truth is frequently taken up into the soul apart from Christ - not that any Christian is without Christ, for he is in Christ and Christ is in him, but in the sense that "without Me ye can do nothing," truth may be acquired.

There are saints of God, knowing their position in Christ, who are like men brought into a palace and told that the palace and its glories are theirs, and who rove from room to room astonished at its wonders. There are others who, upon being brought into the palace, fix their affectionate longings upon the one who is its joy. We shall not value less the glories of the place into which we are brought because we value more and more the Person of the Lord, who is the glory of the place.

Now it must ever be to the law and to the testimony, in the Word and by the Word, the remedy shall be seen and administered by the Holy Spirit. We would then inquire whether the moral beauties and excellencies of the life of Jesus are sufficiently engaging our attention. Surely we are set in the palace of heavenly blessings in Christ that we may better know and appreciate Himself. It is easier to comprehend doctrine about Christ, than to be filled with the loveliness of His ways. We need, beloved, to have the Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) more in our hearts, and not their histories as unfoldings of God's dispensational ways merely, but as lifewords bringing to our souls the Person of Jesus.

"The life of Jesus!" How great is the moral glory of His silence when He answered His accusers never one word. Even Pilate, the Gentile governor, "marveled greatly." Herod hoped to see some miracle wrought by the meek and lowly One; he hoped to witness a mark of external power, but the silence of Jesus before him was power more wonderful still. Herod was blind to the glory, and he and his men of war set the lowly One at naught and robed Him in gorgeous mockery, and then sent Him back to Pilate. But this silence of Jesus commands our adoring worship. And do we not read, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4:10. Were His death truly reckoned on ourselves, His life would express itself, though feebly, we own, in our bodies.

Behold Him at the grave which He came to empty of the beloved brother of Martha and Mary. See the tears flow down His face, and note His groans. Thus do our hearts learn by the life of Jesus to weep with those who weep. There do we obtain from Himself the treasure of His sympathy. Brethren, how softened would our spirits become if we held more company with the Lord. The Jews said, "Behold how He loved him!" The Master's tears and sighs touched even their hearts. Oh! for bowels of Christ - His who fills the palace of God's glory with everlasting luster, and who fills broken hearts below with peace. It is only as in company with Him, and as bearing about in our bodies His death, that the life of Jesus shall be manifested in us.

Yet, without this manifestation, what is our Christianity? The religious world has its Christless Christianity; may not we be in a like danger? It is really futile to have knowledge at our fingers' ends if Christ be not flowing out in our lives. The perfect Man knew no jealous feelings, and this bane of God's servants will be abolished from their souls so long as they bear about in their bodies "the dying of the Lord Jesus." The simple reason why Christian vitality is at so low an ebb, is because there is so little of personal dealing with Christ Himself.

We must get back to the gospels, beloved, if we would walk as Christ walked. It is in the evangelists that we trace His steps. God grant us to study Him in His thoughts, His words, and His ways; to consider Him in His sighs and His tears, in His peace and His joy; to engage our whole souls with Him in His relationship to His God and Father, and in His ministry below. Our ambition should be that the life of Jesus should be manifested in our mortal bodies. To attain to this we must know what the life of Jesus is; and to do this, we must get into the very atmosphere of the four gospels.

The epistles teach us what it is to bear about in our bodies His dying. Perhaps we are familiar with this doctrine. We know that He has died, and that we have died with Him; such is our liberty - marvelous and most wonderful liberty - freedom from self - self gone in the grave of Christ. Yes, beloved, but how shall we deal with this liberty in relation to our state? Ah! then the question is personal and practical. How, indeed? How shall we bear about in our body His dying, when the flesh would not keep silence? Try it; yes, try it, and see how much you know practically of a crucified Jesus. Bring this to bear upon the worries of daily life, on life's cares and follies, and see how much Christian vitality you possess. It is in proportion to the extent of your manifestation of the life of Jesus.

Heat, clamor, evil-speaking, uncharitableness, an overbearing spirit - all witness to the little Christian vigor that exists. Many, who have physical strength sufficient to roll away the stone of Lazarus's grave, lack the spiritual ability to weep with broken hearts. We need a humbler and more

Christ like Christianity. We need to go to the four gospels, brethren, for Christ.

It would be a happy thing, indeed, if having by grace been brought into the glorious place of our heavenly privilege in Christ, our enjoyed privilege was to be solely engaged with Christ Himself, and "so to walk, even as He walked."

Spiritual Understanding

The knowledge of God's will is based on the spiritual state of the soul - wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col. 1:7). And this is of all practical importance. No particular direction by man as to conduct meets this at all - rather saves us from the need of spiritual understanding. No doubt a more spiritual mind may help me in the discernment of God's will; but God has connected the discovery of the path of His will, His way, with the inward state of the soul, and causes us to pass through circumstances - human life here below - to test and to discover to ourselves what that state is, and to exercise us therein. The Christian has by his spiritual state to know God's ways. The Word is the means. (Compare John 17:17, 19.) God has a way of His own which the vulture's eye hath not seen, known only to the spiritual man, connected with, flowing from, and to, the knowledge of God. (Compare Exod. 33:13.) Thus the Christian walks worthy of the Lord; he knows what becomes Him, and walks accordingly, that he may please Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing by the knowledge of God.

The Strait Gate

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24.

Some people have made a difficulty over the words, "shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." The true solution I believe to lie not in the difference of striving and seeking, on which some have rested unduly, and others so mistakenly as in effect to make men their own saviors, but rather in this, that while many will seek to enter in, it is not at the strait gate but by some method of human device. The natural heart dislikes God and God's way, and it easily deceives itself into a vague reliance on mercy without righteousness, which is an infidel thought, or into a vain confidence in religious ordinances, which is a superstitious one; in either way, man is lost. People might like to enter the kingdom, but not by repentance and faith in Christ.

Strong Feelings or Quiet Confidence

As this issue goes to the printer the nation and much of the world is in a state of great agitation over the sudden and unexpected removal of General Douglas MacArthur as Supreme Commander in the Far East. Strong feelings both of approval and disapproval are being expressed about his dismissal.

But what should be the attitude of the child of God who knows his Bible? It should be one of quiet confidence, knowing that in this, as in everything else, God is only working out His purposes. We are the children of Him who knows the end from the very beginning, and whose purposes will never be frustrated. We should be able to look on the scene with perfect serenity. We belong to Him who is never troubled, and to another place which is above all the confusion and strife of men. We should be able to say with the poet T. Kelley:

"Calm amidst tumultuous motion,
Knowing that the Lord is nigh: Waves obey Him,
And the storms before Him fly."

May God grant us to be more mindful of our heavenly citizenship as we behold the evidences of apprehensions and forebodings of the men of this world. Everything seems to be shaking, and commotion is everywhere, so it is little wonder if those who have nothing beyond this world are agitated and perplexed. These upheavals are to become more frequent, and the time is not far off in which there will be "distress of nations, with perplexity" (Luke 21:25). But very soon, fellow-Christian, we shall be off to scenes where sin and strife can never come. Our inheritance is undefiled and unfading. It is reserved for us in heaven, and we are kept for it, through faith, by the power of God. (1 Pet. 1:3-5). What security we have! What a hope! and it will never make us ashamed (Rom. 5:5).

We do not attempt to evaluate the sudden shift of Far Eastern commanders, or any change of national or international policy. These things are beyond our province, except as we see God moving behind the scenes. He works "all things after the counsel of His own will," and none can say unto Him, "What doest Thou?"

We do not say that everything that has happened or that is going to happen in this nation, or in the world, is to work out for what man will call the good of the world. After all, what good does this wicked world deserve? The marvel is that God bears with it, and continues to grant any peace or tranquility. It cast out His beloved Son, nailing Him to a cross after spitting in His face and crowning Him with cruel thorns. What would any man, if he were omnipotent, do to a place that so treated his only son? Another has said that if a man had to rule this world he would not endure its wickedness for a single hour. Trouble is determined for this Christ-rejecting world, and the hour of tribulation is not far off.

Germany will serve as an example of how God may give a nation that which is not good. At this time we think most will concede that, in the end at least, Hitler was not good for that nation, but brought upon it the worst scourge in its history; and yet God "set up" Hitler - "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). He gave that ruler in His governmental dealings. If this seems strange, we may observe the same thing in the history of the children of Israel. Was Saul God's choice for them? No, indeed. God even warned them of the consequences of demanding a king.

Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that the "Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." Dan. 4:17. And why should Germany be so signally crushed? Remember that that nation was the cradle of the reformation. It was there that the truth of "justification by faith" and not by works was revived after the dark ages. It was there that the Bible was circulated early. Their advantages were great, and God judges according to the principle that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Luke 12:48. God is yet going to judge all the Gentile nations who have not continued in His goodness (Rom. 11:23). Did Germany continue in His goodness? Alas, it was from that nation that "modernism" spread over the world. It was there that infidelity among those professing the name of Christ largely had its beginnings. It was given a great impetus among the "learned Germans," as various writers speak, and there they had the audacity to tamper with the Word of God under the misnomer of "higher criticism." They dared to set themselves up to judge of what was worthy of God, and what was not; they tampered with His Holy Word. Do you suppose that God was indifferent to this? We believe not.

The lesson of Germany is solemn, but what shall we say of the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, and other countries? Are they far behind in this departure from the faith? Isaiah God truly acknowledged? Do men generally tremble at His Word? Each one of us knows the answers; they are No, No, No. What then, dear reader, do you think is in store for the nation in which you live? Or let us put it this way, What do you think the nation deserves? If in God's mercy we have been blessed with a stable government, let us thank Him for it. Let us praise Him and acknowledge His goodness to us. But woe to the world after the Church is gone! A time is coming when peace shall be taken from the earth (Rev. 6:4).

"Child of God, by Christ's salvation,
Rise o'er sin and fear and care-
Joy to find in ev'ry station,
Something still to do or bear;
Think what Spirit dwells within thee-
Think what Father's smiles are thine-
Think that Jesus died to win thee-
Child of God, wilt thou repine?
"Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer,

Heaven's eternal day's before thee,
God's right hand shall guide thee there;
Soon shall close thine earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise."

Subjection As Seen in David

(Read 2 Sam. 15)

Observe the exceeding grace of David in the whole scene connected with Absalom's rebellion. He would flee to save the people, and to avoid the shedding of blood. He would send back Ittai the Gittite, who will not go back, and who is, indeed, the expression of that deep reverent affection which never shows itself more than when its object is in distress. He will not check Shimei, though cursing him and following them all the way with stones. He sent back the ark too, and Zadok, even now taking refuge as he was wont in the tender mercy of his God. If he should find favor in His sight He would bring David back to see both it and His habitation; but if not, if He were to say, "I have no delight in thee," well, there he was entirely at His disposal. Oh, the exquisite grace of this man of God, never more manifest than at this moment. It is entire giving up to His mercy. He owned it was God's hand in displeasure but, while owning the hand, he took refuge in His heart.

How different with Ahithophel! When his glory was touched by Absalom's rejecting his counsel he went and hanged himself. He could not outlive his reputation. But David could, for he knew God. Lovely specimen of "subjection unto the Father of spirits."

Surveying the Present

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1.

Teach Thy Sons and Thy Son's Sons: Need for the Word of God in Our Homes

"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." Deut. 4:9.

These are weighty words for all of us. They set before us two things of unspeakable importance; namely, individual and domestic responsibility - personal and household testimony. God's people of old were responsible to keep the heart with all diligence, lest it should let slip the precious Word of God. And not only so, but they were solemnly responsible to instruct their children and their grandchildren in the same. Are we, with all our light and privilege, less responsible than Israel of old? Surely not. We are imperatively called upon to give ourselves to the careful study of the Word of God - to apply our hearts to it. It is not enough that we hurry over a few verses or a chapter as a piece of daily religious routine. This will not meet the case at all. We need to make the Bible our supreme and absorbing study, that in which we delight, in which we find our refreshment and recreation.

It is to be feared that some of us read the Bible as a matter of duty while we find our delight and refreshment in the newspaper and light literature. Need we wonder at our shallow knowledge of Scripture? How could we know aught of the living depths or the moral glories of a Volume which we merely take up as a cold matter of duty, and read a few verses with a yawning indifference while, at the same time, something else is literally devoured?

