

## MY LOAD—HIS GIFT.\*

"Cast what He hath given thee upon Jehovah, and He will sustain thee."—  
(Psalm 55: 22.)

By Ernest Bourner Allen.

My load—His gift! How strange I did  
not see it so!

If I had known His hand had placed the  
burden there,

Then it had been to me no anxious cross  
and care,

But just another way for me His grace to  
show.

My load—His gift! How glad I am He  
knows my frame!

What I can do and bear He weighs and  
watches well;

Some thorn in flesh, some brunt of fight,  
some danger felt,

These be the way designed through me to  
praise His Name!

My load—His gift! I thank my God it  
diff'rent seems

Than when—a yesterday—I faltered on  
the way,

And cried full oft for swifter closing of  
the day,

While now night comes too soon, when  
deeds give way to dreams.

My load—His gift! If heavier then each  
day it grows,

'Tis discipline I need to test and spur  
my strength,

And travel all the road He trod, until,  
at length,

My Father's house I reach, the way to  
which He shows.

## "IN THIS WILL I BE CONFIDENT."

(Psalm 27, 3.)

The Psalm opens with three great reasons why the Psalmist was confident in time of war, and all three are

I. What the Lord is to him:

1. "My light."

2. "My salvation."

3. "The strength of my life."

It is not the joy of a man who does not know, nor the still more hopeless man who does not care, but the confidence of a man who both knows and cares, but also knows that the object of his trust is greater than that of all his fears.

II. What God has been to him in the past.

Foes were always coming, but never came, not because he conquered them, but God always intervened. A climax of confidence is reached in this third verse:

III. His purpose to abide in communion with God.

Friendships and experiences must be kept in repair. He guards his communications. Our strength and hope in time of war is in the temple of God. "One thing have I desired of the Lord." Human life is very complex, but there is always one central thing in every life. One thing had kept him strong. Our real characters are determined by our desires. The real man is the man you want to be. Every man is estimated by God in the light of his inward desires. So the Sermon on the Mount shows hate to be murder in God's sight. The Psalmist's desire was to be engaged in worship and service to God all the days of his life.

1. sprang from one desire—"desired."

2. based upon one plan—"seek."

3. had one object—"to behold."

To have a desire is not enough; we must have a plan—"seek after it."

1. To put spiritual things in the first place.

2. To submit all to the approval of God.

3. To apply all energies to realize it.

What right have we to pray for things that we never seek? There must be harmony in our ways. What do we live for? Here is a twofold object:

1. To behold the beauty of the Lord—contemplation of faith.

2. To enquire in His temple—continue in prayer.

F. C. W.

## OUR LORD'S MISSION AND OURS.

Many and varied and beautiful and edifying to consider are the objects of our Lord's mission here below, as given in the Holy Scriptures, either by Himself or those who "wrote of Him." A few of these we may profitably consider, and at the same time connect them with our own mission as the faint reflections of His own.

The first, and, as it were, all-embracing object, stated on the threshold of His earthly sojourn here, is spoken of by Himself and to His Father, as we read: "When He cometh into the world, He saith: Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." (Ps. 40: 6-8, Heb. 10: 5-7). This we can put down as **the whole matter,**" given in one brief but comprehensive view of it.

### I. TO DO HIS FATHER'S WILL.

Parallel with this, however, we read as to His people: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service, that we may prove what is that

**GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT WILL OF GOD."** (Rom. 12: 1, 2.)

The Father's will, then, was the supreme motive of His Son's mission here. For this He came, became incarnate, lived, worked, suffered, died, and returned to glory, to do His Father's will. How fully He did it, His own lips have told us, in speaking to His Father, as He leaves: "I have glorified Thee . . . finished the work, which Thou gavest Me to do." (Jno. 17: 4.) May we thus learn of Him!

But this holy subject is much too precious to dismiss, as it were, with a passing word, and so we learn further as to our Lord's mission, that it was

### II. TO TRUST IN GOD FIRST, MIDST, AND LAST.

Of this the prophetic language of Scripture as to our Lord Jesus was:

(1) "Preserve Me, O God, for in Thee do I put My trust." (Ps. 16: 1, 22; 10, 11.)

(2) "I was cast upon Thee from the womb, Thou didst make Me hope when I was upon My Mother's breasts."

Children clinging in the simple confidence of faith to those who love and care for them is a beautiful sight in the eyes of many a one who utterly scouts such a

principle of action for himself, when he becomes a man, in his relations to his God. But with our adorable Lord, it was the never-varying principle that governed His spotless life, first, midst, and last, "He lived by the Father," or, in other words, put His undivided trust in Him.

Of His people, feeble and faltering, as may be their measure of attainment, it is written: "They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them." "They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed." (Ps. 22: 4, 34: 5.)

### III. TO PLEASE GOD IN ALL THINGS.

As to this phase of it, He said: "I do always those things that please My Father." (Jno. 8: 29.) How perfectly was this true! At the age of but twelve, when chided by His mother, who found Him in the temple, hearing and asking questions as to the Scriptures, He said: "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business." (Luke 2: 49.)

As to ourselves, too, we read: "Ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." (I. Thess. 4: 1.) May this be our great ambition!

### IV. TO SUFFER BY THE WILL OF GOD.

After all His gracious words and mighty works, in coming to His own He suffered only rejection at their hands, and yet at that time He answered and said: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matt. 11: 26.) "He spent His strength in vain and labored for naught," as far as Israel was concerned, but, bowing to His Father's will, He could say: "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." (Isaiah 49: 4, 5.)

Of His people, too, it is written: "Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him as unto a Faithful Creator." (I. Pet. 4: 19.) They said: "The will of the Lord be done." (Acts 21: 14.) May our souls find its rich blessing!

### V. TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH.

Our Lord Jesus alone could be entitled in any absolute way: "The Faithful and true Witness," and we see it in every

avenue of His fruitful life. He bare witness to men "that their deeds were evil." He also "bare witness unto the truth," (Jno. 3: 19; 18: 37.) But best of all, He declared the Father, and the Father's name, (Jno. 1: 18; 17: 26.)

Such, in our poor measure, is our high and holy calling, too, as we read: Ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with Me from the beginning, (Jno. 15:27). The apostles thus openly declared this to be their mission upon earth, saying to those who would forbid them: "We are His witnesses of these things and so is also the Holy Ghost." (Acts 5: 32).

#### VI. TO GIVE US GOD'S REVELATION.

Among the varied things of which our Lord Jesus spake to His Father as part of His completed mission here, this was an important one, as He speaks more than once, viz., "I have given them Thy word; I have given them the words which hast given Me." (Jno. 17:14, 8). Much more He would fain have told them, but they could not hear it then, but He promised He would "send the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth." This He has fulfilled, and the Book of God is now completed by the Holy Spirit of Truth. Hence it is given to us, neither to add to nor diminish from His holy records, but we are exhorted: "As every man hath received the gift even so let him minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God," (I Pet. 4: 10). May we thus follow in His steps.

#### VII. TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE.

Of this supreme act of devotedness and obedience to His Father, He has told us: "I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father," (Jno. 10: 18).

Inasmuch as life belongs to God, who is both its source and object, none have power over their own or others' lives, hence our adorable Example both lived His holy life and suffered His sacrificial death at the command of His Father. But neither is this also confined to Himself in every phase of it, for we read: "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it," (Mark 9: 35). Hence the apostle marks the extent of our

responsibility to be: "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren," (1 Jno. 3: 16.) This limit we have not yet reached.

B. C. G.

### CHRIST THE HEART OF THE SACRED VOLUME.\*

Christ is the heart of the Sacred Volume. His Person in Divine and human natures: His glories—personal and official; His ministry and sacrifice are dimly foreshadowed in the Old Testament. The revelation of Christ in the New Testament is the substance in minute detail of the three hundred descriptive texts scattered as gold dust in the pages of the earlier oracles of God. Both Testaments have one special end in view, and that is the Revelation of God's Beloved Son.

The stars twinkle in the Old Testament. The sun shines brilliantly in the New Testament. What a simple yet withal weighty and convincing proof of the divine integrity of the sixty-six books of the Bible, in the interesting fact that a period of four hundred years lie between the Testaments—between the shadow and the substance. Who but God could have brought forward after the lapse of four hundred years One who in all respects fulfilled to the very letter these Old Testament predictions? The Bible is Divine, and is the Word of God, and a multitude of overwhelming facts prove it to be so.

Christ is the Head and Centre of Creation, Col. i.

Christ is the Centre of the universe of bliss, Eph. i.

Christ is the Centre of Divine affection, John i., 18.

Christ is the Centre of the saved human heart, Eph. iii., 17.

Christ is the Centre of the Scriptures, Luke xxiv., 44.

Christ is the Life (Phil. i.), the Example (ii.), the Object (iii.), and the Strength of Believers (iv.).

#### Christ.

Foreshadows and Predictions, head (seat of power) of Satan crushed, Gen. iii. 15; fulfilment, Luke x. 18, Rev. xx. 10.

Heel of Christ Bruised, Gen. iii. 15; fulfilment, Luke xxii. 53.

Christ as Jehovah's Servant, Isa. xlii. 1-4; fulfilment, Matt. xii. 17-21.

Christ as Jehovah's King, Ps. ii.; fulfilment, John i. 49.

Christ as Prophet, Deut. xviii., 18; fulfilment, Acts iii. 22.

Christ as Priest, Aaronic, Lev. xvi.; fulfilment, Heb. ix., x.

Christ as Priest, Melchizedek, Gen. xiv.; fulfilment, Heb. vii.

Christ as Son of Man, Ps. viii.; fulfilment, Heb. ii. 6-9.

Christ as Jehovah, Ps. cii. 25-27; fulfilment, Heb. i. 10-12.

Christ as God, Ps. xlv. 6, 7; fulfilment, Heb. i. 8, 9.

Christ the One Seed of Universal Blessing, Gen. xxii. 18; fulfilment, Gal. iii. 16.

His Virgin Birth, Isa. vii. 14; fulfilment, Matt. i. 23.

His Place of Birth, Bethlehem, Micah v. 2; fulfilment, Matt. ii. 6.

His Name, "Immanuel," Isa. vii. 14; fulfilment, Matt. i. 23.

His Call out of Egypt, Hosea xi. 1; fulfilment, Matt. ii. 15.

His Life Mission, Isa. lxi. 1-3; fulfilment, Luke iv. 16-19.

His Galilean Work, Isa. ix. 1, 2; fulfilment, Matt. iv. 14-16.

His Glory, Isa. vi.; fulfilment, John xii. 41.

His Throne, Davidic, Isa. ix. 6, 7; fulfilment, Luke i. 32.

His Zeal, Ps. lxxix. 9; fulfilment, John ii. 17.

His Triumphant Journey into Jerusalem, Zech. ix. 9; fulfilment, Matt. xxi. 4-11.

He Bore our Infirmities and Sicknesses in Life, Isa. liii. 4; fulfilment, Matt. viii. 17.

He Bore our Sins and Transgressions on the Cross, Isa. liii. 5, 6; fulfilment, I. Peter ii. 24.

He was the Appointed Sacrifice, Ps. xl. 6-8; fulfilment, Heb. x. 5-10.

He was the Lamb of Divine Appointment, Gen. xxii. 8; fulfilment, John i. 29.

He was Led to Slaughter, Isa. liii. 7; fulfilment, Acts viii. 32.

He was Numbered with Transgressors, Isa. liii. 12; fulfilment, Mark xv. 27, 28.

He was Causelessly Hated, Ps. xxxv. 19; fulfilment, John xv. 25.

He was Betrayed, Ps. xli. 9; fulfilment, Matt. xxvi. 48.

He was Sold for the price of a Slave, Zech. xi. 12, 13; fulfilment, Matt. xxvi. 14, 15.

He was Forsaken of God, Ps. xxii. 1; fulfilment, Matt. xxvii. 46.

He was Lifted up on the Cross, Num. xxi. 8, 9; fulfilment, John iii. 14.

He was Smitten, Isa. i. 6; fulfilment, Matt. xxvi. 68.

He was Spat upon the Face, Isa. i. 6; fulfilment, Matt. xxvi. 67.

His Dignified Silence, Isa. liii. 7; fulfilment, Matt. xxvii. 12-14.

His Thirst, Ps. lxxix. 21; fulfilment, Matt. xix. 28.

Insults and Tauntings, Ps. xxii. 8; fulfilment, Matt. xxvii. 39.

Not a Bone Broken, Exod. xii. 46; fulfilment, John xix. 36.

Looked upon the Pierced One, Zech. xii. 10; fulfilment, John xix. 37.

Garments Gambled for, Ps. xxii. 18; fulfilment, John xix. 23, 24.

His Burial, Isa. liii. 9; fulfilment, John xix. 38-42.

His Resurrection, Ps. xvi. 9-11; fulfilment, Acts, ii. 24-32.

His Ascension, Ps. lxxviii. 18; fulfilment, Eph. iv. 8-10.

His Heavenly Session, Ps. cx. 1; fulfilment, Matt. xxii. 44.

His Coming in Power and Glory, the Psalms and Prophets; fulfilment, Rev. i. 7, Jude 14, 15.

His Coming to Judge, the Psalms and Prophets, Acts xvii. 31, Rev. xix. 11.

#### A WISH.

When life is bright—

And days fly by on swift and joyful wing,  
Bringing to thee thy very heart's desire—

May thy deep love go out to Him who sends  
The sunshine and the happiness, and say:—  
"Surely it is the shining of His face."

When life is dark—

And trouble gathers like a thunder cloud  
Above thy head, shadowing thy sunny way—

Then may'st thou have given to thee strength to  
raise  
Thy heart above, and say in trustful faith:—  
"My Father sends it, and His will is best."

R. E. S. T.

## THE TEMPEST'S LORD\*

By L. W. G. Alexander

"Jesus spake, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I;  
be not afraid" (Matt. 14:27).

The day is done, adown the watery west  
The setting sun sinks swiftly to its rest;  
The flying clouds like flying phantoms go,  
And gleam fantastic in the afterglow.

Such sunsets sure presage a coming storm,  
And tell of toil to mariners forlorn.  
Who to the deep in shade and shine must  
go,  
And the fell force of tide and tempest  
know.

Such had befell the toiling, trembling few,  
Who, at the bidding of the Lord, with-  
drew

From scenes so great to greater wonders  
see,  
And learn of God on rolling Galilee.

Fierce bursts the storm, whose shrieking  
voices wake

A deafening answer o'er the roaring lake,  
And fills their hearts with fear; what hu-  
man hand  
Can guide their labouring barque to yon-  
der strand?

In vain! they toil in vain through that  
dread night  
Till morning dawns, then breaks upon  
their sight  
The tempest's Lord in triumph treading  
free

His unmarked path o'er raging Galilee.

"'Tis I, be not afraid!" His presence  
stilled

The terrors great their trembling hearts  
that filled;

Their voyage is o'er, their battered barque  
they beach

In harbour calm where storms no more  
can reach.

The lesson learn, ye toiling saints that  
cross

The surging sea of life mid gain and loss;  
The morning breaks, behold the Lord at  
hand!

The surges cease, thy barque is nearing  
land!

## THE HOMELESS STRANGER\*

By Frances Bevan.