What mean the following words to Israel? - "Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes." Deut. 11:18. The "heart," the "soul," the "hand," the "eyes," all engaged about the precious Word of God. This was real work. It was to be no empty formality, no barren routine. The whole

man was to be given up in holy devotion to the statutes and judgments of God.

"And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house, and upon thy gates." vv. 19, 20. Do we, Christians, enter into such words as these? Has the Word of God such a place in our hearts, in our homes, and in our habits? Do those who enter our houses, or come in contact with us in daily life, see that the Word of God is paramount with us? Do those with whom we do business see that we are governed by the precepts of Holy Scripture? Do our children see that we live in the very atmosphere of Scripture, and that our whole character is formed and our conduct governed by it?

The new nature loves the Word of God, earnestly desires it, as we read in 1 Pet. 2, "As newborn babies, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

This is the true idea. If the sincere milk of the Word be not sought after, diligently used, and eagerly fed upon, we must be in a low, unhealthy, dangerous condition of soul. There may not be anything outwardly wrong in our conduct; we may not be publicly dishonoring the Lord in our ways; but we are grieving His loving heart by our gross neglect of His Word, which is but another term for the neglect of Himself. It is the very height of folly to talk of loving Christ if we do not love and live upon His Word. It is a delusion to imagine that the new life can be in a healthy, prosperous condition where the Word of God is habitually neglected in the closet and the family.

We do not of course mean that no other book but the Bible should be read, but nothing demands greater watchfulness than the matter of reading. All things are to be done in the name of Jesus, and to the glory of God; and this is among the "all things." We should read no book that we cannot read to the glory of God, and on which we cannot ask God's blessing.

We feel that this entire subject demands the most serious consideration of all God's people; and we trust that the Spirit of God may use our meditation on the chapter before us to stir up our

hearts and consciences in reference to what is due to the Word of God, both in our hearts and in our houses.

No doubt, if it has its right place in the heart, it will have its right place also in the house. But if there be no acknowledgment of the Word of God in the bosom of the family, it is hard to believe that it has its right place in the heart. Heads of houses should ponder this matter seriously. We are most fully persuaded that there ought to be in every Christian household a daily acknowledgment of God and His Word. Some may, perhaps, look upon it as bondage, as legality, as religious routine to have regular family reading and prayer. We would ask such objectors, Is it bondage for the family to assemble at meals? Are the family reunions round the social board ever regarded as a wearisome duty - a piece of dull routine? Certainly not, if the family be a well ordered and happy one. Why then should it be regarded as a burdensome thing for the head of a Christian household to gather his children and his servants around him and read a few verses of the precious Word of God, and breathe a few words of prayer before the throne of grace? We believe it to be a habit in perfect accordance with the teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments - habit grateful to the heart of God - a holy, blessed, edifying habit.

What would we think of a professing Christian who never prayed, never read the Word of God, in private? Could we possibly regard him as a happy, healthy, true Christian? Assuredly not. Indeed we would seriously question the existence of divine life in such a soul. Prayer and the Word of God are absolutely essential to a healthy, vigorous Christian life; so that a man who habitually neglects these must be in an utterly low state.

Now if it be thus in reference to an individual, how can a family be regarded as in a right state where there is no family reading, no family prayer, no family acknowledgment of •God or His Word? Can we conceive a God-fearing household going on from Lord's day morning to Saturday night without any collective recognition of the One to whom they owe everything? Day after day rolls on, domestic duties are attended to, the family assemble regularly at meals, but there is no

thought of summoning the household round the Word of God or round the throne of grace. We ask, Where is the difference between such a family and any poor heathen household? Is it not most sad, most deplorable, to find those who make the highest profession, and who take their

places at the Lord's table, living in the gross neglect of family reading, family prayer?

Reader, are you the head of a household? If so, what are your thoughts on this subject? And what is your line of action? Have you family reading and family prayer daily in your house? If not - bear with us when we ask you -why not? Search and see what is the real root of this matter. Has your heart declined from God, from His Word and His ways? Do you read and pray in private? Do you love the Word and prayer? Do you find delight in them? If so, how is it you neglect them in your household? Perhaps you seek to excuse yourself on the ground of nervousness and timidity. If so, look to the Lord to enable you to overcome the weakness. Just cast yourself on His unfailing grace, and gather your household around you at a certain hour each day, read a few verses of Scripture, and breathe some words of prayer and thanksgiving; or if you cannot do this at first, just let the family kneel for a few moments in silence before the throne.

Anything, in short, like a family acknowledgment, a family testimony - anything but a godless, careless, prayerless life in your household. Do, dear friend, suffer the word of exhortation in this matter. Let us entreat you to begin at once looking to God to help you, as He most assuredly will, for He never fails a really trusting, dependent heart. Do not any longer go on neglecting God and His Word in your family circle. It is really terrible. Let no arguments about bondage, legality, or formalism weigh with you for a moment. We almost feel disposed to exclaim, "Blessed bondage!" If indeed it be bondage to read the Word, we cordially welcome it, and fearlessly glory in it.

But no; we cannot for a moment regard it in any such light. We believe it to be a most delightful privilege for every one whom God has • set at the head of a household to gather all the members of that household around him and read a portion of the blessed Book, and pour out his heart in prayer and praise to

God. We believe it is specially the duty of the head to do so. It is by no means necessary to make it a long, wearisome service. As a rule, both in our houses and in our public assemblies, short, fresh, fervent exercises are by far the more edifying.

It may be said that there are many families who seem very particular about their morning and evening reading and prayer, and yet their whole domestic history from morning till night is a flagrant contradiction of their so-called religious service.

And when you travel outside the domestic circle, and mark the conduct of the heads and members of the family toward those outside - mark their business, if they be in business; hear the testimony of those who deal with them as to the quality of their goods, the style and character of their work, the spirit and temper in which they carry on their business; such grasping and griping, such covetousness, such commercial trickery; nothing of God, nothing of Christ, nothing to distinguish them from the most thorough worldlings around.

Under such painful and humiliating circumstances, what of the family reading - the family altar? Alas! it is an empty formality, a powerless, worthless, unseemly proceeding - in place of being a morning and evening sacrifice, it is a morning and evening lie.

We should measure everything in our private life, in our domestic economy, in our daily history, in all our intercourse, and in all our business transactions, with that one standard; namely, the glory of Christ. Our one grand question in reference to everything that comes before us, or solicits our

attention, must be, Is this worthy of the holy name which is called upon me? If not, let us not touch it; yea, let us turn our back upon it with stern decision, and flee from it with holy energy. Let us not listen for a moment to the contemptible question, What harm is there in it? Nothing but harm, if Christ be not in it. No truly devoted heart would ever entertain, much less put such a question. Whenever you hear anyone speaking thus, you may at once conclude that Christ is not the governing object of the heart.

We trust the reader is not weary of all this homely, practical truth. We believe it is loudly called for in this day of high profession. We have all of us much need to consider our ways, to look well to the real state of our hearts as to Christ; for here lies the true secret of the whole matter. If the heart be not true to Him, nothing can be right - nothing in the private life, nothing in the family, nothing in the business, nothing in the assembly, nothing anywhere. But if the heart be true to Him, all will be - must be right.

No marvel therefore if the blessed Apostle, when he reaches the close of that wonderful epistle to the Corinthians, sums up all with this solemn declaration, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha." In the course of his letter he deals with various forms of doctrinal error and moral pravity; but when he comes to the close, instead of pronouncing his solemn sentence upon any particular error or evil, he hurls it with holy indignation against any one, no matter who or what, who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ. Love to Christ is the grand safeguard against every form of error and evil. A heart filled with Christ has no room for aught beside; but if there be no love to Him, there is no security against the wildest error or the worst form of moral evil.

Television

We feel constrained to examine the subject of television in the home, especially as it affects the Christian. With this latest giant of the entertainment world growing rapidly, and with the appeals to Christians to open their homes to this masterpiece of human invention increasing, it seems that the question should be faced squarely.

A question once put to King Hezekiah by the prophet Isaiah may be appropriate in this connection - "What have they seen in thine house?" 2 Kings 20:15. This modern medium of communication will bring an assortment of sights into the home for the mental fare of its occupants and its guests. Will it be to God's glory? Will it further occupation with heavenly things? Will it be a means to help us grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? or will it be one more thing to distract us from the only One who is worthy of being our chief occupation? Let us pursue our examination, and may the reader judge in the fear of God.

Perhaps the greatest challenge video makes concerns the welfare of children. Do you know, fellow Christians, what your children will see by means of television? In areas where it is already available, the children in the world have become thorough devotees of this form of amusement. It has a special appeal to the young, and their plastic minds are very easily influenced by it. And what are they seeing with such evident delight? - folly, madness, crime, and moral corruption, among other things. The same things that have poisoned the youth of the country in the picture shows, and brought about much of the juvenile delinquency and lawlessness are now being served hour upon hour, day in and day out, in many homes. This influence will accelerate the coming of the moral conditions in the world similar to that in the days of Noah, and of Lot, as foretold by our Lord (Luke 17:26-30).

O Christian parents, beware of television for your dear children. You would not think of taking your precious charges from the Lord into the dance halls, theaters, arenas, alleys, and dens of the earth. Shall you bring such sights into your living room? Perhaps it will be said that as they grow up they will meet these things, and that you cannot always shield them. That has a certain amount of truth in it, but have you not a definite responsibility to Him who gave them to you? Their youth is the only time that is yours to help mold them, and to instruct them in the ways of the Lord. Shall these fleeting days be lost? while instead of truth they become acquainted with fiction and fable, crime and horror? You shield their precious bodies from chemical poisons; shall you do less for their impressionable minds?

Stop then, dear Christian, and consider seriously before making such things available to those in your home. Remember that television will not, cannot, be better than stage and screen have been all along, and the vivid pictures of the news will bring a riot and bloodshed in far away Bangkok, a murder in New Orleans, a bank robbery in New York, and such like scenes into your home - for "thou and thy house." If the lawless deeds and foul sayings of the Sodomites vexed Lot's righteous soul from day to day, what did they do for his children? The demoralizing effect on them was great - some were lost in Sodom, and those who were not became a shame and a disgrace. It is an old

story of the parents allowing something that grieves them, while the children go wrong:

The contrast to this baneful influence was found in the plains of Mamre. There, Abraham, the friend of God, lived in separation from Sodom, and there he enjoyed communion with God. Would not he have been defiled if he had had those words and ways of the sinners of Sodom televised in his tent? Would he then have been in a fit condition to receive the Lord as his guest? And would not his family have suffered also?

Lot got into Sodom by degrees; declension is always gradual. He first lusted after it with his eye, then pitched his tent near it, later got into it - out of his tent and into a house - and finally became a municipal judge, and all to his sorrow and ruin. And will not the television scenes of borderline immodesty (if not worse), with all the defiling conversation, dull the Christian's senses until at length he comes to not be vexed by the things that would shock anyone of spiritual sensibilities? Let us ask ourselves whether we want to be Abrahams or Lots. If it is the former, then let us not bring into our homes a direct connection with Sodom.

There will not be lacking those who will contend that what we have written is one-sided, and that there are also good things in video. Recently we had occasion to review a book which ostensibly sought to evaluate the good and bad of television; it was written by Edward John Carnell, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. He found plenty of bad in video, but the good things were the very elements of the world which lies in the wicked one. (How can Christians forget the character of this world?) Concerts, orchestras, religious fiction, and such like are things found on the clean side of the broad road. That road is broad enough to accommodate everything - it has its clean and its filthy side. (And may we add here that we feel religious fiction to be one of the worst of all fictions, for it invariably distorts the Word and gives, in effect, a lie. It is particularly deceptive because it poses as truth.)

We presume that Sodom had some good things also - perhaps some things that Lot pointed to with civic pride, but it was all under the sentence of judgment, and was only deluding its populace. By the same token, Cain's world (Gen. 4) had some good things. This murderer invested it with commerce and industry, and the arts and sciences; but could the children of his murdered brother (if there were such) relish anything of Cain and his world? And this world has murdered the Son of God - your Savior and mine, fellow-Christian. Shall we then relish its so-called harmless attractions? Shall we rearrange our homes to make room for it to move in? Let us not forget that it is stained with the precious blood of our Redeemer, that Satan is its god and prince, and that by these very things he is deceiving men and leading them on to destruction. The "desires of the mind" and the "lust of the eyes" - the better things of the world - are ranked in the Word of God with the grosser things of the "lusts of the flesh" (Eph. 2:3; 1 John 2:15, 16).