Based on Ruth 1: 14-17.

A homeless Stranger amongst us came  
To this land of death and mourning;  
He walked in a pathway of sorrow and  
shame,

Through insult, and hate, and scorning.

A Man of sorrow, and toil, and tears,  
An outcast Man and a lonely;  
And He look'd on me, and thro' endless  
years

Him must I love, Him only.

And I clave to Him as He turn'd His face  
From the land that was mine no  
longer—

The land I had lov'd in the ancient days,  
Ere I knew the love that was stronger.

And I would abide where He abode,  
And follow His steps for ever,  
His people my people, His God my God,  
To the land beyond the river.

## LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM'S HISTORY IN EGYPT

Gen. 12:9-20

It is a lesson of departure and conse-  
quent failure which occupies us in this  
section of Abram's history. It will be well  
for us if we learn for ourselves from this  
inspired record where the man of faith  
should not journey, rather than learn the  
lesson through actual experience.

It would seem evident that Abram's  
first mistake was in leaving the place of  
the altar and tent, both of which stood in  
blessed relation to Bethel "the house of  
God," on one hand and Hai, "heap of  
ruins," the truth of the Cross and its  
judgment, on the other. He goes beyond

the place where the Lord would have him abide, and it is then that the famine comes. How noticeable that in this extremity Abram does not turn to the Lord for direction and deliverance, but continues his southerly course going down to Egypt. Here we have a train of events too often repeated in the Christian's experience. Every step of our path we need to watch with jealous care for the glory of our blessed Lord. How often what seems a comparatively slight step may lead us beyond the place in which He would have us remain and find His blessing. Let us beware of anything that would lead us away from where the Lord has revealed Himself to us and we have been made worshippers in separation to Him. It must be His voice, and His alone, which says "go on," if we are to be blessed. Otherwise spiritual famine will arise, and unless this works deliverance for us from the path upon which we have started we will surely gravitate to Egypt—the world and its things. The moment we find leanness coming into our souls, let us turn at once to our ever-loving and gracious Lord and He will restore. If we do not, but instead reach Egypt, "to sojourn there," it will be only to find the famine is "grievous" in our spiritual land. The further we wander the worse we will find it becomes. This then is what the spirit of independence leads into, and its consequences are still further developed for us in this section.

With Egypt in view (verse 11), Abram now decides to refuse to own Sarai his wife. He falls into the sin of deception and false testimony. There is no thought of God or faith in him, his fleshly fear is master of him. It is remarkable, too, that this plan of action is a thing brought with him from the land of his nativity from which God had called him out into separation to Himself (Chap. 20:13). We know of what Sarai speaks as interpreted by the Apostle. It is that precious covenant of grace into the blessing of which the man of faith is brought, and the testimony of his relation to it is what he must maintain before all. The spiritual lesson here is not hard to read. With the world before our eyes and our path leading us into it, we become ashamed of our true

relationship to grace. We hide it, and fall into deception and false testimony. The fear of man and not of God occupies us, and the flesh acts in us, that hateful thing which comes from the land of our nativity, from which in grace God has called us to Himself. Thus it is confidence in the flesh which marks Abram's action here. It all results from that initial departure of which we have spoken.

But now a still more sorrowful result ensues. Abram loses Sarai. The king of Egypt takes possession of her for his own purposes. It is ever so. To enter the world and sojourn there, instead of abiding in the land of our spiritual blessings, means the loss on our part of the joy and blessing of all that grace brings to us. Moreover, there is not only our loss, serious as that is, but also the dishonor to God in that through our failure and false testimony grace itself is taken up by the unholy hands of the world to use for its own ends. And so it is because Christians to whom grace belongs have gone into the world, that men of the world have taken up the grace of God and turned it into lasciviousness (Jude 4). Solemn it is to think that their acquaintance with grace will result in judgment, even as the Lord plagued Pharaoh because of Sarai. It should have led to the knowledge of that blessed God to whom Sarai and Abram belonged, and then Pharaoh and Egypt would have been richly blessed. Did Abram's false position and testimony contribute to the opposite result? O may we, dear fellow Christian, be watchful that we do not fall into such a place where our unfaithfulness and departure from God results in leading men into what only brings judgment upon them instead of the blessing of God. To realize that this is a possible result of our waywardness should indeed impel us to commence to retrace our steps if we have wandered, and on the other hand should awaken a very watchful spirit as to all our manner of life.

With the manifestation of the true relationship between Abram and Sarai, Pharaoh sends Abram and all his away. This is the commencement of deliverance for him. It may well suggest to us that only when we acknowledge our true rela-

tionship, when the blessing of grace again is possessed in our souls, and what it is to us really comes out before all, that we find the world which treated us well while we sailed under false colors no longer wants us in its company and makes us to know it. This starts us on the path of recovery.

May our gracious God grant unto us the learning of these lessons for ourselves from His Word that we may thus be forewarned and forearmed.

John Bloore.

### ATONEMENT.

"Christianity differs from heathenism in its clear perception of the **antagonism which sin has introduced between God and man.**"—(Chambers' Encyclopedia.)

Yet the universal prevalence of Sacrifice in all heathen religions is a witness to the universality of belief in the necessity of Atonement in some form or other. Sacrifice may indeed be regarded independently of sin, as a tribute due to God's sovereignty and a love answering to His love.

A twofold idea of Sacrifice is embodied in the Mosaic system, namely, that Sacrifice is needed to expiate guilt, and to bring about the restoration of communion with God.

Thus Judaism comes in as a link or stepping stone between heathenism in its need and Christianity in its full answer to that end. It reveals a personal God, with whom the Jew stands in personal relationship within the terms of a Covenant, but whose written law exhibits requirements, which he is not able to fulfill, and which makes him conscious of an everwidening breach between himself and his Maker. Thus "by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin." (Rom. 3: 21), and a corresponding desire for Atonement: a desire which it can never satisfy. And yet the sacrificial system of the Jews, being of Divine appointment, pointed to the hope of its fulfillment. "Heathenism is the seeking religion, Judaism the hoping religion, and Christianity is the religion of fruition." (Luthardt).

Judaism exhibits a system of atonement by vicarious sacrifice. Christianity sets forth: "The Lamb of God Who taketh

away the sin of the world." (Jno. 1: 29). This is the **price** of our redemption (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19). The conditions of salvation on our part, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

We look in vain, however, for anything like a systematic treatment of the doctrine of atonement in the Holy Scriptures. And yet it is everywhere taken for granted in the New Testament. The nearest approach to such is found in the underlying argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

"God bless you." This brief prayer, if honestly, earnestly, devoutly uttered, will bring good results, both for its subjects and those who cultivate the state out of which it rightly comes. An old man recently died, who invoked this benediction fervently on many, and ere he died, many, in turn, did the same to him. Like the fruit trees of the Lord's garden, every "seed is after its own kind," also produces its own kind. As one phase of Christian character is that of being priests to God, let us "look with compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," and bear them on our hearts before God, then will we often pray "God bless you," even if our lips may not audibly utter the words. We are God's intercessors in the world, and a praying man counts more with Him than armed legions of warriors, and horses and chariots innumerable.

B. C. G.

### DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

If God be God, whatever He shall plan for us is **positively and surely the best**, and could our eyes at this moment see by the light of eternity, instead of time, we should always choose for ourselves what God has chosen for us. "Jesus said unto him, what I do thou knowest not how, but thou shalt know hereafter."—John xiii: 7.

The present circumstance, which presses so hard against you (if surrendered to Christ), is the best shaped tool in the Father's hand to prepare you for eternity. **Trust Him then.** Do not push away the instrument, lest you lose also its work.

### THE BROWN TOWEL\*

"One who has nothing can give nothing," said the sexton's wife, as the sewing ladies packed a large box for a Western missionary.

"A person who has nothing to give must be poor indeed," said Mrs. L., as she put a pair of blankets in the well-filled box.

Mrs. Sayer's glance seemed to say, "You, who have never known self-denial, cannot feel for me," and remarked, "You surely think one can be too poor to give?"

"I once thought so, but have learned from experience that no better investment can be made, even from the depths of poverty, than **lending to the Lord.**"

Seeing the rest listening Mrs. L. continued: "Perhaps as our work is finished, I can do no better than to give you my experience on the subject. It may be the means of showing you that God will reward the cheerful giver.

"During the first twenty-eight years of my life I was surrounded with wealth; and not until I had been married nine years did I know a want which money could satisfy. Reverses came with fearful suddenness, and I found myself the wife of a poor man, with five little children dependent upon our exertions.

"I lost all thought of anything but the care of my family. Late hours and hard work were my portion, and it seemed at first a bitter lot. My husband strove anxiously to gain a subsistence, and barely succeeded. We moved several times, hoping to do better, but without improvement.

"Everything seemed against us. Our well-stocked wardrobe became so exhausted that I absented myself from meetings for want of suitable apparel. While in this low condition I went to a church one evening, where my poverty-stricken appearance would escape notice, and took my seat near the door.

"An agent from the West preached, and sought contributions to the Home Missionary cause. His appeal brought tears to my eyes, and painfully reminded me of my past days of prosperity, when I could give abundantly. It never entered my mind that the appeal concerned me, who could only venture out under the friendly protection of darkness. I left the church

more submissive to my lot, with a prayer that those whose consciences had been addressed might respond.

"I tried in vain to sleep that night. The text, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom,' continually sounded in my ears. The eloquent entreaty of the speaker to all, however poor, to give a mite to the Lord, and receive the promised blessing, seemed addressed to me. I arose early next morning and looked over all my worldly goods in search of something worth bestowing, but in vain. The promised blessing seemed beyond my reach.

"Hearing that the ladies of the church had filled a box for the missionary's family, I made one more effort to spare something. All was poor and threadbare. What should I do? At last I thought of my towels. I had six, of coarse brown linen, but little worn. They seemed a scanty supply for a family of seven; and yet I took one, hastened to the house where the box was kept and quietly slipped it in.

"I returned home with a light heart, feeling that my Saviour's eye had seen my sacrifice, and would bless my effort to do right.

"From that day success attended my husband's efforts in business. In a few months our means increased, so that we were able to attend church and send our children to Sunday-school, and before ten years had passed our former prosperity had returned fourfold. 'Good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, had been given us.

"It may seem superstitious to you, dear friends, but we date all our success in life to God's blessing, following that humble gift of deep poverty.

"Wonder not that from that day I deem few too poor to give, and that I am a firm believer in God's promise that He will repay with interest, even in this life, all we lend to Him."

"Well," exclaimed one, "if we all had such a self-denying spirit, we might fill another box at once. I'll never again think that I am too poor to give."



## THE SWEET OLD STORY.\*

Faint not, but tell it again and again,  
Keep on repeating the same sweet strain;  
Little one's hearts are so trustful, you know,  
Tho' often weary, yet cease not to sow.

I learned the story from my mother's lips,  
She told it me,  
From out the depths of her believing heart  
So reverently,

That, tho' a little child, I quickly caught  
The fervent spirit of her inmost thought,  
And Bethlehem's holy Babe was more to me  
Than any other babe could ever be.

I knew that He was like no other child,  
I wished so much

That I might just have held Him in my arms,  
And felt His touch.

'Twas more than just a passing childish thought,  
And yet I'm sure I knew not as I ought,  
The grace that brought my Saviour from the sky  
For love of me, to suffer, bleed and die.

And in my womanhood, the same sweet thought  
Still clung to me;

I envied her, the mother of that Babe,  
So dear to me.

How safely she could ever bow the knee  
To Him, nor ever fear idolatry;  
To love, to serve, to worship that Blest One,  
Her child, how strange, yet God's Eternal Son.

What rest, just simple trust in Jesus' Name  
Is sure to bring;

Such peace, that e'en in sorrow's keenest depths,  
The soul can sing.

I thank Thee, Lord, for her, who often told  
The story of Thy precious love of old,  
Which led my childish heart to trust in Thee,  
I'll give Thee all the praise eternally.

The years passed on, God called my mother home,  
'Twas hard to part,

But what she taught me never lost its hold  
It held my heart.

One thought was ever over all the rest,  
That I would strive to do my very best  
To follow her, whom God had called away,  
And thus I chose a toilsome, rugged way.

I tried for years, God knows I tried,  
The bitter cost

Was tears, discouragement and broken vows,  
And labor lost,

Until I learned my utter sinfulness,  
My deep, deep need, yea, worse than helplessness,  
Until I knew that Jesus Christ alone  
Could ever for my guilt and sin atone.

And now I know the way I tread is sure  
To bring me there,

And tho' it lead me by sad Calvary's hill,  
The end is fair;

And I, with undimmed eyes, may fearless gaze  
With faith into my loving Father's face.  
My hand in His, the while I freely talk,  
To Him of Jesus, on my homeward walk.

And, as a little child, still trust His love,  
Nor question why;

He leadeth me by this or that rough way,  
Nor fret nor cry.

I know that He can never lead astray,  
I know that Jesus is the only way  
From sin and death, from this poor world to  
heaven,

Through Jesus Christ alone I am forgiven.

—H. McD.

THE LORD OUR REFUGE AND  
STRENGTH.

Many parts of our Bible present God in this lovely character of a "Powerful Protector." As Moses closed his five books, he gave a song, which begins thus: "I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect," etc. (Deut. 32: 3,4). What a good thing that one person, who is Great is also "greatly to be praised," for He is Good as well as Great.

David, the Shepherd King, thus speaks of Him: "The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer. The God of my Rock, in Him will I trust. He is my Shield, and the Horn of my Salvation, my High Tower, and my Refuge, my Saviour. Thou savest me from violence" (2 Samuel 22: 2,3). The King, who had been so persecuted and chased about, pours out his heart in praise, and recounts God's glorious fame in nine beautiful characters, ending with that sweetest of all words, "My Saviour," and in proof of it he adds: "Thou savest me from violence."

Then, after describing God's triumphant march, he records: "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me, for they were too strong for me. The Lord was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place. He delivered me because He delighted in me." Seven things he says the Lord had done for him.

Next, he challenges all adversaries in saying: "As for God, His way is perfect, the word of the Lord is tried, He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him. For who is God save the Lord? And who is a Rock, save our God? God is my strength and tower, and He maketh my way perfect," etc. 31-33). How good to know God in such a fashion as this, so that we can sing: "In the Lord put I my trust, how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain" (Ps. 11: 1).

This warms the heart up to holy purposes and praises. "I will love Thee, O Lord, my Strength, the Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer, my God, my Strength, in whom I will trust, my Buckler, and the Horn of my Salvation and my High Tower" (Ps. 18: 1.2). Here God is described under nine characters, similar to 2 Sam. 22. This leads the soul to pray to Him thus: "Be Thou my strong Rock, for an House of Defence to save me," and the ground of his appeal is: "For Thou art my Rock, and my Fortress, therefore for Thy Name's sake lead me and guide me" (Ps. 31: 3). Then his assurance rises higher. "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man. Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord, for He hath showed me His marvellous kindness in a strong city," (Ps. 31:20.21). God's presence is the home of His people's hearts.

"Thou art my hiding place, Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah" (Ps. 32: 7). Blessed Refuge is this. So he further sings:

"God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed." The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our Refuge. Selah" (Ps. 46: 1, 2, 7, 11).

But He is more than a Refuge, as we read: "Behold God is mine Helper, the Lord is with them that uphold my soul" (Ps. 54: 4).

And in still other characters is He seen: "Hear my cry, O God, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I. For Thou

hast been a shelter for me, and a strong Tower from the enemy" (Ps. 61:1-3). Then in the "only Psalm," we read further:

"Truly my soul waiteth upon God, from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my Rock and my Salvation, He is my Defence; I shall not be greatly moved. My soul wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from Him. He only is my Rock and my Salvation. He is my Defence; I shall not be moved." In God is my salvation and my glory; the Rock of my strength and my refuge is in God. God is a Refuge for us" (Ps. 62:2-8).

How worthy He is to be trusted at all times we learn also: "By His strength He setteth fast the mountains, being girded with power, which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of the waves, and the tumult of the people."—Ps. 65:6-7.

And next we read: Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee. He ruleth By His power forever." (Ps. 66:3-7.)

And again we read: "He doth send out His voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God. His excellency is over Israel and His strength is in the clouds. He giveth strength and power unto His people." (Ps. 68:33-35).

"I am poor and needy: Make haste unto me, O God; Thou art my Help and my Deliverer" (Ps. 70: 5).

"Be Thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. Thou hast given commandment to save me; for Thou art my Rock and my Fortress. Thou art my Hope, O Lord God; Thou are my Trust from my youth. Thou art my strong Refuge. O God, who is like unto Thee? (Ps. 71:3-19.)

Then a variety of characters He is presented in:

"My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Ps. 73: 26).

"God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. 74: 12).

"God is the Judge, He putteth down one and setteth up another" (Ps. 75: 7).

"None of the men of might have found

their hands. Thou, even Thou, art to be feared" (Ps. 76: 5,7).

"I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. Thou hast declared Thy strength among the people" (Ps. 77: 10,14).

"Showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and His strength" (Ps. 74:4). "They remembered that God was their Rock and the high God their Redeemer" (35 v.).

"Sing aloud unto God, our strength" (Ps. 81: 1).

With all this oft-repeated yet varied testimony as to what God is to sustain His people's hearts, how strangely foolish as well as wicked it is to cherish "the evil heart of unbelief "that departeth from the living God"! May we prove in our daily lives the worth of these blessed declarations of the inspired Word, and thus have made good to our souls the word: "The name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the righteous may run into it and be safe."

B. C. G.

### PREDICTED OFFICES OF THE MESSIAH.

1—A Prophet (Deut. 18: 18,19; Acts 3: 22, 7: 37).

2—A Teacher (Isa. 61 :1; Ps. 78 :2 Isa. 54: 13). Fulfilment (Mark 1: 14; Luke 8: 1; Mark 6: 6). Parables (Luke 6; Matt. 7; Luke 7, etc.).

3—A Priest (Ps. 110: 4; Zec. 6; Heb. 4; 3: 1; 2: 17).

4—An Offering (Is. 53; Dan. 9: 24).

5—A Saviour (Is. 69: 20).

6—A Mediator (Ps. 110: 1).

7—An Intercessor (Is. 53: 12; Heb. 7: 25).

8—A Shepherd (Is. 45: 11).

9—A King (Ps. 132: 11).

"An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man." This is illustrated in the history of Church, State and society. Jno. Wesley, Calvin, etc.

### WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN.\*

According to the Word of God, a Christian is one who, as a sinner in the presence of God, has bowed to the truth of his lost condition by nature and by practice (Eph. 2:3-12, Luke 5:8), and is saved by grace, in believing the Gospel.

1. His sins are forever blotted out through the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14; Rom. 3:24).
2. Never more to be remembered (Heb. 10:17, 18).
3. He is reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:19).
4. Justified from all things (Acts 13:39).
5. Cleared from every charge (Rom. 8:33, 34).
6. Is now made meet for glory (Col. 1:12).
7. Having met God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19).
8. He is at peace with God, and happy in His presence (Rom. 5:9,11).
9. No longer looked upon as in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 5:17).
10. He is sealed with the Holy Ghost (Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 5:5).
11. A member of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:13).
12. A child of God (Gal. 3:26; 1 John 3:1).
13. An heir of God and joint heir with Christ Gal. 4:7; Rom. 8:16-17).
14. Having died with Christ, he is also risen with Him (Eph. 2:6).
15. Is now in possession of eternal life (John 10:28, 29).
16. Beyond the reach of every hostile power (Col. 3:3).
17. Is a priest separated unto God to serve now as a worshipper in the heavenly sanctuary, which the Lord hath pitched and not man (Rev. 1:6; Heb. 10:19; 8:2).
18. Delivered from the world (Gal. 1:4).
19. To be separated practically from it (John 17:16, 17; Rom. 12:2).
20. Is a citizen of, and belonging to heaven (Phil. 3:20).
21. Has a bright future—eternal glory with God's Son (John 17:24).
22. The present object of his heart—Christ in glory (Phil. 3:14).
23. The purpose of his present life—Christ (Phil. 1:21).
24. His present hope—waiting for Him (1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Cor. 1:7).
25. Soon to see Him (1 John 3:2), and to be like Him (Phil. 3:21).

Is it not then a wonderful thing to be a Christian? And is it not a poor thing to be anything else, even in this world? But "What manner of person ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (1 John 2:6; 4:17). W.

## SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY.

(III. John, 2.)

It will be readily conceded, I am sure, that the desire for spiritual prosperity should take precedence with every believer. I would like to draw your attention to John's third epistle, believing as I do, that it is a needed word for these Laodicean days.

One thing, however, is certain, we are not free to think of **soul prosperity** unless we are settled as to **soul security**, so that perhaps a word on that all-important subject will not be superfluous. In his first epistle John unfolds to us Christianity in its essence, and the "beginning," in Chapter 1: 1, is undoubtedly the beginning of Christianity, in the Person of the Word. In this chapter, God is fully revealed, and the believers walk in the light of this revelation. Chapter II. gives us the family circle and the common knowledge of all in that circle is the forgiveness of sins (I John 2: 12). The word "know" occurs nearly 30 times in the Epistle, and it is conscious knowledge: something one knows in the secret of one's soul with God, and not objectively. In Chapter 4, the love of God is **known** and believed, and the knowledge of that love casts out fear (verse 18). In Chapter 5 we know that we are of God (19 verse). There are no uncertainties in Christianity, everything is sure, everything stable, and God would have His people in the enjoyment of all that is theirs in the Lord Jesus Christ, so that able as we are to take up these Scriptures as **true of us**, the question of security can scarcely be raised. It is evident that Gaius was enjoying spiritual prosperity, and we find plainly indicated to us in the Epistle what it was traceable to. His soul prosperity caused the beloved Apostle no anxiety; he prayed that in the same measure he might be prospered in a temporal way. How many of us would like to be prayed for after this fashion? Might it not be said that if we prospered in our souls, as we do in circumstances, our lives, as Christians, would be far brighter with His praise? **Gaius walked in the truth**, there was no

effeminacy about his Christianity, no pandering to popular fads, no compromise; if Jesus Christ come in flesh were not confessed, he gave no quarter. There was no neutral ground, it was truth or error, for or against. Gaius was no spiritual weakling, or backboneless, easy going, keep-in-with-everyone individual, for as in Nehemiah's day, he held the sword while using the trowel (Neh. 4: 17). When our souls are firmly gripped by the truth, and we walk in it, there can be no lowering of the standard. But "love" is the Divine regulator, and unless this is active, we are apt to become cold and critical, and instead of speaking the "truth in love," use the truth to repel. Not so with Gaius. Strangers and brethren bore witness of his love (verse 5), he was evidently a succorer of many, and to find one who had gone forth to preach the word, in dependence on the Lord alone, gave him special joy. To such his heart and home were open, for were they not servants of the Lord he loved? It seems to have been his custom to have seen such properly equipped for their journey, and doubtless by his exhortation and commendation to the Lord many a weary servant was refreshed and refitted for his path of service (verses 6, 7, 8).

No wonder his soul prospered! How could it be otherwise, for truth held in love was the atmosphere in which he lived, and unselfishly he evidently thought not of self but of others. What a contrast to cold, carping Diotrephes, who loved—himself! (verse 9), and in his hypocritical, overbearing, Pharisaical spirit refused even the ministry of the Apostle. No sign of soul prosperity was in evidence; such a spirit can only produce spiritual death! In this connection the writer sounds a note of warning: "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good." May God give us to take heed to the exhortation.

J. W. H. Nichols.

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Home Friend, 60c. year, in U. S. 70c., containing Our Homes for the Household, Friendly Words for the Young, Tidings of Mercy for the Unsaved, Tender Grass for the Lord's Flock, each separately, 15c. year, in U. S., 18c., Home Friend Office, 647 Yonge Street, Toronto, Can.

## A HYMN OF TRUST

O God, our home and dwelling place  
In every generation,  
Thy guiding hand each day we trace,  
With grateful adoration.  
Through shade and sun, through calm and strife,  
Thou still hast been our strength of life,  
Our light, and our salvation.

Our days are but an hand-breadth, Lord,  
A space of toil and fasting;  
Thou livest alway, by Thy word  
Eternity forecasting.  
The progress of a thousand years  
To thee but yesterday appears;  
Thy ways are everlasting.

Like the frail petals of a flower  
That storms ere long must sever;  
Like shadows waning hour by hour,  
To earth returning never;  
Like dreams remembered not by day,  
So, Lord, we change and pass away.  
Thou art the same forever.

And in Thy Son, once given for all,  
We have life's seal and token;  
The heavens shall pass, and stars shall fall,  
Thy covenant unbroken  
Shall link us with its changeless bond,  
To the immortal years beyond;  
For so Thy word hath spoken.

Help us to walk with Thee, O God,  
Through all this brief probation;  
In ways of trial yet untrod  
Grant, Lord, Thy consolation;  
And when we reach the final strife,  
Oh, then be Thou our strength of life,  
Our light, and our salvation!

## SEVEN POINTS IN DISCIPLINE.

(1.) "Necessity." Professors, etc. Matt. 13:25; 2 Peter 2; Jude, etc.

(2.) "Object." The glory of God and the honor of His name. 1 Cor. 5:6-7. "Recovery" too is an object. Unjudged sin leads to death. God must interfere if we do not. 1 Cor. 11:30.

(3.) The occasion, 1 Cor. 5, walk; 2 Jno. 10-11, doctrine. Achan fell; but Israel was responsible, Josh. 7:1-11; Sin of Gibeah, Judges 20 and 21, the tribe of Benjamin was held responsible because they refused to give up the offenders. The reverse is seen in the case of Bichri at Abel. 2 Sam. 20:14-22.

(4.) The character of discipline varies with the nature of the case. Discipline may be divided into three classes—preventive, corrective, preservative. "Preventive" begins with reception into fellowship. Rom. 15:7. "Corrective." 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1, John 13; 1 Cor. 5. "Preservative." Holiness.

(5.) "The spirit" in which it should be done; 1 Cor. 5:2; 2 Cor. 2:4; Gal. 6:1; Josh. 7; on face.

(6.) "Recovery." 2 Cor. 7:4; Ps. 51; Peter; Lev. 14; 2 Cor. 2:6-8.

(7.) "Authority." Matt. 18:18-20. This scripture was given to "all." Jno. 20:23 to the Apostles; Matt. 16:19 to Peter alone.

## DIVINE QUICKENING.\*

### I.

It is in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, as narrated in John iii., that the need of the new birth is so strongly insisted on. The Saviour's words on this momentous subject are exceeding plain, and leave no room for doubt or argument. The need, moreover, is universal. If any individual under the sun would see and enter into the kingdom of God, he must be born again. The "must" is most emphatic. The devout Pharisee, orthodox in what he holds, and the rigid Ritualist, scrupulous in what he observes, must alike be born again, or remain ever blind to the kingdom of God, and outside its hallowed pale. From the application of the Lord's words no child of Adam is exempt.

The doctrine of the new birth receives a very suited and significant introduction at the close of the preceding chapter, and to overlook this is to miss much. When Jesus was at Jerusalem many believed on Him, we are told, when they saw the miracles which He did; but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them. Why not? The answer is, that He knew what was in man. Their faith, if indeed it could be called by that name, rested on outward evidence. It influenced their judgment, but did not stir

their conscience. It was therefore worthless, in that it left them exactly where it found them. Conversion is not to be regarded as a mere intellectual change, even when it is a change in one's thoughts about Christ. An atheist might examine the historical evidence in favor of Christianity, and be convinced by it, and be but little the better. So the men of Jerusalem saw the miracles which Jesus did, and were persuaded that His mission was heavenly in its origin. But Jesus did not trust them. He knew, if others did not, what was in man. Every spring of his moral being was under the eye of Christ. He discerned what was there, and needed no one to tell Him that the very men who accredited Him to-day might crucify Him to-morrow. Man, unregenerate, was not to be trusted, and the Saviour knew it well.

The personal presence of the Son of God upon earth manifested what was in man. The Old Testament Scriptures told in many a sorrowful story, that the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint; but not until that blessed One was here had man fully displayed himself. Then he did. No heart, no room for Christ, had he. Nor was that all, as His crown of thorns and cross can witness. It is to the tragic scenes of Calvary we must turn, to the cruel wrongs connected with them, if we would learn what was in man. Who is there that can contemplate those scenes as the display of what man is, and wonder at the words, "Ye must be born again?"

It is by the power of the Spirit of God, in conjunction with the Word, that men are thus new-born. "Born of water and of the Spirit," are the Lord's own words. Some have sought to make out the water here to be actual water, in order to support the deadly theory of baptismal regeneration. But is not water spoken of symbolically all through the Gospel of John, save in such passages as admit of no dispute? It is impossible to deny that it is so in chapter iv. 14 and vii. 38. And in chapter xiii., where the Lord enjoins His disciples to wash one another's feet as He had washed theirs, no one can suppose that feet-washing with actual water is intended. Why then should it not be symbolic in chapter iii. 5? Moreover, the Word is elsewhere expressly mentioned in relation to the new birth. "Being born again, not

of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1: 23). "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (James 1: 18). These passages shed light on that with which we are now dealing, and show the sense in which the Lord speaks of water. It is the water of the Word (Ephesians 5: 26).

And if "the word of truth" is the instrument which the Holy Spirit employs, bringing that word home in quickening power to the individual, it is evident that this is not **apart from faith**; for how shall the Word profit if it be not thus received? If souls are born again without faith, then are they born again without the Word; for the Word is that which produces faith simultaneously with the communication of divine life. But the faith and the life are both of the Spirit of God.

If it is of importance to see, that what is begotten in the soul is of the nature of the One who begets. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, even as that which is born of the flesh is flesh. The life thus communicated is of the order of Him who communicates it. Its nature is holy, and in the things of the Spirit it delights. Hence in 1 John iii. 9, where the one born of God is looked at in relation to the new nature, it is said, "Whoever has been begotten of God does not practise sin, because His seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God." Between that which is born of the flesh and that which is born of the Spirit there is nothing common. The mind of the flesh is ever enmity against God. Between it and the new nature there is perpetual antagonism, even as Paul says in his allusion to Ishmael and Isaac, "But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." (Galatians iv. 29.)