After the children of Israel were redeemed by the blood of the lamb, they began a journey to the land of Canaan; and every poor sinner who comes under the shelter of the precious blood of Christ has started on his way to the Father's house. The Israelites' journey made them pilgrims in the wilderness, and strangers to all in the land of Egypt. They could no longer enjoy Egypt's refinements (and it had many) any more than they could serve in its brick-making; they were strangers to the one as well as the other. And every Christian occupies a similar place here - he is a stranger and a pilgrim, and is on his way to a better land. (May the sight of its glories, and of Him who is its glory, draw our hearts thitherward.)

Christians still have an old nature that if allowed unjudged will readily indulge in things that are unworthy of Him who has called us. And just as the Israelites lusted after the leeks, onions, melons, and garlic of Egypt when they lost their relish for the manna, so can we enjoy the things of the world when our hearts grow cold toward Him who is the true Manna - "the bread which came down from heaven." May we sing from the heart these words:

"Jesus Thou art enough

The mind and heart to fill;

Thy patient life - to calm the soul;

Thy love - its fear dispel."

The Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Lead us not into temptation"; and the disciples in the garden were told, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Bold and self-confident, or sadly indifferent, must be the Christian who can place such temptation in his home, either considering himself, his children, or his guests. It is bringing temptation right in, and deliberately courting its consequences.

There remains one more point to be considered; namely, the use of television for religious dissemination. Some contend that it will be a powerful instrument for the spreading of the gospel, but with this we take exception. Will the Spirit of God endorse video as "communicating spiritual things by spiritual means" (1 Cor. 2:13; N. Trans.)?

Will not man be preeminently before the video audience? Will it not rather exalt man than honor God? It may gain a large audience, but let us remember that it is not the number of people who listen, nor the cleverness of presentation, but the Word of God in the power of the Spirit of God that alone will accomplish results.

The book we reviewed admitted that the prime purpose of television is to entertain, and it warned those who would use it for religious purposes that they will have to make their presentation attractive or people will switch to something else. It is well known, and the author of the book concurs, that religious programs will have to compete with the best of Hollywood and Broadway. What a challenge! but verily true! Did God intend that His solemn Word should be used to entertain people? Far be the thought. Is that the way He had His message presented to wicked Nineveh? Jonah was to preach the "preaching that I bid thee," and nothing else. Did he have the accompaniment of an orchestra, or the presence of certain celebrities to make it effective? We all know the answer.

Did the Lord Jesus ever use showmanship in His preaching? NEVER, NO, NEVER! And yet, Prof. Carnell suggests that he did. To us the thought is revolting, and Christ-dishonoring. When His brethren wanted Him to show Himself to the world, did He accede? No. The Jews could not understand Him because they sought honor from men, and He never did. Think how many times He dealt with souls all alone, and of the times when He cautioned them to tell no man what He had done. If on one occasion He cried publicly in the temple on a certain feast day, it was not showmanship, but doing what He had a word from God to do.

Again, did Paul make the gospel attractive? He said that as he knew the terror of the Lord he persuaded men; did he get a band to help him? He even reproved the public display made by a woman in Philippi, and would have none of it (Acts 16). Did he ever mingle fleshly attractions with the warning to flee impending doom? When he went to Corinth (where they gloried in human erudition), he hid his profound learning. He said he was determined not to know anything among them but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1-4) - a stumblingblock to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks. The gospel itself was the power of God, and Paul knew it. Perhaps some will say, But times have changed. That is admitted, but God's ways and powers have not changed, nor have His divine principles.

God has given the dearest object of His heart to demonstrate His love, and to save sinners, but He never intended His gospel to be adorned with modern inventions to make it palatable. (The way the gospel is often presented today you would think that people would do God a great favor if they would only "give their hearts to Jesus." How absurd! Man needs to know that he is an utterly lost sinner and be brought to repentance; then God will give him salvation, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life. He does not ask men to give something, but to repent.) And yet some Christians are willing to add the world's attractions to the precious glad tidings. We are bold to say, It is not of God. Christians who use devious methods to get an audience are not striving lawfully according to 2 Tim. 2:5. They might as well condone adding the condemned attractions of a condemned Nineveh to Jonah's message.

We will, however, add one word about God's sovereignty. He may, if He chooses, use something that a man hears, even though it be mixed up with things He cannot approve, to that man's salvation; but that in no way invalidates the principles set forth above. He is sovereign and can do as He pleases, but we are servants who are to follow the rules. We have heard of people being saved through words spoken by unbelievers - yes, even by infidels - but that does not prove that we should enlist the help of such. At one time God used an ass to speak, but we cannot. Let us remember that God is not dependent on any man, or any group of men, or any invention or innovation to save a soul.

May God give us to have the balances of the sanctuary with which to properly appraise the things that meet us in • the last days. Not everything is edifying, not everything is lawful. We need the anointed eye to discern the things that are excellent, and grace to shun all else.

Is not television Satan's great masterpiece of deception? May it not be the thing that he will use to show the image of the beast and the "power and signs and lying wonders" of the false prophet to the world?

Territorial Expansion

The aims of territorial expansion and the methods used to achieve those ends are very little different in the Russia of today than they were in the Russia of the Czars. This greedy bear has for centuries sought to exploit troubles in and among nations for her own gain. It has been a matter of design, although always biding her time and waiting for the suitable opportunity.

Russia, both past and present, has sought to extend her boundaries west in Europe, south into the Balkans and the Dardanelles, and to drive through Persia to the Persian Gulf, and east to Japan. The plan forever-increasing expansion is told as well, perhaps, in the will of Peter the Great, the despotic czar who died in 1725, as in any other statement anywhere. For the reader's convenience we quote this document in part:

"(1.) The Russian nation must be constantly on a war footing, to keep the soldiers warlike and in good condition. No rest must be allowed except for the purpose of relieving the State finances, recruiting the army, or biding the favorable moment for attack. By these means peace is made subservient to war, and war to peace, in the interest of the aggrandizement and increasing prosperity of Russia....

" (3) No opportunity must be lost of taking part in the affairs and disputes of Europe, especially in those of Germany, which from its vicinity is one of the most direct interest to us....

We must keep steadily extending our frontiers - northward along the Baltic, and southward along the shores of the Black Sea.

We must progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India. He who can get possession of these places is the real ruler of the world. With this view we must provoke constant quarrels at one time with Turkey and at another with Persia. We must establish wharves and docks in the Euxine and by degrees make ourselves masters of that sea as well as of the Baltic, which is a doubly important element in the success of our plan. We must hasten the downfall of Persia, push on into the Persian Gulf and, if possible, re-establish the ancient commercial intercourse with the Levant through Syria, and force our way into the Indies, which are the storehouses of the world. Once there, we can dispense with English gold.

"(10) Moreover, we must take pains to establish and maintain an intimate union with Austria, apparently countenancing her schemes for future aggrandizement in Germany, and all the while secretly rousing the jealousy of the minor States against her. By this way we must bring it to pass that one or the other party shall seek aid from Russia, and thus we shall exercise a sort of protectorate over the country, which will pave the way for future supremacy.

" (11) We must make the House of Austria interested in the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, and we must neutralize its jealousy at the capture of Constantinople, either by preoccupying it with a war with the old European States or by allowing it a share of the spoil, which we can afterward resume at our leisure.

We must collect round our house, as round a center, all the detached sections of Greeks which are scattered abroad in Hungary, Turkey, and South Poland. We must make them look to us for support, and then, by establishing beforehand a sort of ecclesiastical supremacy, we shall pave the way for Universal Sovereignty.

When Sweden is ours, Persia vanquished, Poland subjugated, Turkey conquered - when our armies are united, and the Euxine and Baltic are in the possession of our ships, then we must make separate and secret overtures, first to the Court of Versailles, and then to that of Vienna, to share with them the dominion of the world. If either of them accept our propositions, which is certain to happen if their ambition and self-interest are properly worked upon, we must make use of one to annihilate the other; this done, we have only to destroy the remaining one by finding a pretext for a quarrel, this issue of which cannot be doubtful, as Russia will then be already in absolute possession of the East and the best part of Europe.

"(14) Should the improbable case happen of both rejecting the propositions of Russia, then our policy will be to set one against the other, and make them tear each other to pieces. Russia must then watch for and seize the favorable moment, and pour her already assembled hosts into Germany, while two immense fleets, laden with Asiatic hordes and conveyed by the armed squadrons of the Euxine and the Baltic, set sail simultaneously from the Sea of Azoff and the harbor of Archangel; sweeping along the Mediterranean and the Atlantic they will overrun France on the one side, while Germany is overpowered on the other. When these countries are fully conquered, the rest of Europe must fall easily, and without a struggle under our yoke. Thus Europe can and must be subjugated."

While the plan is still the same and the method of accomplishing its purposes remains almost unchanged, Peter the Great never thought of an ideology which would so completely become master of men's minds that it would tie the whole empire into one grand fanatical unit bent on spreading communism to the ends of the world. This remained for the Russia of our day, and with it an expansion of territory which would have been most visionary in the days of Peter the Great.

But we see the same pattern working in all directions; it has been especially observed during the last decade. When the last great war started, Russia signed an alliance with Germany, but when the time was propitious she attacked her ally. The same was true of matters between Russia and Japan, and later between Russia and the Central Government of China. In 1945 Russia signed a 20 years pact with National China to aid it with moral and military support, but almost immediately set to work to accomplish its downfall by armed intervention in support of the Chinese communists. And thus eventually the National Government was forced to flee from the mainland to Formosa.

There is a long list of intrigues and double-dealing with the various countries of Europe which, as a result, fell completely under her domination. It is surely the pattern prescribed by Peter the Great - promise anything to accomplish your purposes, and then take it back at your convenience; set one country against another and then you come in and take the spoils when they quarrel.

All this reminds us of a divine prophecy regarding the notorious Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria. Over 300 years before he was born, God said that he would sit down at a conference table with the king of Egypt, but these kings would speak lies at one table (see Dan. 11:27). And has not this been a somewhat frequent occurrence in international conferences ever since? The marvel is that

God bears with such a world! And, more than that, a world that, when He sent His Son into it in grace to reconcile men, spit in His face, cried, Away with Him, nailed Him to a cross, and cast Him out.

The strange thing is that the great politicians of the world have been so slow to learn Russia's devious methods of operation. God who knows all things knew before what her character would be, and has so described it in one verse. But first let us look at the setting of this verse, so that we may easily perceive that it is Russia which is meant:

In Isa. 30 and 31 we find the destruction of the "king of the north" (that Moslem enemy of the Jews, located north and east of Palestine, who will come against the apostate Jews in Palestine because of their idolatry). This enemy will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus when He comes in power and great glory, after He first puts down the Roman Empire. Then in Isa. 32 we find that "a King shall reign in righteousness." It is at this time that the Lord will interpose on behalf of the Jewish people and bring them back to their own land. After this, Isa. 33 introduces another enemy - Russia - who as foretold in Eze. 38 will come against a people dwelling in safety after having been brought back from the sword. God will bring Russia and her satellites against His people and His land so that He may judge them there.

Now let us look at Isa. 33:1 - "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee!" Oh, what a word to describe that great nation - dealing treacherously. Is not this the pattern found in Peter the Great's will? Is not this the thing that has been proved in the last ten years? God knew it before, and has recorded it by His prophet almost 2700 years ago. Well did another say, "A Christian who understands his Bible knows more about the

course of this world than the wisest statesman without it." God has treated us as friends and told us what He is about to do, but the chief and central object before our souls should be, Our Lord is coming first to take us to be with Himself, and for Him we wait and look. What a joyful moment that will be when we see Him who loves us and died for us.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

There Is a Saviour in Glory

God has visited this world, has manifested Himself in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He came down from glory on this heavenly mission of making known to man all the grace and love that was in the heart of His Father.

He veiled His glory, and took upon Himself the form of a man - the most gracious, the most accessible of men. "Never spake man like this man," His enemies confessed. He carried with Him that which poor lost man could get nowhere else. The only man that could ever stand upon this earth and say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What an announcement to make! He had more; He had life - eternal life - for man, but man would not come unto Him that he might have this life - this everlasting life.