## II.

The truth of the new birth did not necessarily assume men to be dead, though in point of fact they were so. The generations that lay in the loins of Adam fallen were all dead, in a moral sense, though the reality of their condition only came fully out when Christ was here on earth. New birth rather supposes men to be corrupt,

blind, their nature poisoned at its very source. But in John v. the Lord is presented as the quickening Son of God, and men are viewed as dead. To the Son, as man, the Father had given to have life in Himself (v. 26). In the power of this life the Son could and did quicken others in the exercise of His sovereign will (v. 21.) "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Thank God, that hour is not yet at an end. And if any hear His word, and believe on God who sent Him, then have they everlasting life; they shall not come into judgment, but have passed out of death into life.

### III.

In John iii. it is the power of the Holy Spirit that is seen in sovereign exercise in effecting the new birth. In John v. it is the Son who quickens, and in Ephesians ii., which I would now briefly consider, it is God the Father—speaking as we speak when distinguishing the Persons of the Godhead—who acts.

At the close of Ephesians 1. Christ is seen in death, and the mighty power of God is displayed in raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. That same power has been put forth in connection with the objects of divine mercy who were dead in trespasses and sins. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love where-with He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Such are the words chosen for the setting forth of the great truth of our not only being quickened, but quickened together with Christ. Now, it will be evident to every reader that here we are on a larger platform in relation to quickening than either in John iii. or John v. In the former the individual is simply born of the Spirit; in the latter he is quickened by the Son, and is passed out of death into life; but in Ephesians ii. it is life in association with Christ risen and glorified. Quickened, raised up, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Him. This sets the believer on heavenly ground and in heavenly asso-

ciations. "If anyone be in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." Neither new birth, nor the Son's quickening—if John v. be viewed alone, and apart from the scriptures in which the great doctrine of Christian life is further developed—places us there. Life, in present association with Christ in resurrection and ascension glory, could only be declared after Christ was glorified and the Holy Spirit given. Nor in the very nature of things could it be before.

### IV.

Connected with this subject, and essential to the understanding of the believer's present position in life before God, is the immense truth that we have died with Christ, though this is the teaching of Romans, not of Ephesians. Here faith must do its work, faith that receives without debate that which God has been pleased to say on such a subject. In the death of Christ our links with the first Adam have been dissolved. We have died with Christ. It is ourselves, not our sins, that we speak of now. And if we have sin still in us, as is assuredly the case, yet we are entitled to speak of it as "no more I." (Romans vii. 20.) The I to whom sin attached has died with Christ. "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Galatians ii. 20.)

### V.

But though we have sought to distinguish between new birth, quickening, and quickening together with Christ, yet we by no means wish to separate them, as if a man might be born again to-day, quickened to-morrow, and quickened together with Christ the day after. We speak subject to correction when we say that they are to be regarded rather as different sides of the same great truth, though the sides be not equal, and indeed are not, as we have endeavored to show.

When we speak, however, of the apprehension of these things, the soul's really

getting hold of them, as deep and precious realities, by the teaching and effectual working of the Holy Ghost through the Word, then we treat of quite another matter, and one that does mark undoubtedly distinct stages of spiritual growth. And the importance of this cannot be overstated, inasmuch as the Christian's character is formed, and his whole life moulded, by the objects before him, and by his present living associations. If we narrow down the doctrine of Christian life to life communicated to the soul, if we sever life from the knowledge of the heavenly position and relationships in which the believer is set, we do ourselves a grave wrong, and deprive life of much that makes it to be life indeed. Hold fast by all possible means to life on the side of possession, for that is fundamental truth, and anything that weakens it should be resolutely resisted; but the Saviour came not only that we might have life, but that we should have it more abundantly. (John x. 10.) Now, "life more abundantly" has reference, we believe, to the known blessings of redemption, and to the heavenly position and relationships into which Christianity introduces the believer, as marked off from all that was known in preceding ages. It is the knowledge and enjoyment of these things that constitutes Christian life in the sense in which we are now speaking of it, and that makes it easily distinguishable from anything that went before, either under law or in patriarchal days.

If what has been advanced is lacking in simplicity, an illustration at this juncture might serve to make our meaning plain. A child is born heir to vast estates and a ducal coronet. It happens that in his earliest years, and in an untimely hour, the child is stolen from his parents, and becomes the inmate of a gipsy's tent, and the sharer of the wandering life a gipsy leads. The child grows up in ignorance of his parentage, and never dreams that other surroundings than his present ones belong by right to him. By the hand of a gracious Providence the youth is eventually discovered by his sorrowing parents, and restored to the position suited to his rank. What a contrast between a gipsy's tent or caravan and a ducal mansion! between the selling of brushes, brooms and

baskets, and the higher occupations that engage him now! And yet when under the canvas of the gipsy's tent he was as truly a duke's son, and heir to a princely inheritance as when recalled to his rightful home and place. But surely anyone can see that the knowledge of his noble birth, and his restoration to his father's house, made life another thing to him. Life, as that which constituted him a living being upon earth, was truly his when as a gipsy boy he ran with bare feet across the village sward, or along the dusty road; but when seated as a son at his father's table, life on the side of knowledge and enjoyment was altogether another thing.

There is nothing on God's side that is true of the one who has been longest "in Christ," that is not true of the one whom God has but just set there. "All things are yours" can be said of all who are in Christ, quite irrespective of what they understand and enjoy. Yet the latter is of infinite moment; for, as we have already said, the Christian's character is formed and moulded by it, and by these things he lives.

In conclusion, we have only to add that the cross is the basis of all that into which we are brought through grace. Indeed, it cannot be too clearly seen, that every exercise of divine power in blessing to man, from the clothing of our first parents in "coats of skin," down to the ingathering of the last that shall be blessed, has its foundation in the cross of Christ. In whatever way it may please God to bless the objects of His grace according to varying ages or dispensations, it is all founded on the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The late W. Barker.

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Home Friend, 60c year, in U. S. 70c., containing Our Homes for the Household, Friendly Words for the Young, Tidings of Mercy for the Unsaved, Tender Grass for the Lord's Flock, each separately, 15c. year, in U. S., 18c., Home Friend Office, Church and Ann Sts., Toronto, Canada.

All articles in our papers reprinted as Seed for the Sower, are marked by a star.

Entered as second class matter, February 25, 1909, at the Post Office at Detroit, Michigan, under an Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.



"Speech is silver, but silence is golden."  
Phil. 4.

Paul had to choose between Christ and service here, and Christ and rest there. (J. N. D.)

"Rejoice in the Lord always." Certainly it could not be in circumstances, for he was a prisoner.

Christians are often a great deal happier in the trial than they are in thinking about it.

Paul could not so well have said: "Rejoice in the Lord always" if he had not known what it was to be a prisoner. (Ps. 34).

Grace is sufficient for the most favorable circumstances, but they are by far the most trying (spiritually) to the saint.

If circumstances come between our hearts and God we are powerless.

God is not troubled about circumstances. If the soul is occupied with evil there will be weakness.

When a person has left the path of spiritual power everything takes the form of duties.

Circumstances need never hinder the power of spiritual joy.

Paul had been in peril, want and in plenty (a far more dangerous thing) but he had found a present Christ sufficient for him.

## A BEACON LIGHT

### The Story of Amaziah, King of Judah.

It is all given in 18 verses in 2 Kings, 14th chapter, and 28 verses in 2 Chronicles, 25th chapter. Only 46 verses of God's word, and a man's whole history is given in it, and besides, that man was a king, and on the whole a rather good one. And yet, there is in his history one of those sad and significant "buts," which the Scripture often uses, when it has told the very best it could of one of its subjects.

#### I.—His Father

Amaziah's father, Joash, had been slain by his own servants in his bed, and so the young man came to the throne through a sad tragedy, which should have impressed

him much with the danger of turning aside from God.

#### II.—His Mother

His Mother's name, not character, is recorded for us—"Jehoaddan, of Jerusalem." It is said to mean "Jehovah, their adornment, or pleasure." If her character was at all like her name, it was certainly a good one, and should have had a helpful effect in forming the character of her son, which we trust was true. How much we owe, many of us, to a godly Christian mother's prayers, influence and example!

#### III.—His Name

Amaziah, which means "strength of the Lord," indicates that his parents recognized their true relation to the God of Israel, and so the young man had, in his youth, some privileges, which, no doubt, had their effect on his after life. But how many, alas, like Ishmael, abuse their privileges, until they lose them, and they learn, by bitter experience, that all God's good gifts bring their responsibilities also.

#### IV.—His Reign

It was "twenty-nine years in Jerusalem," and but for his untimely end, we know not how much longer "it might have been." He died, not from old age, but in a conspiracy, but back of this we read that "God had determined to destroy him," because he had not only turned to false gods, but also refused God's reproof through His prophet. He was thus "cut off, in the midst of his days," for his sin, when God would fain have spared him, so let none think or say: "Oh, people always die when their time comes."

#### V.—His Doings

"He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart." (2 Chron. 25:2). "Yet not like David his father, he did according to all things as Joash, his father did." (2 Kings 14:3.)

His head-line being so much less perfect than the one which God had set for him, he got used to doing things, perhaps as he thought "good enough" or "nearly right," and so his character went down.

### VI.—His Failure

"Howbeit the high places were not taken away; as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places." (2 Kings 14 : 5).

These high places were not, in themselves, evil places, nor were they devoted to evil things. In their first inception, they were simply a ready-to-hand way of worshipping God, but when God chose a place for His altar, a place to put His name in, He commanded His people to go there, and not to the high places. So in the long run these became a source of weakness to Israel, and fostered idolatry, as we read: "Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin." (Hosea 8 : 11.)

### VII.—His Regard for Scripture

"He slew his servants, who had slain the King, his father." So far, he carried out God's decree that "whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed." (Gen. 9 : 6). "But the children of the murderers he slew not," according unto that which is written . . . every man shall be put to death for his own sin. He slew of Edom in the valley of Salt ten thousand, took Selah or the Rock by war, and called its name Joktheel (subdued), unto this day." (2 Kings 14 : 6-7.) This last record seems to indicate that pride had got the better of him and so "went before destruction."

### VIII.—His Loss to Obey God

In view of the conquest of Edom he hired 100,000 men of Israel for 100 talents of silver. But on a prophet saying to him "the Lord is not with Israel" he sent them back, lost his 100 talents of silver, a number of cities and also much spoil.

This seemed, as men count it, "hard lines," for the King to so promptly obey the prophet, and yet be such a loser by it, but so God often tests us as to whether our obedience is genuine, and not biased by whether as men say, "it pays" or not.

### IX.—His Comfort From God

On his asking the man of God, "But what shall we do for the 100 talents which I have given to the army of Israel?" the man of God answered: "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this."

In what way this recompense was granted him, we are not told, but we know that "God is faithful," and His word is true, so it may have been in his complete victory over Edom without Israel's help just after.

### X.—His Threefold Folly

(1.) "He brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them and burned incense unto them."

This insane folly kindled the Lord's anger against him, and he sent a prophet to ask: "Why he sought after gods which could not deliver their own people?"

(2.) The king interrupted him by asking: "Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten?" The prophet then sadly forbore, but with the solemn warning: "I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel."

(3.) "Then Amaziah took advice, etc. (2 Chron. 25:17.)

We are not told of whom, but we are assured that he "asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord," and he had just refused to hear to the end the faithful message of his servant, and so his counsellors were not of the right sort, but of those who inflamed his heart with pride, so that he provoked a needless, and in the end, fatal war, and those who seek war will ever find what a bitter thing it is.

### XI.—His Foolish Challenge

"Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, saying 'Come, let us look one another in the face.'" (2 Kings 14 : 8.) In this, he was challenging him to battle. The king of Israel reminded him that they had no quarrel and warned him to desist from it. But "Amaziah would not hear," and the issue was: "Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and they fled," Amaziah was taken, 400 cubits of the wall of Jerusalem broken down, the temple spoiled and hostages taken.

How swift the retribution of God followed upon so foolish and headstrong a course is here seen, and is one of God's beacon lights on the pages of His word to warn us against like folly.

### XII.—His Second Chance

"He lived after the death of Jehoash, 15 years." (2 Kings 14:17, 2 Chron. 25:25.)

No more is told us, but that as Hezekiah he had 15 years added to his life, at least after the death of the king, whom he had proudly provoked a war with, and been humiliated by. The significant silence of God's book as to any repentance should impress us. Each historian tells us where the "rest of his acts" are to be found, but we look in vain among them for any trace of the repentance, which gives God glory, and restores the soul to Him.

### XIII.—The Conspiracy

"Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem." (2 Chron. 25:27.)

Evil as the conspiracy was in itself, and swift as the judgment which befell the conspirators, yet God ordained it in relation to the erring king, who gave up faith for folly and would not hear His gracious appeal to reason with Him as to his course, and thus come to a sound mind again.

### XIV.—The End

The terror-stricken king flies to Lachish, but there they slew him. His being "brought on horses," his royal burial (1) "at Jerusalem (2) with his fathers (3) and in the city of David" may indicate how "in wrath God remembers mercy," and that while He must recompense iniquity, He also is careful to remember good in any, and such there was in poor, foolish Amaziah, though found amidst a heap of folly. The phases of it are varied:

1. An imperfect or divided heart. (2 Kings 14:3.)
2. Tolerance of high places. (2 Kings 14:4.)
3. Love of money. (2 Chron. 25:8.)
4. Cruelty to captives. (2 Chron. 25:12.)
5. Whoring after false gods. (2 Chron. 25:14.)
6. Refusal of God's prophet (2 Chron. 25:16.)
7. Taking the advice of fools. (2 Chron. 25:17.)
8. Would not hear sound speech. (2 Chron. 25:20.)

God grant that neither writer nor reader may act like him, and thus have their sun set behind a cloud and come short of their reward.  
B. C. G.

### SEVEN CHARACTERS OF THE SPIRIT'S MINISTRY\*

(2 Cor. 3)

1. Christ — "Ministered with the Spirit. (v. 2.)
2. Life—"The Spirit giveth life." (v. 6.)
3. Righteousness — "Ministration of righteousness. (v. 9.)
4. Stability—"That which remaineth." (v. 11.)
5. Liberty—"There is liberty." (v. 17.)
6. Glory—"Glorious," "exceed in glory," "the glory of the Lord." (8, 9, 18.)
7. Transformation—"Changed into the same image." (v. 18.)

The Holy Spirit is here in the interests of Christ, here to make human hearts "the epistle of Christ." In doing this He occupies the soul with Him, takes of His things and shows them unto us.

### "READY"\*

- 1.—"Prepared unto every good work," by separation to God. (2 Tim. 2:21.)
- 2.—"Furnished unto all good works," by the Holy Scriptures. (2 Tim. 4:17.)
- 3.—"Ready unto every good work," by communion with God. (Titus 3:1.)

Such is the Scripture order of "readiness" in the Christian life and we all prove that it can be attained in no other way, while at times the counterfeit may pass for it. "Ready!" is from an old Saxon word signifying prompt, prepared, willing, but perhaps the best definition of it is "prepared," for often what is termed readiness is only rashness, if we go unsent or unfurnished.