This blessed One was hated "without a cause." He was "the light of the world," and this did not suit man; for men "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Hence they did not rest until they had got rid of this Jesus so that they might go on undisturbed in their own path of iniquity. A robber was preferable to Jesus the Son of God. Their cry was, "Away with Him, crucify Him." But the blessed God made this crowning act of man's hatred against Himself to be the only way of salvation; and where man made this blessed One a martyr, there God made Him to be a victim; and the precious blood that flowed from the side of that crucified Christ gave God eternal satisfaction about sin. That precious blood was of such infinite value in God's sight that the sinner, be he who he may, that rests in the value of this blood to God, is cleansed from every stain. Thus, where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded (Rom. 5:20, 21).

But, dear reader, that blessed One that died upon the tree now sits upon the throne in glory! God raised Him from the dead, and has exalted Him, having declared that at the name of Jesus "every knee should bow,... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:10, 11.

Each soul must have an interview with Him, either now in grace or presently in judgment. The dying thief had an interview with Him when He hung upon the cross. Saul, the enemy of Jesus, had an interview with Him when He was in heavenly glory - the same Jesus, but in different circumstances. The thief turned to the Savior on the cross, owned his true condition, and asked to be remembered in the coming kingdom. The Savior's answer to his cry was, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Saul, on the other hand, on his way to Damascus, endeavoring to wipe out the memory of the name of Jesus from the earth, was met by that same Jesus in heavenly glory.

What a contrast between Paul and the Lord Jesus! the one full of hatred against Christ, the other full of grace toward Saul. The Savior asked him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

Saul, tell Him why!

Saul, in the light of that glory, fell to the ground and exclaimed, "Who art Thou, Lord?" The answer was, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Not one word of reproof fell from the Savior's lips. What

a reception was this for Saul! His course on earth was changed. No longer the persecutor of the saints of God, but henceforth to be an ambassador for that Savior here, and a preacher of Him as glad tidings among the nations (Gal. 1:16). He announced what that Savior is in Himself as glad tidings to those around him.

And we declare not only what that Savior has done - how He has finished the work of salvation, that He has paid an adequate price for the salvation of all (1 Tim. 2), and that God is satisfied with that work which He accomplished on the cross, having raised Him up from among the dead - but also declare what He is Himself. If any soul wants rest,

peace, righteousness, life, all are found in Christ in glory.

To refuse present grace is to incur future judgment, and then there will be no mercy. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, bath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 4:5, 6.

Things Which Are Before

Beloved, let us be decided, for it is impossible for us to grasp at things "before" and "behind" too. Were we pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"; were we "reaching forth unto those things which are before," we must be forgetting those behind; were we looking up, gazing with the eye of faith on our portion above, could we be groping in the dirt of this world for what we might find there? Could we be making a god of business, pleasure, riches, or reputation? Faith is an anticipating grace. Faith is a substantial reliance on the verities of God, such as makes its possessor count all things else but dross and dung for Christ and the things above.

Things Written Aforetimes for Our Learning: Words Spoken at a Wedding

It is fitting and proper that we should turn to the Word of God on this very happy occasion, and seek to learn something of what He has said on the subject of marriage. Whenever this blessed Book - the Book of books - speaks, it is absolute authority.

Some people have mistakenly thought that the Bible is simply a collection of historical material; this is not correct, for there is much history that it passes over entirely, or that it touches but very briefly, while it contains detailed accounts of things which would not rate a line in men's histories. For instance, Alexander the Great and all his mighty exploits are but meagerly mentioned. In Dan. 8 his rise, his conquests, and his decease are covered in about five verses; but God often enlarges on some personal, or domestic scene. In Genesis, God takes up the history of a man by the name of Abraham and devotes almost fourteen chapters to it. Why is this? The answer is to be found in these words: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

Rom. 15:4. God has some lessons to teach us in this record of Abraham, if we have ears to hear.

Now let us examine some parts of the life of Abraham. In Gen. 22 we find God testing his faith. God had given him a son in his old age, and Abraham loved him dearly - his only son. In this chapter God instructs him to go to a certain place and offer this beloved son as a burnt offering - what a great test of faith and obedience! It must have torn Abraham's heart very much, but he started out in simple obedience to do as he had been told. God, however, stopped him short of actually offering his son, and provided a ram as a substitute for Isaac.

This testing of Abraham is often mentioned by infidels as though God sanctioned the offering of human sacrifices, but this is not true. God stoutly condemned any such act, but He had a lesson to teach us (as well as Abraham) in the trial of Abraham's faith. God wanted to express to us something of the great cost to Himself in the giving of His only-begotten Son. God loved poor, guilty, ruined sinners, but His absolute holiness prevented Him from showing mercy until

He had a way to do it righteously. This was accomplished when God sent His well-beloved, His only-begotten, Son into this world, and allowed wicked men to crucify Him; then on the cross in those three hours of darkness God poured out on His sinless head the judgment due to sins, so that He might be able to come out and save guilty sinners, and yet be righteous. Thus we see that Gen. 22 is more than history; it is an unfolding of the heart of God in a type. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Then in chapter 24 we find Abraham thinking and acting to procure for that son of his love, the one who had been in the place of death on the altar, a wife, a companion suited to him. This is the longest chapter in Genesis and one of the longest in the Old Testament, and it is all devoted to a man getting a wife. Now why should God enter into such details of this family scene? simply to tell

us that He is interested in His Son having a bride. It reminds us of the parable in Matt. 22, where it says, "A certain

king... made a marriage for his 3071." The chief and central object of the type in Gen. 24, and of the parable in Matt. 22, is to unfold God's purposes that the Son of His love should be honored and be happy in receiving His bride.

That beloved One had to go into death, the death of the cross, before He could have a bride. He was the "corn of wheat" that had to fall into the ground and die before He could bring forth "much fruit," and see of the travail of His soul. After the work of redemption was accomplished through His death and blood shedding, He ascended up on high and sat down on the right hand of God, and there He is at present. Then the Holy Spirit came down to seek a bride for Him, just as Abraham's servant, following his directions, went into another land to seek a bride for Isaac. Abraham's servant went about his mission with all diligence, and allowed nothing to hinder him from carrying out his instructions. He went to find the bride, and to woo and to win her heart to the one who had been in the place of death, and who had been given all the riches of Abraham. This faithful servant produced gifts which were evidences of the riches of Abraham and of Isaac, and gave them to Rebekah as the token and pledge of the love of one whom she had not yet seen.

After Rebekah heard of all the glories of Isaac she was pointedly asked, "Wilt thou go with this man." Her answer was a clear and precise affirmative, "I will go." She did not figure out what it would cost her to go, for her heart was won, and love does not calculate. Immediately she began the long journey through the desert to her beloved bridegroom, the servant conducting her all the way.

Today the Spirit of God is in this world seeking out a bride for Christ, the One who had to die to put her sins away so that He could have her. The Holy Spirit is here to tell of the death, resurrection, and glory of Christ, and to woo and to win the hearts of sinners to Him who loved them. And may we ask this question of each one here today, Has your heart been won to the Lord Jesus? What is He to you? Do you know Him as the One who loved you and died on the cross to save you? Has your heart responded to the loving query, "Wilt thou go with this man?" If you can say, "He died for me," you will also say, "I will go." You cannot know Him without loving Him, and you cannot love Him without a desire to be with Him.

It is strikingly significant that the first time we have love mentioned in the Bible is in Gen. 22, where it is Abraham's love to Isaac; the second time is in Gen. 24, where it is Isaac's love to his bride - Rebekah. The former faintly pictures to our souls the love of God to His Son, even to Him whom He delivered up for us all; and the latter feebly tells of the great love of Christ to the Church, His bride. For while in the type Isaac was first on the altar in the place of death before he received his bride, it could not be said of him as of our blessed Lord, "Christ... loved the church and gave Himself for it." Eph. 5:25.

Now let us turn to the last book of the Bible, Rev. 21, where we see a beautiful future scene. The Church, those of this age who are saved and sheltered by the precious blood of Christ, is seen coming down out of heaven "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (v. 2). This brings before us what the Church is to be to Christ. She will be beautiful because He Himself has made her so, and all her beauty is to be for Him, and for Him alone. We always like to see a bride; a

bride is beautiful, but here all her adornment is for her husband. It will be her delight to be fully and forever for Him. Fellow-Christian, what a glorious time awaits us - to be adorned as He would have us, and all be for Himself. May our hearts leap with joy at the thought of being thus prepared for Him who loves us and gave Himself for us. There will not be a spot or blemish to mar that perfection which is for Him.

Then in the ninth verse of this same chapter we read another prophetic utterance: "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Here the emphasis is on the "Lamb's wife." This is a glory that others may and will see, for she is here displayed "having the glory of God." We shall share in all His glory; and while our beauty will be for Himself, there will also be the public display that we are His.

Just as Rebekah was for Isaac alone, his bride, and the one necessary to his happiness, so we who are saved shall be for Christ, fully in keeping with all He is; and, what is more, we shall be necessary to Him also. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Isa. 53:11. Then as Rebekah was made one with Isaac and so possessed all of his great riches with him, so we shall be "the Lamb's wife," and share all His riches and glory. Rebekah had not been to the altar with Isaac; he was there alone (except for Abraham, who had the fire and the knife, the symbols of judgment), but she was brought to him later to satisfy his heart, and share all his possessions. So the Lord Jesus was there alone on

the cross in those three awful hours of-darkness, except that God was there in judgment on sin; but we are, to be brought to Him as the fruit of His toil and sorrow, to satisfy His affections, and share His glory.

And our beloved brother and sister who have just been united in marriage, "in the Lord," shall find full instructions in the Word of God for the pathway ahead. They are to represent Christ and the Church. The husband is to love his wife "as Christ also loved the church." What a high standard that is! How did Christ love the Church? even to the extent of giving Himself for her. And did He just give Himself once and stop there? no, He has occupied Himself with her ever since, nourishing and cherishing her. May we who are husbands keep this before us, and never weary of doing that which is a picture of Christ's love to and interest in the Church. And as the Church is subjected to Christ, so the wife is to be to her husband, remembering her blessed place in the beautiful type set before us. May we have God's thoughts concerning marriage; the world knows them not.

When Rebekah neared the end of her wilderness journey she "lifted up her eyes" to look for Isaac; he was out watching and looking for her. Then she lighted off the camel - the ship..)f the desert, which was needed no more.

Our wilderness journey is about over; may "we lift our wishful, longing eyes," waiting to see His blessed face.

Three Blessed Things to Know: Will, Work, Testimony of Holy the Spirit

Heb. 10:10-15

In the ninth chapter of this epistle is set forth, in the most complete argument, the manner in which sins are put away by the one offering of Jesus Christ; whereas in the tenth chapter the subject is how this is applied to the conscience, so purging it that no dread of God's judging because of sins any longer remains. This is the meaning of "no more conscience of sins." So full, perfect, and sufficient is Christ's offering, that by Him all who believe are not only justified from all things, but are entitled to be within the holiest, and to know it. Could anything be more wonderful or excellent? to be inside the veil - where of old only one man, of one tribe, of one nation, on one day of the year, could enter - and that not by sufferance, but by right and title, and suited for such a place, having a conscience so purged that it is fit for the presence of God. I may just observe in passing that Hebrews shows the twofold position of a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. As regards heaven he is, as in this chapter, within the holiest now; as regards this world his place is outside the camp, as in chapter 13. On this latter I do not now enlarge; it does not come within my present purpose.

Let us look a little at the foundation of this great salvation. First, as we have it in verse 10, "By the which will we are sanctified." God willed not, and had no pleasure in the death of a sinner, nor had He pleasure in the sacrifices offered by the law, which could never make the worshiper perfect. In these repeated sacrifices there was a remembrance of sin every year: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come... to do Thy will, O God." Thus we are let into the secrets that passed between the Father and the Son in the council chamber of eternity before the foundation of the world. It was the will of God, and the Son set Himself to do that will - "A body hast Thou prepared Me." Oh, how different from man's natural thoughts of God! How eclipsed even the very best thoughts about His love. He willed it, and what His heart conceived, the Son of His love undertook to accomplish.

Will you, beloved reader, say what are your thoughts about God? Whoever could have stooped so low in a love that removed out of the way all that hindered its expression, and that too at the cost of all that was dear to itself! Such then was His will which is the great source and spring of this wonderful display of grace.

Second, we have the Person and work by which it has been accomplished. The Person, the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of the Father, He it was who took a body prepared for Him by God, and in it glorified Him, as well as established a righteous ground upon which God can be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Hear His own words - "Therefore Both My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." John 10:17. "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17:4. He was the One who

shed His blood. The righteousness of God demanded the blood of such a victim, so perfect and so blessed. Sin could be put away by nothing less; and for the purging of the conscience there was nothing more needed. He it was who, by the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God (and only He could); and now that very same righteousness of God raises Him up from the dead, from the very death by which He glorified God, and sets Him in glory, and likewise rends the veil from the top to the bottom. Could anything be more wonderful? "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down [that is, sat down in perpetuity] on the right hand of God... For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." This one offering accomplished what the blood of bulls and of goats, shed from the beginning, could never do. This one offering needed no repetition, so there remains no more offering for sin.

Last, we have the way by which it is known and enjoyed, in those words, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us... Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Oh, how blessed to have the knowledge and enjoyment of this. Could there be anything equal to the blessed certainty in the soul, founded on God's will, Christ's offering, and the Holy Ghost's testimony? The

Holy Ghost could not have come down until Jesus was glorified; but Christ being glorified out of the very judgment by which He forever put away sin, the Holy Ghost came down. Wherever I look I see infinite power and infinite love - the love that gave Christ, and brought Him down to the grave, and the power that raised Him up and seated Him in glory.

Three Exhortations

"Rejoice in the Lord Always." Phil. 4:4-6

Who was a fit person to say that? The man who had been in the third heaven? No. The man a prisoner at Rome. That was rejoicing always, as we have in the Psalms, "I will bless the LORD at all times." When I get the Lord as the object of my heart, there is more of heaven in the prison than out of it. It is not the green pasture and waters of quietness that made him glad. "The LORD is my shepherd," not the green pastures, though green pastures are very nice. And even if I wander from them, it is "He restoreth my soul." And if death is in the way, I am not afraid, for "Thou art with me." And though there are dreadful enemies, there is a table spread in their presence. Now he says, "My cup runneth over." He carries him through all the difficulties and trials of his own feebleness. Ah! he says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

The man who trusted in the Lord, the more trouble he was in, the more he proved that all was right. Paul says, "I know Him free, and I know Him in prison." He was sufficient when he was in want, and sufficient when he abounded. So he says, "Rejoice in the Lord always."

What could they do with such a man? If they kill him, they only send him to heaven; if they let him live, he is all devoted to lead people to the Christ they would destroy.

It is more difficult to rejoice in the Lord in prosperity than in trials, for trials cast us on the Lord. There is more danger for us when there are no trials. But delight in

the Lord delivers us altogether from the power of present things. We are not aware, until they are taken away, how much the most spiritual of us lean on props. I mean, we lean on things around us. But if we are rejoicing in the Lord always, that strength can never be taken away, nor can we lose the joy of it.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men." Do you think people will think your conversation is in heaven if you are eager about things of earth? They will only think us so if there is the testimony that the heart does not stick up for itself. "The Lord is at hand." All will be set right soon. If you pass on in meekness, and subduedness, and unresistingness, how it acts in keeping the heart and affections right! and the world can see when the mind and spirit are not set on it. So he says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

"Be careful for nothing." I have found that word so often a thorough comfort. Even if it be a great trial, still "be careful for nothing." "Oh," you say, "it is not my petty circumstances; it is a question of saints going wrong." Well, "be careful for nothing." It is not that you are careless, but you are trying to carry the burden, and so you are racking your heart with it. How often a burden possesses a person's mind, and when he tries in vain to cast it off, it comes back and worries him. But "be careful for nothing" is a command; and it is blessed to have such command.

What shall I do then? Go to God. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Then in the midst of all the care you can give thanks; and we see the exceeding grace of God in this. It is not that you are to wait till you find out if what you want is the will of God. No. "Let your requests be made known." Have you a burden on your heart? Now go with your request to God. He does not say that you will get it. Paul, when he prayed, had for an answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." But peace will keep your heart and mind, not you will keep this peace. Is He ever troubled by the little things that trouble us? Do they shake His throne? He thinks of us we know, but He is not troubled; and the peace that is in God's heart is to keep ours. I go and carry it all to Him, and I find Him all quiet about it. It is all settled. He knows quite well what He is going to do. I have laid the burden on the throne that never shakes, with the perfect certainty that God takes an interest in me, and the peace He is in keeps my heart, and I can thank Him even before the trouble has passed. I can say, Thank God, He takes an interest in me. It is a pleasant thing that I can have this peace, and thus go and make my request - perhaps, a very foolish one - and instead of brooding over trials, can be with God about them.

It is sweet to me to see that, while He carries us up to heaven, He comes down and occupies Himself with everything of ours here.

While our affections are occupied with heavenly things, we can trust God for earthly things. He comes down to everything. As Paul says, "Without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us." It was worth being cast down to get that kind of comfort. Is He a God afar off, and not a God nigh at hand? He does not give us to see before us, for then the heart would not be exercised; but though we see Him not, He sees us, and comes down to give us all kinds of comfort in the trouble.

The Tillage of the Poor

The Lord abhors the trafficking in unfelt truth. In heaven there may be ignorance, or want of knowledge, but no such thing as the possession of unfelt truth. The angels are heavenly creatures, but they confess their ignorance by their desire to know (1 Pet. 1:12). Ignorant of certain truths they are, but not uninterested about them.

A little knowledge with personal exercise of spirit over it is better than much knowledge without it. As the proverb says, "Much food is in the tillage of the poor," for the poor make the most of their little. They use the spade, the hoe, and the mattock; they weed, and they dress, and they turn up their little garden of herbs. And their diligence gets much food out of it. And we are to be these "poor" ones, ever to use divine Scripture as they carry out their tillage, and make the most of our little. It may be but milk we feed on, but if we use our diligence to put aside malice and hypocrisies and envies, and the like, we shall be really feeding and growing (1 Pet. 2). And because of this, much more savor of Christ do we often find in those who have less knowledge, for theirs is this "tillage of the poor" (Prow. 13:23)

The Trial of Job: Satan's Failure

Job was a perfect man, God said. But there was some legality in his piety, for he was always trying to keep God's judgments from his family by sacrifices, and he says, "The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me." God speaks to Satan about him, and Satan replies that he fears God for what he gets. Satan was glad to bring trouble upon him, and ransacks heaven and earth, and uses the elements and all the surrounding nations for the trial of Job. First, he loses his oxen and asses and servants; then the sheep and servants; then the camels and the servants; and at last Job's own sons and daughters. But Job is a worshiper; he says, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

Then in chapter 2 God allows Satan to have another turn at Job, and he was glad to have it: "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." How gracious! However great Satan's power, it is only limited. Was ever a man so tried as Job? He had lost all his property, all his children, and then his health. Moreover, the one from whom he might have looked for a drop of comfort, his wife, tells him to curse God. But Job is victorious. The conflict was between God and Satan; and do you think God would provide for His own defeat? I think Satan acted in a very foolish way to reach his end. If I wanted to make a person break down, speaking humanly, I would be always grinding at him, and would spread it over a long space of time. Satan brought these trials suddenly upon Job, but a saint in any great trial - suppose the bank breaks, and he loses all his money - rises above it like a cork on the water. He turns to God. It is not the great trials that break one down, but the little wearing things that make a man live the life of a martyr. Speaking from experience, it is in these things that we generally break down.

Observe that after the first two chapters of Job, Satan is off the scene altogether; we hear nothing more about him. Then Job's friends come. One thing was wrong with Job; he thought himself a very good man. In chapter 29 he says, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." But at the end he says to God, "Now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." We may be in Christ, blessed with all spiritual blessings; but there is something more than all this - it is the knowledge of God, as it says, "Some have not the knowledge of God."

Abraham had not sinned like David, and did not need trials like Job; he had been walking

with God, and he was a worshiper. In Genesis he said to his servants, "Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." God spoke to him in a way to touch every cord in his heart: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou

lovest." One might say, How cruel! But God had strung a harp in Abraham's heart that He was going to get music from, and said, I will get something for Myself from him. When God asks us to sacrifice anything for Him, do we worship?

The Two Natures

While the birth of Isaac filled Sarah's mouth with laughter, it introduced an entirely new element into Abraham's house. The son of the free woman very speedily brought about the development of the true character of the son of the bondwoman. Indeed, Isaac proved, in principle, to be to the household of Abraham what the implantation of the new nature is in the soul of a sinner. It was not Ishmael changed, but it was Isaac born. The son of the bondwoman could never be anything else but that. He might become a great nation, he might dwell in the wilderness and become an archer, he might become the father of twelve princes, but he was the son of the bondwoman all the while. On the contrary, no matter how weak and despised Isaac might be, he was the son of the free woman. His position and character, his standing and prospects, were all from the Lord. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:6...

The moment a sinner believes in his heart, and confesses with his mouth, the Lord Jesus, he becomes the possessor of a new life, and that life is Christ. He is born of God, is a child of God, is a son of the free woman. (See Rom. 10:9; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:1, 2; Gal. 3:26; 4:31.)

Nor does the introduction of this new nature alter, in the slightest degree, the true, essential character of the old. This latter continues what it was, and is made in no respect better; yea, rather, there is the full display of its evil character in opposition to the new element. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." There they are in all their distinctness, and the one is only thrown into relief by the other.

I believe this doctrine of the two natures in the believer is not generally understood; and yet, so long as there is ignorance of it, the mind must be utterly at sea in reference to the true standing and privileges of the child of God. Some there are who think that regeneration is a certain change which the old nature undergoes and, moreover, that this change is gradual in its operation until, at length, the whole man becomes transformed. That this idea is unsound, can be proved by various quotations from the New Testament. For example, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." How can that which is thus spoken of ever undergo any improvement? The Apostle goes on to say, "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." If it cannot be subject to the law of God, how can it be improved? How can it undergo any change? Again, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Do what you will with flesh, and it is flesh all the while. As Solomon says, "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." Pro. 27:22. There is no use in seeking to make foolishness wise; you must introduce heavenly wisdom into the heart that has been heretofore only governed by folly. Again, "Ye have put off the old man." Col. 3:9. He does not say, Ye have improved, or are seeking to improve "the old man," but, Ye have put it off. This gives us a totally different idea. There is a very great difference between seeking to mend an old garment, and casting it aside altogether and putting on a new one. This is the idea of the last quoted passage. It is a putting off the old, and a putting on of the new. Nothing can be more distinct or simple...

The birth of Isaac did not improve Ishmael, but only brought out his real opposition to the child of the promise. He might have gone on very quietly and orderly till Isaac made his appearance; but then he showed what he was by persecuting and mocking at the child of resurrection. What then was the remedy? to make Ishmael better? By no means; but, "Cast

out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." v. 10. Here was the only remedy. "That which is crooked cannot be made straight" (Eccles. 1:15); therefore you have only to get rid of the crooked thing altogether, and occupy yourself with that which is divinely straight. It is labor lost to seek to make a crooked thing straight. Hence all efforts after the improvement of nature are utterly futile so far as God is concerned. It may be all very well for men to cultivate and improve that which is of use to themselves; but God has given His children something infinitely better to do, even to cultivate that which is His own creation, the fruits of which, while they in no wise serve to exalt nature, are entirely to His praise and glory.

The Two Thrones: Only One Altar

We want the reader to turn aside with us for a few moments and look at two thrones which are presented on the page of inspiration, one in the 6th of Isaiah, and the other in the 20th of Revelation. We shall do little more than introduce them to his notice, in the very words of the inspired penman, and then leave him to muse upon those solemn realities in the immediate presence of God.

1. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

Here then we have something peculiarly solemn. We have the throne of God, and the effect produced by that throne upon the heart of a man of like passions with ourselves. It is a serious thing to find oneself in the presence of God - to see ourselves in the light of His throne - to hearken to the sound of a voice that could move the very posts of the door. This truly is real work. All is laid bare here. Man sees himself in his true condition. He sees the deep moral roots of his being. He sees not only his acts, but his nature; not only what he has done, but what he is. He sees not only the negative but the positive; not only what he is not, but what he actually is.