"Move that chest of tea," said a grocer once to one of his men, able and accustomed to heavy weights. "I will," said a young apprentice, and he soon put it in its place, but it cost him a serious illness, for he took hold of it rashly, and had not been trained to lifting weights, so he harmed himself in the way he did it.

"My tongue is the pen of a ready writer" is not merely one fluent of speech, or still less one ready to talk for the love of it, but one who is "full of matter" and must find vent, as of a "bottle filled with new wine." (Job 33.)

It was when David's heart was "inditing a good matter," "things touching the King," that his tongue was "as the pen of a ready writer." When the heart overflows "the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly." To be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear," means a filled heart, and exercised conscience, and an obedient will. B. C. G.

### WALK OF THE GENTILES\*

(Eph. 4:17, 19)

**VANITY.** In the vanity of their mind.  
**DARKNESS.** Having the understanding darkened.

**ALIENATION.** Being alienated from the life of God.

**IGNORANCE.** Through the ignorance that is in them.

**BLINDNESS.** Because of the blindness of their heart.

**UNFEELING.** Who being past feeling.

**LASCIVIOUSNESS.** Have given themselves over unto lasciviousness.

**UNCLEANNESS.** To work all uncleanness with greediness.

### "ME AND THOU"

(Psalm 31)

There is a vivid contrast in this chapter between the words "Me and Thee." The first mention of them is "In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust" (v. 1.)

There we find both the object and the exercise of faith. God, the Mighty God, the Saviour God, the Redeemer, is the One who puts Himself before the human heart as the sole object for its faith. Here alone can it rest, for faith like the ivy that clasps the trunk of the mighty oak must cling to the Mighty One, for He is both our salvation and the strength of our life. (Ps. 27:1).

"Let me never be ashamed."

Every man who is at all right minded feels that he ought to be ashamed of himself at times. Yes, further, everyone that knows the true meaning of repentance is ashamed of himself. And yet the one of whom this is true can pray with a good conscience: "Let me never be ashamed."

The reason for this is given in the Lord's words: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and the Scripture saith: "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed." (Rom. 10:11.) Let but our judgment of sin be deep and thorough and we may meet Satan's accusations with the words, as to our sins:

I know them all and thousands more,  
Jehovah findeth none.

"Deliver me in Thy righteousness."

Here the faithfulness of God is appealed to, for He who has promised abideth faithful. He cannot deny Himself. "He is not a man that He should lie nor the Son of Man that He should repent." Hath He said and shall He not do it, and hath He spoken and shall not make it good? (Num. 23.)

### FRENCH PROVERBS

Virtue is the only true nobility.

Leisure hours are worth the treasures of the world.

Diffidence is the mother of safety.

Fortune sells many favors which she seems to bestow.

Young life is often spent to make old age miserable.

Let ignorance talk, learning has its value.

Love and smoke cannot be concealed.

Youth indulges in hope, old age in remembrance.

Money is a good servant, but a dangerous master.

Soft words hurt not the mouth.

Despair doubles our powers.

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## GOD'S REBELLIOUS CHILDREN

Is it always a sign of wrong in the parents if children are ungrateful, impudent, disobedient and rebellious? Some say it is. Jehovah's own complaint as to His favoured people, Israel, should settle that for us, while fully allowing that "bad children" may be allowed of God to scourge the parents for their wrongs, and the sorrowful fact of any being such, should ever be a loud appeal to the parents' hearts. But, on the other hand, for the comfort of any who are thus suffering, according to God's will, consider Isa. 1:2: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

Had these children, then, not been treated in a proper fashion; were they not tenderly cared for, their wants met, and their feelings fully considered? The Divine Complainant sets all this beyond question, by saying: "I have nourished and brought up children." What, then, was the result of so tender and gracious and loving Father's care? Did these children appreciate the toil and labor, the care and consideration spent upon them by this best of parents? The same Infallible Witness answers: "They have rebelled against me." This result, plainly, could not be the proper fruit of the nourishing and cherishing which these children had.

Let us, then, hear in what it consisted, this nourishing and bringing up. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by the arms. I drew them with the cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they take off the yoke on their jaws and I laid meat unto them." (Hosea 11:1-4).

Was not this fatherly care, then, tender enough? Note its pity, and gentleness! He says (and none can dispute the statement, as may alas, be so with us, poor and imperfect representatives of this Father): "I lov-

ed them." All the ways of that love occupy the sacred Volume, but one way He expresses here which is important to note: "I called my son out of Egypt." The first thing put in exercise, as the fruit of His love, is His voice, it is used to call His son "out of Egypt." He had borne witness of this: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." (Ex. 2:7-8). Such, then, was the heart which was behind this gracious voice that called! Who can doubt the love and tenderness that filled it? He had called them out of bondage, affliction and oppression, the iron furnace, but next, He records: "Ye have seen how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself." But were the words of this gracious Father all alike, gentle and soothing to the ear? Assuredly they were not. To Moses, of whom He, as it were, proudly says "my servant," His first words were: "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet." (Ex. 2:5). He taught him, thus, at the very start of those "ways," which He "made known unto Moses," that He was Father, and He asks later, "If, then, I be a father, where is mine honour?" (Mal. 1:6).

Thus at the threshold of his path Moses has to learn that the basis of all blessing for children is that they give the Father His proper place, and that they take their proper place before Him. When God said: "Draw not nigh hither," He was impressing also the earliest lessons of all other children, that the Father's place is not their place; that there is a proper reverence attached to it and a respect due from the children, because they are the less, and the "less is blessed of the better." It is no question, whatever, of mental, physical, or even moral attainments as to this. Filial reverence and respect God attaches to the position, and hence His command: "Honour thy father and thy mother that it may be well with thee." Regardless of the different characteristics of father and mother, one may be firm, the other weak, or either may be over-indulgent or unduly severe. There may be faults, great and many, attaching to either,

yet God says to all children of all parents: "Honour them," and He promises them blessing if they do so. Hence the son that laughs even at his father's shame, sad as its occasion may be, will inherit Ham's portion, "cursed," and have his portion in degradation, because he first degraded him whom God had set over him.

God's next word to Moses: "Loose thy shoes from off thy feet" meant that as he was an inferior in the presence of his superior, a child in the presence of his father, he must act fittingly as to it, and loose his shoes, the oriental mark of reverence or worship.

With the utmost stretch of charity, can it be said that children ordinarily take this place to-day? No impartial mind would venture to say so. The father who denies himself many comforts and often even the common necessities of life to give his family an easier lot, and greater advantages than he, himself, has had, alas, is often despised, and ill-treated and even made to feel that there is no room for him, from cellar to garret, in the home which, perhaps, his own toil provided, and this simply because the children whom he nourished and brought up have "rebelled against him."

But to continue, God, while He taught His servant, Moses, reverence, did not repulse nor drive him away, but drew him closer to Him, as we read: "Moreover, He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." The first effect of even this gracious announcement is that "Moses hid his face," which draws forth God's tender assurance: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people, and am come down to deliver them." Thus will any true earthly father who pities his children soothe their needless fears, and teach them that while respect and reverence are his due, that he would be even more troubled than they, if they were afraid of him, or did not know that he loved them.

Later on, in God's training of His servant, Moses, after assuring him of His interest in His people, He closes with a command, brief and decided, and allowed no refusal of it, while He patiently met all difficulties that this command raised in the heart. Moses objects: (1) Who am I,

that I should go unto Pharaoh, etc.? (Ex. 3:11), and God's gracious answer was: "Certainly I will be with thee, etc.," as good as to say, I know the task that I set you, and I will uphold you in carrying it out.

Moses second objection is: "What shall I say unto them?" and God answers by saying: "I am that I am," a message very simple and forcible, carrying its own conviction with it.

Moses' third objection is: "But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice, etc." (4:1). God had just assured him: "They shall hearken to thy voice," (3:18), and it was very close upon impudence on Moses' part to say that God's presence and name would be alike fruitless with His poor people. But God is patient with him, giving him the sign of the rod and the serpent, "that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers hath appeared unto thee." (4:5.)

To this God adds the sign of the leprous hand, and the water changed to blood, to still further convince them. But Moses is again perverse and pleads: "O Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." "And the Lord said unto him, who hath made man's mouth? Have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Thus patiently, but decidedly, does the Lord insist upon obedience from His child, and meet his foolish objections one by one, first by assuring him of His presence and help; second, telling him what to say, then giving signs of assurance, and finally asking him if He does not understand His own affairs, and holding him firmly to His first command: "Now, therefore, go."

This command, however, was not merely peremptory, but accompanied by the gracious assurance: "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." But Moses is foolishly weak, and as with many who think it is merely weakness that lies in the way, he is wilful and stubborn, as well. What more could a weak man need than the power of an Almighty God, and what excuse was there for ignorance, if God promised to teach him? And yet he pleads perversely: "O, my Lord, send, I

pray thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send." This was a strange enough request, for was not God sending by his hand, and he was begging off from obedience by silly and ungrounded excuses.

The crisis is reached, and "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well." He also tells him that Aaron was coming to meet him, and would be glad to see him. Further also that He would be with both of their mouths and teach them what they should do. First, God assures Moses that He would be with him, then reveals to him His name as I AM, gives him three confirming signs, and now, twice repeated, He promises to be with his mouth. But God will not let him off, nor should parents, who are set to represent this God, while ever seeking to carry it out in the same patient grace, for as here with Moses, excuses and objections are often the sign of an insubject will, rather than of weakness and timidity, which requires assurance and tender dealing.

At this point the Lord no longer parleys with His rebellious child, but assumes that Moses will, after all this consideration of his feelings, now behave himself, and do as God bade him do. Hence God says: "Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs." It would have served no good end to Moses, to have left him to his own choice, which would have been ruinous to him, as to us all. God was the Father. He had undertaken the business in hand, and He had the resources at His command to carry all through to completion, and it remained but for Moses, as all others, to drop into their appointed place, to take the divinely chosen path for them, and foot it bravely, or else in rebellion, to be set aside from the high and holy privilege of serving such a master, or be dealt with in righteous judgment, as was the haughty and rebellious Pharaoh. "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry," was God's faithful testimony to Saul, who refused Him obedience, and thus lost his kingdom.

At length we read: "And Moses went," but in asking his father-in-law's leave to

go, he urges it is to see his brethren "whether they be yet alive." Of this, God had already fully assured him, in His first commission, to go to Egypt to deliver them and also in the word "Aaron cometh forth to meet thee." Moses may have thought it politic to keep his own counsel, and say nothing to Jethro, as to his call from God, for fear of interference with his plans. But was it the wisest course to pursue, when the sequel shows that Jethro took the greatest interest in his affairs, and "rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel?" (Ex. 18:9).

The Lord's next word to Moses, after Jethro has dismissed him in peace, seems to refer to Moses' needless fears, for he says: "Go, return into Egypt, for all the men are dead which sought thy life." (Ex. 4:19). Dead men he need not fear, and to faith as to the Almighty God whom it trusts, all obstacles to obedience are but as "dead men."

"And Moses took his wife and two sons and took the rod of God in his hand." Thus he sets out with both his earthly all, and his heavenly heritage and power as well. Trudging beside the laden ass, a lone, defenceless man, an exile from his enslaved brethren, to whom he was now returning, how poor and forlorn was his seeming condition! But as a modern child of faith has said: "All was bright as the promises of God," and these, Scripture assures us, are exceedingly great and precious. Those he loved, the solace of his heart in his long exile from his own kin, are beside him, and better still even, "the rod of God is in his hand." Let all the hosts of the enemy come on, "Before, behind, around, and set their fierce array." "By this, he could break through them all, and gloriously win the day." But God does not let Moses go on his way with any illusive hopes, He nips all such in the bud, as by a biting frost, and poor Moses has enough to melt him down, if God was not his dwelling place, at the very outset. First, God claims from him unqualified obedience, "When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all these wonders, which I have put in thine hand." (4:21). The rod of God was there, and in it were all the wonders, which Moses later wrought in the field of Zoan. He has but to hold

it firmly, to value and use it faithfully, and victory was ensured unto him. "But," says God further, "I will harden Pharaoh's heart that he shall not let the people go." Moses must not count on a path of roses, or easy success, for another Pharaoh was on the throne, if Moses' Pharaoh was dead, and God both knew well, and foretold his character, as rebellious and obstinate, whom He also would harden to his own destruction. But this was neither to rule out obedience or testimony in the present, nor success in the end. "Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh: Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born." That is, he was to tell Pharaoh what was in question, and fairly state the case as to God's property now in his possession; then to add: "And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me," a reasonable and just demand, surely. Then Moses was to state further: "And if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy first-born." Thus Pharaoh was to learn, as indeed all men have, that God is entitled to His own, and all who refuse to yield it must smart for it. But with Divine intent surely it is that we next read of one of the strangest scenes which Scripture records, and which has often been the butt of the enemy's ridicule, that of the Lord's controversy with Moses at the inn, "And it came to pass, by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him." No explanation is given of this strange event, but the sorrowful sequel shows what was in question. When the Lord thus met him on the way to Egypt, in obedience to His command, how different is His bearing from the previous interview at the burning bush. There He says: "I am the God of thy father. . . . I have surely seen the affliction of my people, etc." Here, "He met them, and sought to kill him," then when Zipporah circumcises her son, we read: "So He let him go." The clue to the maze is plainly found herein, and it is "multum in parvo" (much in little) and full of the saddest interest to the reflective mind. The gross and blind critics of God's holy Book may ridicule the thought of an Almighty God seeking to kill a poor, defenceless exile, spending a night at an inn, as he returns to his kinsfolk, but only "the

wise shall understand" and it is "the knowledge of the holy that is understanding." But what, then, means it?

Looking back a little in the narrative we find in verse 20 that "Moses took his wife and his sons" and set out for Egypt, with "the rod of God in his hand." All looks fair enough on the surface, and as though Moses' will is at last subject to God, but is it indeed so? What had moved this holy man, "meek above all men," as Scripture later records (Num. 12:3), to put himself so stoutly against the God "whose were all his ways?" God's calling him to a halt, a dead stand, where a choice between obedience and death must be made by him has its meaning for us all. Moses' marriage relations to Zipporah seem not to be altogether happy. He has yielded to her in the matter of circumcision and only now, when God asserts His rights over His child, and shows He could not use one in a rebellious course, to bear His message to a greater rebel, Pharaoh, does she yield the point. God's order was to be maintained by Moses, as head of his house, whether she saw any use in the matter or no, and when Moses takes this ground and obeys the Lord as to it, he goes on his way in peace. Thus God gained the day, and the obedient soul gained also by the sense of his father's approval. May we find it so likewise.

B. C. G.

### HE GIVETH MORE GRACE

"More grace" with every morning  
To sing of all His love,  
"More grace" to see His goodness,  
All doubtings to remove.  
With every bitter trial,  
Which fierce our foes assail,  
"More grace" to us He giveth,  
Lest we should faint or fail.

"More grace" beneath the noonday,  
The burning, scorching sun,  
His grace will yet sustain us  
Until the day is done.  
The task is long and heavy,  
And toilsome is the race  
Yet for each faltering footstep  
He giveth us "more grace."

"My grace is sufficient for thee."



## CHASTENING\*

Heb. 12:6-11

I once heard a brother liken the effect of chastening upon the Lord's people to that of rain upon three of His creatures. Imagine a lovely spring day, with a bright sun shining, and everything seeming so fresh and joyous as to make one's senses tingle. Suddenly the sky is overcast and down comes a deluge of rain. Yonder hen, which a few minutes ago was enjoying herself to the full now slinks away with bedraggled feathers, head tucked away in her breast, and looking the embodiment of dejection. Close at hand is a duck waddling about and hunting slugs just as indifferent to the rain as if there were no rain at all; in fact the very synonym for indifference is the phrase: "Like water off a duck's back." But behold, out comes the sun again, and with it a dear little robin with uplifted head warbling away its note of praise, having sheltered in the hedge till the downpour was past.

Now, dear fellow-Christian, which of the three are we going to be like, or rather which of the three does our Father wish us to be like, for most of us have had our time of chastening. I have met several Christians in the last few months, and heard of more who have got so depressed and dejected by the chastening of the moment, as in some cases to have even thought that the Lord had forsaken them. Man's word is powerless to help, but to any such I commend you to God and the word of His grace. Listen, dear child of God: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Dwell on it. "Loveth, loveth, loveth!" Again, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." And can you have forgotten that when Israel had to march forty years through the wilderness on "account of their sins," God marched through with them. (Psa. 68:7). Courage then, beloved, and lift up your heads.

But what about the duck class—the indifferent class? I was visiting the other

day a sister in the Lord, who is now in very poor health, with a large family, and who, on account of the general financial depression, has been reduced from having a comfortable balance to their credit to less than nothing. I listened to the tale of trouble, with sympathy, but I was saddened to hear the sister close her remarks by saying: "Well, I've got so used to troubles, coming thick and fast, that I've got accustomed to everything, and do not trouble now as I once did." Sad, beloved, when chastening has this effect, for one of our verses says: "To them who are exercised thereby." Our God wants us to be exercised that the "peaceable fruits of righteousness" may be the result. Let us get on our knees, in His holy presence and ask what He would say to us, or, in the language of Psalm 139 say: "Search me, O God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Remember again, that it is **because** He loves that He chastens, and His only end for us is to do us good. Let us rather emulate the robin, and, when the storm falls, go in solitude, but with holy boldness, into the blessed precincts of the sanctuary, and there, with our hearts discovered in the brightness of His presence, learn to know His mind concerning us a little better, and prove that in His heart there is not, nor possibly could be anything but love, fathomless love toward us. The bride in the Song of Solomon could say: "I am my beloved's, and His desire is toward me." (Ch. 7:10).

Surely, then, if we go through our trials, our chastenings, with Him, we shall emerge with voices tuned to praise Him, and to tell to others the riches of His love.

"'Tis His great delight to bless us.  
Oh, how He loves."

A. B. E.

### TWENTY-FIVE—SIX—SEVEN\*

"And yet some one of them must be right. **Twenty-five—six—seven, twenty-seven spires pointing heavenward. What shall I do?"** So spake a young man, looking out over a large city.

After years of doubt, darkness and despair, the mighty word of deliverance had been spoken; that cry from Calvary, "It is finished," had reached that struggling soul, and in one instant the sophistries of Rome, its penances, mass, absolutions, purgatory—all were swept away and the harassed soul exulted in its new-found joy.

Then the perplexing question arose: "What church shall I join?" As a Catholic, he had known but Catholic and Protestant, two churches, and with the faith imbued from infancy, had believed the Catholic Church the true, the only, the church the Lord built upon Peter—the only church in which salvation was to be found, and now he had left it. Friends, the old associations, and hardest of all, his mother, was it possible that they were all wrong, and he alone right? Was not this the pride of heart the priest so often warned against? He could almost wish the doubts had never come in. This was almost as hard as the struggle for conscience rest. His soul had slipped its moorings, and was vainly groping for light, and now what did he find? Protestantism, which he had known from afar, divided into parties and sects; which one should he join? His soul was hungering for rest. His hopes and longings were all unsatisfied. He was drifting in the darkness like a rudderless ship upon the tide.

One day during the weary quest, he met an old servant of the Lord, going up and down the land, to whom he poured out his soul thirst, with the ever-present, unanswered cry: "What church shall I join?"

"What church shall you join? Have you not learned that the moment you were converted the Lord Himself made you a member of His church, that church which He promised 'the gates of hell should never prevail against'? The true church, not the Church of Rome, but His church for which He died, and of which every saved soul throughout the world is a member, and that by the new birth—not by joining."

"But I don't understand. I see a number of churches about me. I counted twenty-seven the other day, representing perhaps a dozen different sects. Which one of them is right? If they are all right, why are they divided from one another?"

"My son, get back to the beginning. When the Lord saved the three thousand at Pentecost, what church did they join? Do you not see they could join nothing? There was nothing to join. They themselves were the church. Thus we read, 'The Lord added unto them, daily, such as were being saved.' This was His church: a body of living, saved souls, ever growing—not a sect or a denomination, but all one in Himself."

"But was there not a meeting—a public expression of this church—a coming together?"

"Yes, there was a coming together, and He Himself had promised to be in their midst to lead and guide them. You will find them meeting throughout the Acts."

"But how did they meet? What were they called? Who was their minister?"

"They certainly came together at least weekly, to remember their Lord in the breaking of bread, as He commanded. The only name we know by which they were called, was the name 'Christian.' There was no minister in the sense you are using the term. The Lord had given them gifts, and He, by His Spirit, used these different gifts to edify the whole. The church thus having come together in one place subject to His Spirit and Word, was a beautiful witness to the world about them for their absent Lord. When division arose, and men drew disciples after themselves, this public unity was destroyed, the outgrowth of which are the numberless sects by which we are surrounded, of which Rome itself is one."

"But these, as you said, were the early days. There can be no such meetings now."

"Why not? The Lord is ever faithful. His Word is ever sure. 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst.' Is not this just as certain as 'He that believeth hath everlasting life'? Praise His name there are little companies of His saved ones here and there throughout the land who come

thus together in dependence on Himself—guided by His Word, led by His Spirit, seeking amid much failure to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

“Do you know of any such meeting in this place?” eagerly asked the young man.

The next Sunday found our young convert in a strange place—a large upper room, with nothing to attract the eye, no lofty organ, no pulpit, a small company seated around a table on which was a loaf and a cup of wine. A deep solemnity was over all. Each had his Bible and hymn-book. A hymn was given out, another led the meeting in prayer. One rose and gave thanks for the bread and wine which was passed from one to another. No one took the place of leader, and yet there was no clash—a beautiful harmony and note of worship pervading the whole meeting.

This was long ago. Twenty-five years have passed and still that little company meet, grown in numbers, many of the original ones passed on to meet their Lord. Our young friend found his place among them, and O, the soul rest, the peace of mind! No more groping in the dark, no more weary searching for an anchorage for the soul.

Calvary's Cross for salvation—

The place of His name for worship.

Till He come!

Even so, Lord Jesus come.

J. S.

## LESSONS FROM ABRAM'S HISTORY

### Conflict and Victory

#### Genesis 14

The close of the thirteenth chapter shows us the man of faith occupying his place of power and blessing in communion with God. It is from this place that we see him going forth to be both the victor and deliverer.

The fourteenth chapter opens with a conflict which at first it would seem could have no connection with Abram. The onrush of contending armies does not and cannot intrude upon the security, peace and blessing of Hebron. The man of faith is in a place into which the din of this battle does not enter, the peace of which a conflict like this cannot disturb. This in itself is a precious lesson, and if there was

nothing else to say, would be justification enough for its introduction at this point. How perfect the Word of God is in every part! But this conflict has its valuable lesson for us in connection with Lot and the place he occupies. His place was found in the midst of the scene in which the conflict took place and with which it was directly concerned. No peace, and rest, and communion there, indeed it was far otherwise. Sensual pleasure, the lust and strife of sin, prevailed there to an abhorrent degree. There his righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked (2 Pet. 2:7-8). Sad contrast to the peaceful plain of Mamre.

Let us consider the character of the conflict and of the opposing forces. The first confederacy is headed by the king of the land of Shinar, the kingdom founded by Nimrod where Babel was built, and later mighty Babylon. The Shemite king of Elam is evidently the active leader. The power of world-religion is the obvious interpretation of this federation. The scene where the might of human energy was put forth in an effort at self-deification, where idolatry reared its head and from whence it spread until a king of Shem, the family with whom the knowledge of the true God was deposited, is ensnared in its meshes and becomes the active leader of this evil coalition. Sad association for a Shemite who should have been a witness to Jehovah. Throughout Scripture the land of Shinar and Babylon is linked with the great religious system and power of the world. This gives, I believe, the true character of this first confederacy. The second is quite different, and again its character is discerned in its leaders—the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. Here the connection is with the depth of moral depravity (Jude 7), sensual pleasure and lustful indulgence, presenting that aspect of the world with which the religious forces of that same world are always in conflict considering it their main duty and calling to hold in subjection those powers of fleshly lust. The man of faith has no part in all this. Poor Lot, seeking worldly advantage, had not even found his place among the worldly religious with their outward respectability, but sat in Sodom's gate, a judge of its evil, vexed and unhappy,

though occupying a place of prominence among his fellows. Unlike Abram the surge of conflict reaches his place and sweeps him in as a captive of the enemy's power with his goods. How clearly it shows that our immunity from all forms of worldly entanglement and bondage is alone through the occupation of that sweet and restful place of maintained communion with God. There it is that we find how "the peace of God" keeps our hearts, and "the God of peace" is with us (Phil. 4:7-9). Blessed portion!

But it is the man who enjoys this portion who can go forth to deliver and gain a great victory, which even the world must acknowledge which only again affords an opportunity for faith to triumph over it. It is love for his captive brother which leads Abram out to battle. It is his faithfulness to God and the place He had given to him which leads him to spurn the offer of enrichment from Sodom's king. Both occasions display the power and dignity of faith which is the victory that overcometh the world (1 John 5:4). Lot, then, is delivered and even his goods restored to him, but how sad to see, as future circumstances show, that he was not united in restored fellowship to his deliverer. He goes back to his place in Sodom, a circumstance which develops most disastrously for him. It is sad to see those for whom God has acted in delivering power not going on with Him, but slipping back into their old ways. It always results in disaster for them. Apart from anything else, consider for a moment what Lot missed and Abram enjoyed—the ministry of Melchizedek, the bread, the wine, and his blessing. Abram alone participated in this feast. Neither the unfaithful nor the world have part in it. Divine sustenance, joy, blessing, and relationship for he is addressed as "Abram of the most high God," are alone the portion of faith administered by the hand of Him who is our great priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. To the faithful warrior how sweet the title of the priest—King of Salem, that is, as the apostle says, King of Peace, while He is also by interpretation, King of righteousness, the former being built upon the latter for as the prophet says "the work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteous-

ness, quietness and assurance forever." (Isa. 32:17). This is the divine order which governs in all relations. It underlies the work of salvation, and is the order in which its truth must be apprehended; while it is the principle which must govern in all right Christian experience, and abides as the fundamental order of the eternal state, as well as being the characteristic of the millennial age. Indeed, the prelude to our own entrance into eternal glory is the action of righteousness as connected with the judgment seat of Christ where it is not a question of our persons but of our works and God's righteous dealing with them entailing reward or loss to us. In view of that day may we seek the grace and help of God to daily grow in the appreciation of the place and portion He has given to us.

John Bloore.

#### MARION'S VERSE\*

Everything had gone wrong with Marion that Monday morning. Breakfast was late, she had spoken unkindly to the cook, and had been reproved by her mother. Then her little sister actually upset her cup of coffee, over her new plaid merino. She rose from the table very angry, and rushed upstairs to change her dress. Some word which her Sunday school teacher had said to her only the morning before crossed her memory.

"It's of no use," she said aloud, "for me to try to be a Christian. I might as well give up."

Soon she remembered that it was her turn to learn and repeat four lines of a poem from some author. She caught up her book of extracts and opened it. What was it that caused the tears to flow from her eyes and her lips to move in a prayer?

She stood a moment, committing the lines to memory, and then went down and spoke pleasantly to the cook, and kissed her mother and Allie good-bye, and went away to school. And when it was her turn to give an extract she rose, and, with a bright, unclouded face, repeated slowly: The little worries which we meet each day  
May lie as stumbling-blocks across our  
way,

Or, we may make them stepping-stones  
to be

Of grace, O Lord, to Thee.

## THE BURDEN AND ITS BEARER

"Cast thy Burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Ps. 55:22.)

## I. The Burden—Many Evils

- (a) The increase of evil—proud evil oppressing him.
- (1) The voice of the enemy. (v. 3.)
  - (2) The oppression of the wicked. (v. 3.)
  - (3) Iniquity and hatred. (v. 3.)
  - (4) Violence and strife. (v. 9.)
  - (5) Mischief and sorrow. (v. 10.)
  - (6) Wickedness. (v. 10.)
  - (7) Deceit and guile. (v. 11.)
- (b) The unfaithfulness of professors—false virtue.

1, a man, mine equal; 2, my guide; 3, mine acquaintance.

1, reproached me; 2, magnified himself against me; 3, put out his hands against; 4, broke his covenant; 5, war in his heart; 6, words, drawn swords.

## II. The Remedy—Prayer.

"I will call upon God"—cry aloud.

"Cast—roll—thy burden on the Lord."

Our safety is not in flight but fight—God delivers in the battle.

Some good words commence with the prefix "Com"—communion, companionship, comfort, commit, communicate.

III.—The Burden Bearer—The Lord Pharaoh asked: "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?"

May we be able to answer triumphantly: "The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

## IV. The Burden-Roller—The Righteous

"He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous." (Job 36:7.)

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry." (Ps. 34:16.)

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth and delivereth them." (Ps. 34:17.)

## GOD TRUSTED THOUGH HELP IS DELAYED.\*

## Psalm XIII.

How long? is the cry four times expressed in this psalm. Help is sorely needed, and yet seems long in coming. This

causes sorrow to the heart of David, for it puts seeming triumph into the hand of the enemy.

But David's sorrowing heart is none the less a trusting heart. He was fully assured that God would not fail him. "I shall rejoice in Thy salvation," he says. Nor is he disappointed; for the psalm ends with overflowing joyfulness. "I will sing unto the Lord, because He hath dealt bountifully with me" (ver. 6).

"His method is sublime,

His thought supremely kind;

God never is before His time,

And never is behind."

But before deliverance really comes, David is brought down very low. "Lighten mine eyes," he cries, "lest I sleep the sleep of death" (ver. 3).

This is often where God's deliverance comes in; that is, when all hope in everything on our side is completely withered up—even hope in the strength of our faith! And oh, what a common snare is this! For though self should be the first to be suspected, it is often the last. "Our" anything is all too readily turned to, rather than our God. But faith does not look at faith. It rests in God—in GOD. He has revealed Himself in His beloved Son, and we are brought to say, "Perish every other hope."

## THINGS WE OUGHT TO KNOW\*

That certainty is the birthright privilege of the children of God is easily settled for us, by a single sample Scripture in the Old and New Testaments, though there are hundreds more, if needed. This is in nowise necessary, however, as the authority of the Word of God is to be owned in one Scripture equally with many, providing it be applied to the right matter, and at the right time.