Thus it was with Isaiah when he got a view of himself in the light of the holiness of God. He discovered himself. He found out what he was, and the tale was easily told - the confession was brief, pointed, and profound. "Woe is me! for I am undone." This was the sum of the matter. It took in everything. It was no mere lip profession - no formal statement of an unfelt truth that "We are all sinners." Ah! no; it was deep and thorough work. The depths were reached. The arrow had entered the soul. Isaiah saw himself, in the presence of the throne of God, an utterly undone man.

The throne at which we are now gazing has a special feature attached to it - a peculiar fact connected with it. There is an altar near at hand. Thanks be to God for this precious, this consolatory fact. There is grace and salvation for the guilty and undone. The guilt which the light of the throne reveals, the grace of the altar removes. "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this bath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

What grace shines in all this! What mercy in the fact that we can now have to do with a throne which has an altar attached to it - a throne of grace! The Lord be praised. This is a most weighty, telling, 'powerful fact. Grace is triumphant. It reigns "through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 3:2; 1

2. But we must turn to another throne of which we read in Rev. 20 "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. AND WHOSOEVER WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE." vv. 11-15.

This is a throne of judgment. No grace, no mercy here. We look in vain for an altar in the vicinity of this throne. There is no such thing to be found. It is a scene of unmingled judgment. We have the claims of the throne alas! alas! unanswered claims - without any of the provisions of the altar. "The books were opened" - those solemn records of the life and conduct of each. Yes, of each one in particular. There will be no such thing as escaping in the crowd - no getting off with mere generalities. The judgment will be intensely individual - awfully personal - "every man according to their works."

Reader, mark the character of the judgment: "according to their works." It is a fatal mistake to think that people will only be judged for rejecting the gospel. No doubt, the rejection of the gospel, wherever it has been heard, leaves people on the ground of judgment; but the judgment will be, in every case, according to a man's works. The inspired Apostle most distinctly teaches us in Eph. 5:3,6, and Col. 3:5, 6, that the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience on account of certain sins which he specifies. In short, it is perfectly plain from Scripture that each one, "small and great," will be judged according to his works. Solemn truth! Every one who dies in his sins - dies unrepentant, unconverted, unbelieving - will have to give an account of all his deeds. All will stand out in terrific array on the tablets of memory and conscience; all will be seen in the light of that throne from which nothing is hidden, and from which none can escape.

How dreadful to stand before the throne of judgment! How many a "Woe is me!" will break forth from the countless myriads who shall stand before that throne. But there will be no altar there! No flying seraph! No live coal! No mercy! No provision of grace! What then? "The lake of fire"! It cannot be otherwise if the judgment is to be according to every man's works. Fire unquenchable and the never dying worm must be the consequence with all who stand before the great white throne of Rev. 20. Men may deny this. They may try to put it from them. They may reason about it. But all their reasoning, and all their philosophy, and all their learning, and all their criticism, can never shake the clear and solemn testimony of Holy Scripture. That testimony proves beyond all question, first, that those whose names are in the book of life shall not come into judgment at all, because Christ was judged in their stead. And second, that those whose names are not written in the book of life, shall be judged according to their works, and - appalling thought! - "cast into the lake of fire."

The Uncertainty of Life in This World

The assassination of King Abdullah of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, and the untimely death of Admiral Forest P. Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations of the United States, within one week, give pointed evidence to the uncertainty of human life. Surely no man, no matter what his station, knows what a day may bring forth. The one died from violence and the other from natural causes.

Their sudden and unexpected deaths also show how quickly the affairs of men and nations can change, for they were both prominent in the great arena of international struggle, and their decease could mark changes of policy.

King Abdullah was shot down as he was about to enter the Mosque of the Rock (also called the Mosque of Omar) by an assassin who leaped from behind a gate. This happening where it did, gives added emphasis to the Lord's word, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. The Mosque with its surrounding "noble sanctuary" covers the spot of all spots in all of Palestine most desired by the Jews, for it was there that their temple stood. Today it is the site of a Mohammedan mosque, and it is as tenaciously held by the Moslems, as ardently desired by the Jews.

This king had been highly favored by Great Britain, and he was well known as a friend of the West. His death is a great loss to the West which is precariously situated in the whole of the Middle East. Russia stands to gain, and will lose no chance of fomenting unrest in the area where resurgent militant Mohammedanism has an increasing appeal to the populace who desire more intense nationalism, rather than subservience to the West.

King Abdullah has been a great factor in keeping a measure of tranquility in the highly explosive Middle East. He was one of the very few capable Arab statesmen, and has been willing since he agreed to peace to live side by side with the Nation of Israel in Palestine. He would have liked to bring the other Arab countries of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia into his camp, under his direction. This has been opposed by Egypt on the one hand, which has sought to bring them all under her control, and Syria on the other, which also wants to dominate the Arab league. Egypt and Syria would each, if they could, gain the leadership, and strike against Israel; they have designs of conflict with and conquest of the Jewish state. Thus we see the two old rivals of the book of Daniel - the "king of the north" (Syria), and the "king of the south" (Egypt) - readying themselves for their future prophetic operations. The removal of King Abdullah may help to pave the way for the more aggressive and more warlike aspirations of Syria.

There was another cold-blooded murder of an important personage of the Middle East just four days earlier. He was Riad Bey el Solh, a very shrewd political leader of the tiny nation of Lebanon. He, like King Abdullah, was a balancing factor for peace among the Arab states. He was a friend of King Abdullah's, and had gone to Amman to visit the king. After the visit he was being driven to the Amman airport in Abdullah's limousine when he was shot by assassins from a passing car.

This also bodes ill for the Middle East (also the Jews and the West) for el Solh was a national hero in Lebanon, and was resisting the efforts of the radical Syrian National Party which is bent on taking over Lebanon in a plan to form Syria into an Arab superstate.

It is no mere accident that these two powerful figures in opposing the warlike intentions of Syria were removed within one week. Thus the way is being paved for the coming "king of the north." The Scriptures must be fulfilled.

The godly Jewish remnant who will be in Palestine after the Church has been taken to the Father's house will pray the words of the 83rd Psalm:

"Keep not Thou silence, O God: hold not Thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate Thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against Thee: the tabernacles of Edom [descendants of Esau], and the Ishmaelites [descendants of Ishmael]; of Moab [descendants of Lot], and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon [descendants of Lot], and Amelek [the first enemy of Israel after they came out of Egypt, and their constant foe]; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tere; Assur [the Assyrian] also is joined with them: they have helped the children of Lot." Psalm 83:1-8.

This is the list of Moslem confederates who will oppose the Jews, and consequently take issue with the Roman Empire who will favor the Jews and back them with military might - "the god of forces." The godly remnant of the Jews, however, will make an issue between this opposing horde and God, for they say, "They are confederate against Thee."

It is striking that in this quotation the enemies say, "Let us cut them off from being a nation," and it is only very recently that they are "a nation" again; and then they say "that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance," for this is the name that has been adopted by the new "nation."

The capital city of Jordan where King Abdullah was buried is called Amman; is not this the old name of the children of Lot, Ammon, showing itself again? In Biblical times this city was called Rabbah, and Rabbath, and was the fortified capital of the Ammonites (see Deut. 3:11; Josh. 13:25; 2 Sam. 11:1; 12:26-29). It was there that Uriah was slain.

The mission of Admiral Sherman to Europe points up more preliminary steps to the formation of the revived Roman Empire, which is to play such a great and terrible part in the last moments of man's day. He had gone to Europe to arrange for Western air and naval bases in Spain, and thus bring Spain - a necessary part of the future Western confederacy - into the Western alliance. His death of a heart attack in Naples, Italy, probably will not affect the purpose of his mission, for there will be others to take it up where he left off, but it does bring him and his mission into sharper focus in these crucial days.

There can only be one conclusion - "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand." May we who are saved not sleep as do others, but be thoroughly awake, watching for our Lord to come, and warning men to flee from the wrath to come.

Unleavened Bread: a Reader Inquires

"Should unleavened bread be used in the remembrance of the Lord in death? Was it not unleavened bread that the Lord used when He instituted His supper?"

ANSWER: It seems quite evident that the Lord Jesus used unleavened bread on that "night in which He was betrayed," for it was at the Passover; and in Exod. 12 the Israelites were told to eat the Passover lamb with "unleavened bread." The day following began the feast of unleavened bread which was to last seven days, during which time leaven was not even to be in their houses. Some people, therefore, have concluded that only unleavened bread should be used by Christians in keeping the Lord's supper. Such a conclusion, however, is a mistake; it is an attempt to carry over the actuality of the type, rather than its typical significance, into Christianity.

Leaven was forbidden in any offering made by fire to the Lord (Lev. 2:11). Inasmuch as it typifies the working of evil, it could not be offered in a sacrifice which spoke of Christ. There were two occasions where leavened bread was used, and both of these tend to emphasize this same truth. In the peace offering the offerer was to present "leavened bread" besides unleavened cakes and wafers (Lev. 7:12, 13), but this offering spoke of communion or worship, and the leavened bread shows that sin was present in the offerer, who later ate the bread.

In Lev. 23 leaven is also found in the two loaves that typify the Church as formed on the day of Pentecost; here again it is evil as found in the Church on earth. All this is conclusive proof of the typical significance of leaven.

When we come to the New Testament we always find the same meaning involved in the use of the word "leaven." The leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy, and the disciples were to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (hypocrisy) and of the Sadducees (infidelity). The corruptions of Herod, who was a proselyte to Judaism, were also spoken of as leaven, "the leaven of Herod." (Luke 12:1; Matt. 16:6, 11, 12; Mark 8:15.) Then in Matt. 13 in the parables of the "kingdom of heaven" - the sphere of profession on earth - there was the woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal "till the whole was leavened." This is the secret working of evil doctrine which has well-nigh permeated the whole lump of Christendom. Its progress was to be steady, and eventually embrace the whole of profession. It was not to be checked nor eradicated by men.

In the Church proper the case was different; evil workers were to be put out, for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5). The man who was guilty of immorality was to be excluded, for before God the assembly was unleavened. The Apostle, by the Spirit of God, then brings in the practical application of the feast of unleavened bread. If the Israelites were to put away leaven for seven days (a picture of a complete cycle of time), so were the Christians to keep that feast in its spiritual application by keeping free from evil. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast [feast of unleavened bread seven days, or the whole of our lifetime on earth], not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." vv. 7, 8.

In Gal. 5:9 the evil doctrine which was at work among the churches in that province was also referred to as leaven, and the same word is given: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." This is indeed salutary, for some Christians admit that moral evil would contaminate the whole body of Christians, and yet allow evil doctrine to work without expulsion. The two evils are classed in the same category - leaven that defiles all.

In no single instance is the Christian enjoined from using material leaven; such injunction would bring him back under the Mosaic economy. He is to keep himself free from that which leaven typified; that is sin; but the shadows in the ceremonies of the past age are not for him to observe. He may use leaven or not as his taste may dictate. There is no wrong in his use of leaven- yeast. The same thing is true of many outward observances obligatory to the Jews; they have no place in Christianity.

Nowhere is it mentioned whether or not the loaf the Lord Jesus used in instituting His supper was leavened or unleavened. In Christianity it is immaterial; the great point is that it was a loaf of bread, and that that loaf unbroken bespoke the Lord's body before it was offered; and when it was broken it symbolized His body given unto death for us. To bring in anything as to leaven is to miss the mind of the Spirit, and to get souls occupied with something else rather than the Lord Jesus in death. It is quite natural that the natural man would be occupied with natural things - bread and wine - but may we be so occupied with Himself that we lose sight of mere nature and see "Jesus only." It is hard for nature to get above itself, like the woman of Samaria; she could not understand what the Lord spoke about for she could not get beyond the actual well, water, and waterpot.

The same type of question has often been raised about the "fruit of the vine" used in the Lord's supper, whether it was fermented wine or unfermented grape juice. How gracious of the Lord that neither the one nor the other is insisted upon; He merely said "the fruit of the vine." No doubt it was fermented wine that He used on that occasion, and certainly the Corinthians used wine, for some became intoxicated when they joined their "love feasts" with the Lord's supper; and they had to be rebuked (1 Cor. 11). In those days there was no way of preserving unfermented grape juice; it was not thought of. Doubtless wine was used.