The Scriptures referred to are: Prov. 22:21 and Luke 1:4. The former gives as its chief object: "That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth, etc." The latter reads: "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

Thus, in the mouth of two witnesses, one Solomon, who in his folly turned from the path of wisdom to prove that "the way of transgressors is hard," and the other Luke "the beloved physician," who had "perfect understanding of all that he wrote of, from the very first."

But beside this general, assured teaching of God's Word, which we each should seek to realize, there are some special things noted by the sacred writers, notably the Apostle Paul, to call our attention to truths he judged likely to be forgotten or overlooked. They are of the nature of a Divine *Nota Bene*, and we do well to give heed to them.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE OLIVE TREE

(Rom. 11.)

The chapter, first of all, relates to God's people, Israel, as the seed of Abraham, to whom, the Apostle, in chapter 9, says "pertained the adoption." Here, he says: "His people whom He foreknew." This gives, at once, the keynote of the chapter—God's sovereign choice in grace of a people, few in number, unworthy in character, and stiffnecked and rebellious in their ways. This fact should at once impress our minds with the prior one that all motive for God choosing them was found in His heart, and not in theirs. This the apostle proved, at the outset, by stating not merely that God foreknew them, but also that when "Elias made intercession against them" and all he said was true, God's answer was: "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, etc." The God who chose them in His grace preserved them also, or a seed among them, even in the days of their darkest apostasy. This the Apostle confirms by adding: "Even so, then, also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Verse 5.)

This grace he, at once, contrasts with works, or human merit or deservings. They are opposed in their very natures; the one being the free or undeserved favor of God, the other, the product of this if it is at all what God calls "good works." If it be put in the place of grace, then it is what He calls "dead works."

The Apostle, then, gives the conclusion: "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for." This he has

already stated in ch. 9:31, saying "Israel, which followeth after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith but as it were by the works of the law," etc.

But if Israel, in her pride of heart, chose her own way, and refused God's, and boasted in what condemned her, does God give up His purpose of grace? Not at all, for "the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded," and then he quotes passages from Isaiah 29:1 and from David to prove the judicial hardening of those who refuse God's message of grace. It will be noted that David's imprecation is upon those who crucified the Lord of glory, and shews the retributive side of the cross, that if the true trespass offering does not by faith settle the score against us, then it but increases our trespass, until it "mounts unto the heavens," as calling down the vengeance of God.

But the Apostle, next raises the question of its finality. "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid." No, it was not final, but rather that salvation might be extended to others—"come to the Gentiles" for to "provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world and the diminishing of the Gentiles, etc." How striking is the Apostle's argument! Israel's folly and failure in rejecting God's provision of grace has resulted in God "visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name." How great will be the blessing to flow to them when "Israel blossoms and buds and fills the face of the earth with fruit."

But the great application of the chapter is found in verse 22: "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity, but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise, **thou also shalt be cut off.**" Solemn prospect for Christendom and those nations upon whom in this dispensation great light has risen: "Thou also shalt be cut off. And so all Israel shall be saved, etc." Such is the end of this favored dispensation and the Apostle penned this highly prophetic chapter so that it might not come upon us unawares, but be as "a light shining in a dark place, whereunto we do well that we take heed."

May we weigh well the Apostle's serious words:

(1.) "Boast not against the branches" (18 v.).

(2.) "Be not high minded, but fear," (20 v.)

(3.) "Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God" (22 v.).

(4.) "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits," etc. (25 v.)

May we also be led by the examples given of both mercy and judgment to exclaim: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, etc!"

B. C. G.

**LOVED ME—SOUGHT ME. FOUND ME  
—SAVED ME\***

I have a Friend, whose faithful love  
Is more than all the world to me,  
'Tis higher than the heights above,  
And deeper than the soundless sea:  
So old, so new,  
So strong, so true;

Before the earth received its frame  
**He loved me.**—Blessed be His name!

He held the highest place above,  
Adored by all the sons of flame,  
Yet, such His self-denying love,  
He laid aside His crown and came  
To seek the lost,  
And, at the cost

Of heavenly rank and earthly fame,  
**He sought me.**—Blessed be His name!

It was a lonely path He trod,  
From every human soul apart,  
Known only to Himself and God  
Was all the grief that filled His heart;  
Yet from the track  
He turned not back

Till, where I lay in want and shame,  
**He found me.**—Blessed be His name!

Then dawned at last that day of dread  
When, desolate, yet undismayed,  
With wearied frame and thorn-crowned  
head

He, now forsaken and betrayed,  
Went up for me  
To Calvary,  
And, dying there in grief and shame,  
**He saved me.**—Blessed be His name!

Long as I live my song shall tell

The wonders of His matchless love;  
And, when at last I rise to dwell

In the bright home prepared above,  
My joy shall be

His face to see,

And, bowing then with loud acclaim,  
**I'll praise Him.**—Blessed be His name!

—C. A. Tydeman.

### ABRAM'S ALTARS

Abram, as being a worshipper of God, is early seen in his pilgrim career, when once he makes his break with Haran, where Terah (the delayer) died, or as Stephen emphasizes it: "God removed him" into the land of promise or Canaan. (Acts 7:4). Chaldea was the land of his nativity, the place of his sinnership, and of the call "of the God of glory." Charran was the land of his halting, where indeed "Terah took him," and of his being held by "kindred and father's house," (though he had left his country, as God's call was), and where also idolatry existed as well as in Mesopotamia.

(1) Sichem and Moreh—obedience and dependence.

But when once Abram had "departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him" and passed through the land unto the place of Sichem and Moreh (meaning the shoulder or yoke of obedience, and the instructor) then we read of a double result. On the one hand "the Lord appeared unto him" and renewed His covenant by adding to it: "Unto thy seed will I give this land" as the seal upon his "obedience of faith." On the other hand, of Abram we read: "And there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who had appeared unto him." (Gen. 12:7.) Thus plainly have we Abram marked out, at the first stage of his pilgrimage in the land of the Canaanites as "a worshipper of God and a doer of His will."

II. A mountain east of Bethel—separation to God.

We next find him on a mountain on the east of Bethel, where he pitched his tent, and now again is the record: "There builded he an altar unto the Lord" and with this word added "and called upon the name of the Lord." (Gen. 12:8).

Then we have the famine, very grievous, which drove Abram into the land of Egypt.

But there, forthwith, the man of faith is tested in another way and now by what he has, rather than by what he has not. The first test was as to lack of daily bread, and next it was as to his fair wife, and either can put the man of faith into sore trouble. How he was to get the one in a time of famine, and not to lose the other in a strange land were the burning questions with him. But God's sure word of promise: "I will make of thee a great nation, etc., should have silenced every fear as to either matter. How could he starve when the living God had promised: "I will bless thee?" How could he lose his princess-wife when God had also said: "I will curse him that curseth thee."

III. Between Bethel and Hai—Restoration and grace.

But Abram finally went up out of Egypt and then back "unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord." (Ch. 13:4). This was God's restoring grace. Thus restored in soul, Abram next settled the herdmen's strife by his magnanimous act of grace toward Lot, and then when Lot was separated from him God bade him first look over and then walk through the land. Thus God ever rewards every act of faith by a fuller revelation of Himself.

IV. Mamre and Hebron—fatness and communion.

The sequel is that once more, when in Hebron "Abram built there an altar unto the Lord." (Gen. 13:18.) From this holy place he gained victory over the spoiler (kings of the north), and the tempter (king of the south) and was blessed by the King of righteousness and peace.

V. Beersheba, "the well of the oath" fidelity.

Here we read "he planted a tree or grove and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." True, it was in the Philistine's land, and they were but Egyptians out of Egypt, but yet it was his inheritance by promise, and there Abraham "sojourned many days," i. e., he was not concerned from being either a true pilgrim or worshipper.

VI. Mount Moriah—"The mount of the Lord" and His provision.

"They came unto the place which God had told him of and Abram built an altar there, etc." (22:10.) There as the reward of his unquestioning obedience God revealed Himself as Jehovah-Jireh, or "the Lord will provide," or in other words, as "the God of all grace."

VII. At Kirjath Arba or Hebron—Sorrow and victory.

Here is no record of a new altar but it was back again at the same place as he reached in chapter , and here Sarah died, and here Abraham is seen as a four-fold victor over his circumstances, for we read of him as follows:

1. "He came to mourn for Sarah"—he was not a stoic.
2. "He stood up from before his dead"—was not a weakling.
3. "He stood up and bowed himself"—was not an uncouth man.
4. "He stood up and bowed himself again"—was not ungrateful.

Thus in these seven mentions of Abraham's altars, as being linked with five places, Sichem, Bethel, Hebron, Beersheba and Moriah, we have the great lessons of his marvellous and complete life, and the steps of that faith which we are to copy him in. They are first on our side, and then on our Lord's, as follows:

1. Obedience—the yoke of Christ.
2. Separation—the path of Christ.
3. Restoration—the grace of Christ.
4. Communion—the heart of Christ.
5. Fidelity—the faithfulness of Christ.
6. Surrender—the provision of Christ.
7. Victory—the power of Christ.

Worship, which Abraham's altars plainly suggest, is not a mere passing impulse, or the first budding forth of faith in the soul but the ruling principle of a life that first emanates from God, and then returns to Him again. "Of Him, or through Him, and to Him are all things," is the glorious lay of the heavenly choir, and worship surely as the highest privilege of a creature can be no exception to the great and all prevailing rule of the courts above. May we, then, who are "blessed with faithful Abraham" thus possess all his altars.

B. C. G.



## A CHILD'S FAITH\*

"Mother, dear mother, why do you cry?" asked a little girl, startled to see tears coursing down her patient mother's face, and moistening the work busily occupied.

The mother could not, by silence, destroy the holy confidence of that wondering child, and answered, "What will Mary do without supper to-night? I am afraid I cannot get any bread."

"O, mother," replied the child, "is that all? We had enough dinner, and can do very well without supper."

"But what will you do without breakfast, or dinner, or supper to-morrow, my darling?" continued her mother.

Mary looked sad for a moment, then said suddenly, with a bright smile, "We shall be very hungry, mother, but then we have this good fire to keep us warm, and some people are shivering all day this cold weather."

"But, dear one, we shall have no fire. for all the coals we have are in the stove, and I have no money to buy bread, or coal, or sugar, or tea, or anything we need so much. To-morrow, Sunday, of course we cannot get any."

"Will you not get any money when you take this work home?" queried the child.

"I have taken home all that I can finish to-night," replied the mother, "and it was not convenient for Mr. G. to pay us, so we must go without food and fire. my daughter, till Monday."

Mary sat in thoughtful silence, then looking up with a very grave countenance, said, "Mother, is not God here?"

"Yes, my child."

"Does He not know that we have no food and fire to keep us warm?"

"Yes," again answered her mother.

"Can He not easily give us bread and coal, dear mother?"

Again her mother was compelled to assent.

Mary said, "Mother, perhaps God would like us to tell Him what we want. Perhaps he would like me to tell Him all by myself. May I go into the closet alone?"

She went and pleaded thus: "O God, we have no bread and no coal. Wilt Thou not please to send us some, and if Thou canst not send enough for both, please send a little bread so that mother can have supper and breakfast. O God, it will be very cold without fire, and we shall be so hungry without bread. Please send some, for Christ's sake. Amen."

She returned to her mother with quiet joyfulness, saying, "Mother, I feel sure that God will send us something soon."

Shortly the tract visitor for that district called, when, contrary to her usual custom, Mary forsook her post by her mother's knee, and stood by the lady's side looking expectantly in her face. Her mother spoke not of her sufferings, for, like many others, she could more easily bear the want, than ask for its removal by the hand of charity.

As the lady rose to leave, she stroked the little girl's head and slipped a coin into her hand which was arrested by a burst of grateful joy from the heart of little Mary, who sank upon her knees, while tears streamed from her eyes, exclaimed:

"God has sent it! See, mother, God has sent it!"

The mother explained to her guest the cause of her child's singular actions, and the visitor departed, glad that God had made her His messenger for good to those patient, hopeful, waiting ones.

"Now, mother," said the child, as soon as they were alone, "will you not go and get us bread, and coal, and tea, and everything we want with this large piece of money?"

"Ah, my child," replied the mother, sadly, but thankfully, "it will not get everything we want, it is not enough."

Mary was disappointed. To her the silver piece was a small fortune, and to learn that something was wanting to perfect the joy saddened her for an instant, then, encouraged by previous success, she said, "Mother, I'll go and ask God for more."

Though startled by her child's singular confidence, she dared not restrain her, and

again, in earnest assurance, she pleaded, "Our Heavenly Father, I am so glad for what Thou hast sent; but please send mother a little more, so that she can get the things she needs to make us happy tomorrow. Then we shall know that Thou art near us always, and wilt help us if we ask Thee." Again she came to her mother with a beaming countenance, saying, "I think, dear mother, God will send us more. O. how good He is." An hour or two passed when a low knock at the door announced another visitor, a gentleman by whom the lady had been employed several months before. He owed her five dollars, which she never expected to receive, as her residence was unknown to him. But he had that day heard where she lived and had hastened to discharge a debt which had lain heavy on his mind, for He knew well her toil must be unremitting, even to scantily supply their most urgent necessities. Mary was silent till he had gone, then sinking on her knees at her mother's side, thanked the Lord for His wonderful goodness.

What a touching instance of faith; yet, was it misplaced? O, that we could always realize that "like as a father pitieth his children," even so the Lord pitieth them that are His.

R. A.

### "THE EARTH ALSO"

2 Pet. 3:10

The Apostle Peter, while having strong Jewish prejudices, as is easily seen from Acts 10 and 11, Gal. 2, etc., yet when penning his epistles, under the control of the Holy Spirit, looked past the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel, to the new heavens and earth in the eternal state. We know he was one of four of our Lord's apostles, who came to him, as given in Mark 13, saying: "Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" Our Lord's reply was: "See'st thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." This startling prophecy they realized meant Divine judgment upon Israel, as a nation, for if their temple was destroyed it meant the taking away of both "their place and nation," so they came to enquire privately as to both the time and signs of it. How saddening to

their hearts it must have been to learn from His lips, who was Himself the Truth, the fate of their once highly favored nation, and that one of the earliest prophecies, Deut. 32, as to their being "scattered into corners" would shortly be fulfilled. But despite the many opportunities they had of learning further from Himself, as He spoke of His cross and His kingdom, we find them eagerly asking: "Lord, wilt Thou, at this time, restore again the kingdom to Israel?" and the only answer our Lord wisely give them was one little heeded since: "It is not for you to know, etc." (Acts 1:6, 7). They did learn, however, when the Holy Spirit came, far more about these matters, and Peter himself clearly told his Jewish brethren that only on their repentance would the King return. His words were "Repent and be converted," and the results promised were:

(1) So that your sins may be blotted out.

(2) The times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord.

(3) He shall send Jesus Christ, etc. (Acts 3:19-21).

But passing from all this to Peter's second epistle, he presents some things equally hard for us Gentiles to take in, and that is, that this dispensation, too, will end in judgment. In fact, he states that men are willingly ignorant of it, that is, they choose to be deceived as to what he wrote of. The subjects were as follows:

(1) "God spared not the angels which sinned."