But surely the Spirit-taught Christian should be able to remember the Lord in death with either leavened or unleavened bread, wine or unfermented grape juice; and Scripture leaves it without comment or instruction. Certainly if only unleavened bread were available it should not distract any heart from the purpose of remembering the Lord in death, nor should the availability of grape juice instead of wine change our one thought as to the meaning to us of "the cup." It is the "loaf" and the "cup" that bring the Lord before our souls, not the fermentation or the lack of it in either case.

We might add a few more words, as to a subject closely akin to this one; that is, the Lord and His disciples were in an upper room. Here again nature would get occupied with the location of the room, rather than with "the Lord's death." Perhaps a significance can be taken from the upper room, that it was apart from the world, and so should our remembrance of Him in death be; but this could be true in a cave below the surface of the earth, or on any floor of a building above it. Let us not interpose anything between our souls and the all absorbing object for which we come together - "This do in remembrance of ME."

God in His grace has left no instruction in His Word on some points. Not one word is given as to what hour of the day we should thus remember Him. Circumstances in certain countries might make afternoon or evening the only time allowed, or might preclude the use of wine or of leavened bread (or the reverse); but all this should in no way affect the simple remembrance of "the Lord's death till He come." May we give more attention to coming self-judged into His presence, so that there may be no hindrance to the discerning of the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:28, 29) and the leading of the Holy Spirit of God. These are things that should concern us, not the things of nature.

Waiting for the Son From Heaven: Signs of the Times

In the calculations of men, events unfold themselves as the effects of causes which are known to be operating. But while this has its truth, to faith it is God who in His supremacy holds a seal in His hand to stamp each day with its character or sign.

This gives the soul a fresh interest in the passing moments. Some of them may be more impressively stamped than others, but all are in progress, and each hour is contributing to the unfolding of the coming era, like the seasons of the year, or the advances of day and night. Some moments in such progresses may be more strongly marked than others, but all are in advance.

Every stage of Israel's journey through the desert was bringing them nearer to Canaan, though some stages were tame and ordinary, while others were full of incident. And so all the present age is accomplishing the advance of the promised kingdom, though some periods of it have greater importance than others.

These "signs of the times," or sealings of God's hand upon the passing hour, it is the duty of faith to discern, because they are always according to the premonitions of Scripture. Indeed, current events are only "signs" as they are according to or in fulfillment of such previous notices.

The words of the prophets made the doings of Jesus in the days of His flesh the signs of those days (Matt. 12:22, 23). And have we not words in the New Testament which in like manner make all around us at this moment, or in every century of the dispensation, significant? Have not words which we find there abundantly forecast the characters of such dispensation, and given beforehand the forms of those corruptions that were to work in Christendom? They have told us what now our eyes have seen. They told us of the field of wheat and tares; of the mustard seed which became a lodging place for the fowls of the air; of the unmerciful servant, or of the Gentile not continuing in God's goodness; of the great house with its vessels unto honor and dishonor; and of other like things. They told us of "the latter times," and of "the last days," and they still tell the deadly character which that hour is to bear that is to usher forth "the man of sin," and ripen iniquity for the brightness and the power of the day of the Lord.

All this is so. And let me ask, If every hour is, after this manner, bearing its character or wearing its sign, what mark are we individually helping to put upon this our day? Is the purpose and way of the Lord, ripening into blessedness, at all reflected in us? Or are we in any measure aiding to unfold that form of evil which is to bring down the judgment? If the times were to be known and described according to our way, what character would they bear? What sign would distinguish them?

These are inquiries for the conscience of each of us. We cannot be neutral in this matter. We can not be idle in this market place. It may be but in comparative feebleness, but still each of us within the range of the action of Christendom is either helping to disclose God's way or to ripen "the vine of the earth" for "the winepress of the wrath of God." The Lord tells us that the sign on which our faith must rest is that of a humbled Christ, such a sign as that of Jonah the prophet. Our faith deals with such a sign because our need as sinners casts us on a Savior, or a humbled Christ. But hope

may feed on a thousand signs. Our expectations are nourished by a sight of the operations of the divine hand displaying every hour the ripening of the divine counsels and promises, in spite of the world, and in the very face of increasing human energies. These signs may be watched, but watched by the saint already in the place and attitude assigned him by the Spirit. They are not to determine what is his place, but they may exercise him in it. His place and attitude are beforehand and independently determined for him, waiting for the Son of God from heaven.

This posture the Thessalonian saints assumed on their believing the gospel (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). The Apostle seems afterward to strengthen them in that posture by telling them that from it they were to be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). And again afterward he seems to guard them against being disturbed in that attitude, against being tempted to give it up, by further telling them that the place of expectation should be exchanged for the place of meeting-ere the day of the Lord fell in its terrors on the world and the wicked (2 Thess. 2:1).

And still further. This very posture of waiting for the Son from heaven had induced a certain evil. The Thessalonian saints were neglecting present handiworks. The Apostle does not in any wise seek to change their posture, but admonishes them to hold it in company with diligence and watchfulness, that while their eye was gazing their hand might be working (2 Thess. 3).

The Lord Himself seems to me to give just at the bright and blessed close of the Sacred Volume admonitions and encouragements to strengthen us in this place and posture of heart.

"I come quickly" is announced by Him three times in Rev. 22 - words directly suited to keep the heart that listens to them believingly in the attitude of which I am speaking.

But different words of warning and encouragement accompany this voice.

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." v. 7. This warns us that while we are waiting for Him we must do so with watchful, obedient, observant minds, heedful of His words.

"Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." v. 12. This encourages to diligence, telling us that by the occupation of our talents now during His absence, on the promised and expected return, He will have honors to impart to us.

"Surely I come quickly," is again the word (v. 20). This is a simple promise. It is neither a warning nor an encouragement. Nothing accompanies the announcement as in the other cases. It is, as it were, simply a promise to bring Himself with Him on His coming again. But it is the

highest thing, the dearest thing. The heart may be silent before a warning, and before an encouragement. Such words may get their audience in secret from the conscience. But this promise of the simple personal return of Christ gets its answer from the saints. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Great things are going on. The professing church, the Jew, and the Gentile are all in characteristic activity, each full of preparation and expectancy. But faith waits for that which comes not with such things. The rapture of the saints is part of a mystery, a part of "the hidden wisdom." The coming of the Lord for His own is a fact, as I judge, apart altogether from the history or the condition of the world around.

Way of Separation From Evil

The true way of non-association with evil is to be occupied with the Lord; in such occupation sin, which is still in you, lies a dead letter, and other things are in abeyance. There is nothing that "deadifies" more than the habit of not minding. A person, for example, is seeking association with you. He calls, but you are occupied; he calls again, and you are occupied; he repeats his call, still you are occupied. He knows you prefer being occupied, to him, and he is mortified - the energy which first marked him is broken. Thus it is with the flesh. To be spiritually minded is life and peace; minding the things of the Spirit, being occupied with them, becomes a practical mortification - a -deadilying- process to the flesh. This I believe is the power of a true personal holiness - separation unto God being the greatest power in separation from evil. J. D S.

Thoughts on the Ways of God

God has been wont to pass His servants through some special discipline if His intention has been to use them for any particular service. He shapes and prepares the vessels that He deigns to make use of, and often by means of severe trials, in order to fit them for their work.

David was a man after God's own heart, but he had to endure years of affliction even after being anointed king. He was hunted like a partridge on the mountains. Never, however, let us forget that but for these circumstances we should have been without most of his psalms, and that his sufferings from within and without, his exercises of soul, and the persecution of his enemies were the occasions which called them forth. So it was in Paul's case. But for his Roman prison, we might not have had many of his valuable epistles. Thus does God bring the greatest blessing out of the keenest suffering and the deepest affliction of His children.

We Walk by Faith, Not by Sight

We wish briefly to show the contrast between the path of Abram and the path of Lot, as furnished in the book of Genesis, but chiefly for the help of young believers who are called to face the terribly increasing evil and alluring influences of these last difficult times.

When Abram was called to leave his country and his father's house and go into a land that God would show him, his nephew Lot went with him. Both became rich in flocks and herds; and when their respective herdmen strove at Bethel on account of the land being too small for them (allowed, no doubt, of the Lord to separate Abram from his relative), Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee.... If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right: or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Gen. 13:8, 9. From this point, mark the course of each of these two noted saints of God. Abram walked by faith, while Lot walked by sight, but observe with what vastly different results. "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where....

Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan... and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly." Soon afterward Lot dwelt in Sodom. Then came his first warning; namely, in the war of the nine kings he was taken captive from Sodom, with all he possessed, to Hobah, near Damascus, whence Abram had to rescue him. Did this warning voice cause Lot to alter his course for the better? No, it appears not, as he returned to Sodom and became more involved than ever; for we read that he sat as a magistrate in the gate of the city.

Then came his second warning, which was much more solemn than the first. One evening two angels arrived at his house to announce that as the iniquity of the city was so great they had come to destroy it by fire. It is evident how far Lot's heart was in Sodom from the fact that next morning "while he lingered, the men [angels] laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city," and said, "Escape for thy life.... Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven." Gen. 19:16, 17, 24. How solemn! And it is most marked that so little is said afterward of Lot in God's Word. Solemn warning indeed for any who have an eye or a heart for this world that lies in the wicked one; that is, under the prince of the power of the air, even Satan, the god of this world - a world under the righteous judgment of a holy God on account of man's sin.

Lot's backsliding consisted of about four steps, and we are not aware that a soul ever reaches the full length all at once. He beheld, he chose, he pitched his tent, he dwelt in Sodom. Should a world-bordering believer read these lines, we lovingly warn you, dear one, beware of the first wrong step; and may the Lord indeed in His mercy keep each of us from entering upon the lines of sight. For the Lord said for our learning, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." As to things of sight it is written, "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2

Pet. 3:7.

It may perhaps be said by some, Then we must needs go out of the world altogether to comply with these requirements. We do not think Abram would have said so; Lot might. But the secret lies in the Lord's words, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Of course the only One who ever did walk the path of faith in all its perfection was the blessed Lord Himself, and He left "us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).

When circumstances forced Abram and Lot to part company, how much wiser it would have been had Lot conferred with such an honored man of faith as Abram, instead of being allured by that well-watered plain, where he took his first three wrong steps!

When Lot had departed, the Lord said unto Abram, "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward. and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it.... Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD." Abram therefore got infinitely more by faith in God than Lot could ever possibly obtain by sight; "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

Abram had also four steps about the same time which are - he looked, he walked, he pitched his tent, he dwelt. But note, each step was in the path of faith, and in company with the Lord, which led to where he built an altar unto the Lord. The path of faith always leads Godward. Which of the two plains are you in, dear reader? Is it the plain of Jordan - well-watered it may be, but where your soul is lean and barren, and very likely out of your Lord's company? or are you in the plains of Mamre, with your' soul increasing in fatness and in. the true spirit of worship, having your altar unto the Lord?' We read not of any such thing as an altar being built by Lot in Sodom, There is no altar with the' world., The Lord says to His own, "Come out from among them, and be ye' separate,... and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you."

It was apart from God that Lot went astray. His loss was enormous, but he did not cease to be a saint. We remember that the example of our blessed Lord is the only perfect one, for Abram had his failures as all saints have; but, beloved child of God, as all Scripture is written for our learning, we earnestly beseech you to' let Abram's example, and not Lot's, be yours. "For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7.

The Weapons of Our Warfare

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:3-5.

We may see in the first epistle to the Corinthians how the Apostle employed those arms with God to the overthrowing of strongholds, whatever the reasoning or the high thing that was lifted up against the knowledge of God. Take their fleshly zeal for Paul, Apollos, or Cephas: he brings in Christ and His cross to judge its roots, declaring that the former were but ministering servants through whom they themselves believed and as the Lord gave to each; and in fact all theirs, and they Christ's, and Christ God's. It was a carnal corruption of their privileges. Take their worldly ease; with such an unbelieving anticipation of the day when we shall all reign together, he contrasts the apostles set by God as the last appointed to death, despised, suffering, and become as the world's offscouring until now. Take their appeal to law courts; he confronts the indignity of saints, who are to judge the world and angels, prosecuting suits one against another before the unjust. Take their laxity about temple feasts; he shows that their boasted intelligence about the vanity of idols was exposing them to Satan's snare, and drawing them into communion with demons. Take lastly their denial that the dead rise; he proves that it virtually upsets the resurrection of Christ, and consequently the gospel with all their heavenly privileges and hope. Thus admirably does the former epistle lead captive every thought into the obedience of Christ.

Weights

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Heb. 12:1.

Mark how simply the Apostle speaks of it, as if it were easy. Can you "lay aside every weight" so easily? That is what you are called to do. Why cannot you?

The moment I feel it is a weight, it is very easy to drop it; but if it is a pleasure, it is very hard to get rid of it. The moment I have Christ as my object, all these weights become a burden, and I am very glad to throw them off. The secret of it is, the heart looking to Jesus who has run the path; the new nature finding its food in Him has no taste for the things of the world.

Worship in Spirit and in Truth

It is impossible to separate true spiritual worship and communion from the perfect offering of Christ to God. The moment our worship separates itself from this, its efficacy, and consciousness of that infinite acceptance of Jesus before the Father, it becomes carnal, and either form or delight of the flesh. When the Holy Spirit leads us into real spiritual worship, it leads us into communion with God, into the presence of God, and then, necessarily, all the infinite acceptability to Him of the offering of Christ is present to our spirit; the acceptance of that sweet savor is that in which we go to Him. We are associated with it; it forms an integral and necessary part of our communion and worship. We cannot be in the presence of God in communion without finding there the perfect favor of God in which an offered Jesus is. It is, indeed, the ground of our acceptance, as well as of our communion. Apart from this then our worship falls back into the flesh; our prayers form what is sometimes called a gift of prayer, than which nothing often is more sorrowful; a fluent rehearsal of known truths and principles instead of communion and the expression of our wants in the unction of the Spirit; our singing, pleasure of the ear, the taste in music and expression in which we sympathize, all a form in the flesh, and not communion in the Spirit. All this is evil; the Spirit of God owns it not; it is not in Spirit and in truth; it is really iniquity.

Ye Are Not of the World: Something That Is a Fact

In John 17, Jesus, praying to His Father, said, "And now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." vv. 13-16. And in John 15:18, 19: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

These two scriptures show clearly that the Lord's people are not of the world, even as He, and that as the world knew Him not, but hated Him, so must we meet with its hatred also. There is not a single thing in unison between the Christian and man's world. "The whole world lies in the wicked one." 1 John 5:19; N.

Trans. But Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from" (out of) "this present evil world." Gal. 1:4.

The term "world" is used in Scripture in different ways. We read of God making the worlds by His Son (Heb. 1:2). It expresses too the moral condition of unconverted men without God, living for self, time, and sense, so that the Lord said to His own, "If the world hate you." It also sets forth the system that men have built up on the earth, without God, whose elements are totally opposed to Him. Hence we find that John, in exhorting those classed as young men in his first epistle, says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John 2:15, 16.

Yet, although Christians are not of the world but, as elsewhere presented, a heavenly people, the greater number are left awhile upon the earth to glorify God in their bodies till

Christ returns. Hence we find ourselves in the midst of a vast system of things totally opposed to the new life which God has given us in His Son, and to everything that that life delights in. But we have also the Holy Ghost who is the power of that life and, walking by faith, we overcome the world, and pass through the midst of it unscathed by its manifold evil influences.

At the same time it is important to distinguish between worldly elements contrary to God and things which are needful for the body in the circumstances in which we may be placed. There is a wide difference between the two. We have died with Christ, and hence we are dead to sin (Rom. 6) but not to nature. We are now risen in Christ, and can enjoy communion with God. And if we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (which of course remains in us, and lusts the moment it is allowed), nor yield to the evil of the world while seeking to use natural things in the fear of God, and for His glory, watching always lest even any natural blessing that He has given us should in any way become our snare.

Now Satan uses the world in different ways to hold men in his power, and to draw away the hearts of Christians from God and the simplicity which is in Christ. We may divide the moral state of the world around us under at least five heads; namely, wicked, worldly, social, political, and religious. Christ, as we have already cited, gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from (out of) this present evil world (Gal. 1:4), and that in every form in which we come in contact with it. Let us seek briefly to present what we mean by these different terms.

First, the wicked world. We speak thus of the world of the ungodly, of men following their own unbridled will, and the lusts and desires of their evil hearts. Ungodliness abounds -all kinds of license, revelry, and open and secret wickedness. Men, with no fear of God before their eyes (Rom. 3:18), indulge their lusts and passions, and the desires of their hearts and minds, in gluttony, drunkenness, immorality, infidelity, blasphemy, etc., etc. Now surely no one with any pretensions to Christianity would sanction such manifest evil for a moment. Even the natural conscience of thousands is shocked at such things. Men of the world themselves would not believe in the Christianity of the man who followed such practices. A Christian is saved to sin no more, and it would be difficult to find one who would not own at once that these things were sins, and must be wholly refused and shunned.

Second, the worldly world. By this term we would present the world of fashion and vanity, folly and pride, etc. Alas! how many true children of God, as well as carnal professors, are more or less ensnared by the world in this aspect. There are numbers of believers, who are sheltered from judgment under Christ's precious blood, who seem to have no idea that His death has not only saved them from the consequence of their sin, but also laid them under obligation to refuse the world. It is only too often the case that there is no real deliverance in the soul; they have never learned that they have died with Christ (Rom. 6), and are now before God in Him, privileged and responsible to live Christ henceforth. And did that blessed, perfect One follow the fashion, vanity, folly, and pride of this world? Far be the thought. All these things are of the flesh, and the flesh was judicially dealt with at the cross, and set aside by God once and forever as utterly incorrigible and worthless. We are saved to give no place to the flesh, and to refuse all worldliness as part of that system that Satan and men have built up here without God.

Third, the social world. All our readers doubtless know the meaning of the word "social." Now this is one of the most specious forms in which Satan presents the world to our hearts, in order to allure us from Christ and the things unseen and eternal. Thousands who refuse the wickedness of the flesh, and the gross worldliness of Vanity Fair, readily excuse themselves and others for a little social worldliness. We might give details of what we mean, but it would carry us beyond our limits in this paper. But think for a moment of the thousand and one things that Christians go on with every day in the home circle, and the social intercourse of life, which are merely for selfish pleasure, or to please others, regardless of whether they are pleasing to God. How often the exercised Christian hears the words, "I don't think there is any harm in this or that"; or "So-and-so does it, and therefore there cannot be any harm in it" (very low ground, to say the least) - and no thought whatever as to whether it is according to the Word, and for the glory of God. Is the practical Christianity of the Bible to go world-bordering, as nearly as possible, without openly going into it? or is it a positive thing? "To me to live is Christ," said Paul. This is a sure test. Not, "Is there any harm?" but, "Is it Christ?" "Is it Christ like?" "Is it suited to Him?" "Is it according to the Word of God?" "Will He be glorified by it?" He who loves us as He loves His own Son, withholds no joy or

pleasure from His people that is good for us, and expressly forbids all that is bad. He has connected His glory with us, and it is only the study of His Word, under the teaching of the Spirit, that will enable us to know what is suited to Him, and what will glorify Him.

Fourth, the political world. The meaning of this familiar expression is well known. The question is, What is the relation of the Christian to it? God has His ways in government in the world, as well as His ways in grace; and we read that there is no power but of God, and the powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1). If our readers will weigh the opening verses of this chapter, they will see that the whole teaching is that the Christian should be subject to such, rendering tribute, custom, fear, honor, etc., to those to whom they are due. But there is not one word about our taking part in the rule. And why? Because Christians are a heavenly people, and their citizenship is heavenly (1 Cor. 15:48; Phil. 3:20). What has a foreigner to do with the government? Nothing whatever. All he has to do, if he lives in a country, is to be subject to the rulers and the laws. So also the Christian is a stranger and a pilgrim here (1 Pet. 2:11). He belongs to another country and therefore, as long as he dwells upon earth, he has but to be subject to the laws of those ruling. This simplifies matters immensely for us, if we will only be simple about it all. If we begin to reason about it we shall form mere human conclusions which are contrary to the Word of God. Faith acts in simple, whole-hearted obedience to what God says. Minding earthly things is one of the characteristics of the enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18, 19).

When Christians get linked with the world, whether in government or anything else, they are sure to become losers in their own souls. It is impossible to get the political world to act on Christian principles according to the Word of God (although it may be more or less influenced by Christianity), and therefore, sooner or later, as has often been practically proved, the Christian necessarily succumbs in some measure to worldly principles, unless he breaks away to go on with God. What part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? (2 Cor. 6:14-18.) The Christian's ruling time is future. When the Lord judges and reigns, we shall judge and reign with Him (1 Cor. 4:8; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:12).

Fifth, the religious world. This is the worst form of evil before God, because it is the corruption of that which is most immediately connected with Himself in His relations with men. Nowhere, and in no way, have men more grievously sinned against God than in connection with holy things. All around us at the present moment, more or less throughout Christendom, we see the results of Satan's power and man's self-will. Vast religious systems, formed of mixed principles of Christianity, Judaism, and heathenism, are maintained and carried on to a very great extent by unconverted men, or by converted and unconverted together - worldly elements of all kinds abound to suit the eye and heart of man, though ostensibly for the glory of God. All sorts of worldly practices (in some instances even unrighteous) are resorted to, to support them. "My people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. 5:31. Oh, what indeed?

What is the Christian's path? Separation. Separation from all evil, doctrinal or practical, as proved by the sure Word of God, and a path in fellowship with all who do the same (2 Tim. 2: 19-22). Thousands are misled by the subtleties of Satan, who clothes worldliness with religious titles, or introduces a little religion to make worldliness less objectionable, so that those who otherwise would have a bad conscience become his dupes. Nothing but cleaving to God's Word and making a clean sweep of all religious worldliness, is worthy of Him whose holy name we bear, and "who

gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world," in its religious as well as in any other form.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16), saith the Lord. This is unmistakably plain. We are responsible then to refuse the world, and the things in it, in whatever form Satan may present them to our hearts, whether wicked, worldly, social, political, or religious: "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.

May the Lord graciously exercise the heart of every Christian who reads these lines, that we may be occupied with Him and heavenly things, in simple faith rising superior to all in the world, so leaving it practically behind us, and pressing on to the glory until we behold Him face to face, for His own precious name's sake.

The Year of Jubilee: the Time of Godly Order Upon the Earth

Lev. 25:8-16

Someone has truly remarked that the institution of the jubilee had a double testimony. It testified of man's confusion and it testified of God's order. During forty-nine years, many things were suffered to get into disorder under the hand of man. One man got into poverty, another into debt, another into bondage, another into exile. Again, one man through extravagance had let his inheritance slip through his hands; another, by his shrewdness or penuriousness, had added to his.

Thus it happened during man's day. But the trumpet of jubilee changed, in a moment, the entire condition of things. No sooner had that hallowed sound fallen on the ear than the debtor was released, the slave emancipated, and the exile brought back. The jubilee was God's year, and He would have no debtors, no slaves, no exiles. All should be free and happy, and all abundantly supplied throughout Jehovah's year. When the Lord alone is exalted, all must be right.

Now it is interesting and very practical to note the various ways in which men would be affected by the approach of the year of jubilee. The man who had lost his property would be glad because he would get it back. The man who had gained property would be sorry because he would lose it. But the man who had done neither, who had neither lost nor gained, the right-minded Israelite who had retained his patrimony, and was satisfied therewith, this man would regard the jubilee, not with reference to his gains or his losses, but simply as a noble testimony to God's order, and as securing the blessing of the entire nation.

Thus it was with the Jew in reference to the jubilee; and thus it should be with the Christian in reference to the glorious appearing of the Son of God from heaven. We should simply look forward to that blessed event as the moment of Christ's exaltation, the moment of His full investiture with the kingdoms of this world, the moment in which an end shall be put to all man's misrule and confusion, and the order of God be established for evermore. Blessed, longed-for moment!

And be it noted here that the cross of Christ is at once the remedy for all man's confusion, and the basis of God's order. This is strikingly brought out in the ordinance of the jubilee. "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land" (see Lev. 16). The trumpet of jubilee and the day of atonement were inseparably linked together. The blood of the cross is the foundation of everything. In the times of the restitution of all things the river of life will proceed out of the throne of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 22:1).

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