(2) "God spared not the old world" (before the flood).

(3) "God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes."

(4) God has "reserved the heavens and earth unto fire."

(5) God has appointed the day of judgment and perdition.

(6) The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.

(7) The heavens shall pass away with a great noise.

(8) The earth also, and all the works therein shall be burned up."

Did it come true that God scattered Israel out of their own land into corners, and draw a sword out after them? It did, to the very letter.

Will it then come to pass, in like manner, as here foretold:

1. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise.
2. The elements shall melt with fervent heat.
3. The earth also shall be burned up.
4. The works that are therein shall be burned up.

Awful as the contemplation is, and sad-denying as we think of the moral necessity of such an end to man's sad history, it is well to be undeceived as to the delusive and empty boast of the scoffers: "All things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." How manifestly untrue this is can be seen from these facts:

1. The expulsion of man from Eden.
2. The curse upon the earth of thorns and thistles.
3. The animal creations becoming wild and ferocious.
4. The judgment of the flood upon the world.
5. The burning of the cities of the plain.
6. The plagues on Pharaoh and Egypt.
7. The judgment of the Canaanites.
8. The judgment of Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome, etc.

Added to all this is the present war of a dozen nations, peace being taken from the earth. Instead of "The whole earth" sitting still and being at rest," as in Zechariah's day, there is "wars and fightings," kingdoms in a chaos, and amid it all men boasting of the better days they expect shortly to bring in. May God give us to hear and heed His faithful voice.

B. C. G.

## LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM'S HISTORY

### Faith's Exercise and God's Response

#### Genesis 15

With the opening of this chapter, we enter upon a section of Abraham's history with a different character from that given in the previous chapters. In them we heard no question raised or request made by Abraham, it was rather his obedience and consequent blessing, which were emphasized, whereas now we see him in exercise and conflict, to which he gives expression in one way or another in almost

every chapter, to the close of the divine record of his life.

In this chapter it is faith's exercise concerning the fulfilment of God's Word as to the seed and his inheritance. God answered Abraham and at the same time gives very precious intimation of the basis upon which all rests, and the way in which blessing is entered.

Seven times the Lord speaks (vv. 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 18), and seven times Abraham speaks or acts (vv. 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12). The Lord's salutation is full of grace and comfort, and is like a blank cheque upon which faith may fill in its request. Abraham in holy boldness lays hold of God in the way in which He thus presents Himself. It would seem that before the Lord came to Him Abraham must have been exercised about those very matters, of which he first speaks to the Lord. Hence the sweet and comforting words first addressed to him, "Fear not." He knew his exercise and trouble, for there is nothing which affects His own that He does not know and consider. Then He speaks so as to draw the confidence of the heart to Himself, "I am thy shield," and to cause the hope of the heart to be put in Him, "and thy exceeding great reward." Fear and doubt vanish before a vision like this, and faith steps out in confidence and hope to make known its desires. It is not improper for faith to say, "What wilt Thou give me?" when God has said He is faith's Shield and Reward, for the love which thus speaks delights to give special gifts to its object, that thus it may be confirmed in a specifically individual way. Thus would God deal with each one of His children that each might have their own peculiar portion and intimate acquaintance with Himself as both God and Father.

Abraham seeks a token, but he desires it as a divinely given object for his heart and its affections. Such a gift or token will not give God a secondary place in the heart, but as being given by Him will only link the heart and life more closely with the gracious Giver of all good. Sad, indeed, if it be otherwise with those who receive from Him. The Lord answers Abraham with the assurance that he shall have a son of his own, and that the fruitfulness of his seed shall be as the stars

of heaven, innumerable. Thus was he given both rest and hope in a present object, set before him by God Himself, and concerning which he could now have intelligent communion with God, whose own heart was engaged in the accomplishment of His word. For us it is Christ who is this object. In the contemplation and enjoyment of Him we are one with God Himself. Blessed, holy privilege! Moreover, the Lord's word to Abraham linked him and his thoughts as to the seed with heaven, and not earth. So with ourselves, for it is there that Christ is, and hence all our hopes.

Abraham "believed in the Lord and He counted it to him for righteousness." He rested in the word of promise and revelation communicated to him. The Lord now speaks of the inheritance itself (v. 7), reminding Abraham, first of all, of the grace which took him from the land of his nativity to make him the object of divine favor. Abraham is called to remember the place from which he has been delivered—indeed, his salvation—that his heart may be assured that the promise given will be fulfilled, that He who began the good work will complete it. The lesson in this for us is evident. God would ever have us remember the pit from which we have been taken, that in the enjoyment of the immense grave thus bestowed upon us we may assure our hearts as to the fulfilment of every promise given to us. Abraham again seeks a token, which we may consider in the same light as the first. It is faith desiring an object about which there can be mutual fellowship between the Promiser and the one receiving the promise. The Lord responds to the request, and instructs Abraham in that which is both the basis of and the means of entrance into blessing. It is through the sacrifice that he is to be, first of all, assured of the inheritance, and it speaks to us of the sacrifice of Christ. Its fullness is spread out before the eye of faith. The laborer for God who perfectly glorified Him (heifer), the substitute for the sinner (goat), the One consecrated unto death (ram), and the heavenly One in both His love and sorrow (the birds) are all suggested to us in this scene. The work of Christ was essential to the promise, its confirmation and

actual accomplishment, and by it God would make all sure to faith. It being that by which God makes all good to the recipient of His promises, it becomes the object of the enemy's attack. Faith must rise up and defend what is so fundamental to all blessing (v. 11). No quarter must be allowed to that which would mar the perfect character of the sacrifice. It must be maintained unimpaired in its every part. This is the work of faith. Then we get the trial of faith under the power of evil; it is the night of tribulation, but though there be the furnace to try, God is also there as the light to guide and sustain, and all is closed by the Lord's covenant granting full possession of the inheritance. With this there is assured judgment of all opposing power. We may rightly think of the dispensational aspect of all these actions as they bear upon Israel and God's purposes for the earth, but of more immediate concern to us is the practical lessons we may gather from them. The sacrifice and our standing by it is of first importance, but there comes with this the fiery trial of our faith that we may know fellowship with His sufferings, and in result as to ourselves be made conformable unto His death in all that it means for us as to the world in which we find the furnace of affliction, through which, however, we prove how God is with us as the light which guides, comforts, and sustains during the night. The blessed issue is the assured possession of the promised inheritance. May we lay hold of these things in a practical way and know the blessing of living in them day by day.

John Bloore.

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Home Friend, 60c. year, in U. S. 70c., containing Our Homes for the Household, Friendly Words for the Young, Tidings of Mercy for the Unsaved, Tender Grass for the Lord's Flock, each separately, 15c. year, in U. S., 18c., Home Friend Office, Church and Ann Sts., Toronto, Canada.

All articles in our papers reprinted as Seed for the Sower, are marked by a star.

Entered as second class matter, February 25, 1909, at the Post Office at Detroit, Michigan, under an Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

## HEAVEN: OUR HOME\*

My home! 'tis not here in a region of death,  
Which sin has defiled with its poisonous breath,  
Where Christ was rejected, where man is oppressed;  
In a world full of groaning I seek not my rest.

You may show me its palaces, stately and fair,  
But the brows of its inmates are furrowed with care.

Its wisdom is folly, and madness its mirth,  
For the shadows of death envelope the earth.

I may gaze on the mountains, and forest, and flood,

They speak of their Maker, my Father, and God,  
His sun it enlivens the day with its light,  
His moon, and His stars give a voice to the night.

His hand paints each flower with its beautiful dye,

His providence watches the sparrows that fly,  
I hear Him, I see Him wherever I roam,  
For this earth is His work, but it is not my home.

My home is in heaven, for Jesus is there,  
He's gone His own home for His Bride to prepare,  
In the land which no evil has ever defiled,  
Where the tear shall be wiped from the eye of His child.

My home is in heaven! Yes there we shall meet,  
What joy it will be our companions to greet,  
With whom thro' the desert we journey'd along,  
When the sigh shall be changed for the harp and the song.

J. G. Deck.

Written on board the vessel leaving England  
for New Zealand, April, 1853.

THE RELATION OF WORSHIP TO  
MINISTRY

Speaking recently with a brother as to the above subject, he related an interesting incident on this line. Some years before, while he was preaching about somewhat on holiness lines, he went in with a little company of Brethren, and for a few times much enjoyed the meetings, with the exception of, as he termed it, the tarrying one for another, or pauses which he thought should be used in praise or prayer. Getting uneasy through this, which may, of course, have been a spiritual weakness, instead of true waiting on the Lord, he went off for a few times and devoted the entire day to

ministry in several places, but the question kept rising with him: "What am I getting from the Lord, or giving to Him?"

At last he returned to the meeting, and said he wanted to more thoroughly understand worship and ministry. So he sat back for 8 or 9 Lord's Days feeling deeply his position, and hearing in his soul the Lord's Words, "Do this for a remembrance of me." At last he burst out, as the meeting was in progress, "Oh, let me have my place among you." and with delight, his brethren conferred on him his privilege.

Thus, by true exercise of soul, he realized that worship is the highest privilege and blessing of a redeemed soul, and giving it its true place, still earnestly sought to spread the Gospel and lead others to the Lord. But his Bible plainly presented this very thing. David essayed to build God an house, and on learning that God was going to build him one, went in and "sat before the Lord," and burst forth in praise and worship" then afterwards he "prepared in great abundance" for the very temple he was not allowed to build. The one leper of ten in Luke 17 that most pleased our Lord was the one who turned back to worship at the feet of Jesus ere he got further orders as to what he should do. The Divine order is: "Eat the fat and drink the sweet, then send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared," (Neh. 8). Let it be so with us to give worship its true place, but not all the place. B. C. G.

## A FOUR-FOLD BLESSING

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:12-14).

These verses do not belong to everybody. They are the private property of the children of God—part of the title-deeds of their inheritance. I open these precious records which declare the blessings of the

children of God that there may arise in your heart a desire to be one of them. Thank God! His house and His heart are thrown open, and by His holy grace you may be one of His children, and may leave this room with full assurance that the children's birthright is yours. How great is this grace! I trust you will not be indifferent to it.

The children of God are already those:

- (1) Who are made meet for Heaven's glory.
- (2) Who are delivered from the world.
- (3) Who are translated into Christ's Kingdom, and
- (4) Whose sins are forgiven.

What a wealth of blessing! And, observe, it is all in connection with a Person. "The Son of His love; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." It is through and in a Person that we have all these things; and that Person is the Son of the Father's love, the Creator of all things, the mighty Victor of Calvary, the Saviour of sinners. It is He who has stooped to secure, at an infinite cost, glory for God, and a boundless wealth of divine blessing for all who believe on His name. There is a Person who can meet all your need, and bring the brightness of divine love into your heart. If you knew that Person you could not help trusting Him. He loves to be trusted by the sinners for whom He died.

C. A. C.

### THE PRAYER OF HABBAKUK

"O Lord I have heard Thy speech and was afraid,  
O Lord revive Thy work in the midst of the years.

In the midst of the years make known,  
In wrath remember mercy." (Hab. 3:2)

These are all the actual petitions of this strange, unique and eloquent prayer, so called. One verse contains them, while 13 verses are taken to describe God's triumphal march in meeting His people at Mt. Sinai, and leading them into Canaan. One verse describes the first effect of it upon the prophet, and three more close the chapter with an anthem of victory and praise to God.

For what does the prophet pray? For three things, and all three are the present and pressing needs of our times as well as his.

They are as follows:

1. Revive Thy work.
2. Make known.
3. Remember mercy.

This triplet, at first sight seems disjointed, and perhaps to have little fitness to our own present circumstances, but this is only apparent.

The first petition is indeed a first, inasmuch as it puts "God first." The heart that gets sick of self and its strange aberrations wearies too of the world and its corruptions, its way of guile and shame, then cries out, "Revive Thy work," and no help or deliverance comes until that prayer is answered.

"Thy work!" To this we must trace up alike Creation, Redemption, Glory. All comes from Him, all is created for Him, and all should now be to Him, in the glad service of His redeemed people. His first work, of Creation, gave man a home, and while sin entered and spoiled the fair scene, yet still, in how many "a pleasant prospect," His work yet remains.

But, in grace His work is more manifest still, for if He did not produce out of nothing or "call into being," which is what Creation means, yet in one sense He did more, for He restored a chaos, brought order out of confusion, and a city of peace out of a howling wilderness. He saves the lost, makes righteous the guilty, turns Satan's captives into His own happy freedmen, and lifts man once degraded beneath the beasts that perish, higher than the angels that never sinned.

But in government, His work is seen also. He chastens and rebukes, He lays low and raises up, He humbles and exalts, and all to do us good at our latter end, to defeat the enemy, and bring glory to His own great name.

But it is in glory that His work will most of all appear, when the last enemy shall be destroyed, when God shall be all in all, and when the voice off the throne shall proclaim: "Behold, I make all things new," and closes man's story with: "It is done."

Well may we pray, then, "O Lord revive Thy work!"

Similar to this is the petition of Moses, the man of God, in Ps. 90, "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants."

## 2. "Make known."

This implies a Revelation, and for such the Prophet, with his sorely burdened heart, had cried out thus, "How long? Why? Art Thou not? and Wherefore?" (Chap. 1), and he adds, "And the Lord answered me and said, etc." (Ch. 2:2.)

Thus encouraged the Prophet seeks afresh the Divine Remedy and craves at God's hand these three things:

1. Revival of His work.
2. Revelation of His ways.
3. Remembrance of His mercy.

How brief, but comprehensive? Unless God revives His work, ours can no more continue than it could start of itself, for He works in us both "to will and to do of His good pleasure." Unless He reveals also how certainly all our projects and undertakings are but a groping in the dark, and even God's own perfect ways seem to be but hopeless confusion! And then, when learning ourselves, and realizing the justice of His judgment, and how fully merited is His wrath, if He did not, in the midst of it, "remember mercy," how surely would it consume us in a moment! So also the prophet Jeremiah realized when he prayed, "O Lord, correct me but with judgment, not in Thine anger lest Thou bring me to nothing" (Jer. 10:24).

Beautiful and humble appeal it was, to plead that mercy be remembered when judgment was so richly deserved.

Thus the Prophet, in his brief prayer, mentions God's speech, which first struck fear into his heart, His Work which he longed to see revived, His revelation which alone can bring light in the midst of darkness, His wrath which is the just due of rebellious creatures, and His mercy which is that rare quality that lets out His heart of love, even compassion toward unworthy and often ungrateful objects, such as we are.

Little wonder is it that our old-time brother Habakkuk, because he prayed so to the point, confessed so fully both his weakness and his sin, and cast himself so entirely on God's wisdom and His mercy, can now forget himself to dwell upon God's

glory and praise, His brightness and His power.

With what delight He now portrays His triumphal march at the head of His redeemed people. He notes the "horns in His hand" or power to prevail, the "burning coals at His feet" or discriminating judgment; His everlasting ways; His horses and chariots of salvation; His arrows and His glittering spear, and all for the salvation of His people.

Its first effect on himself was inward trembling, quivering lips and shaking bones but then turning from himself to Jehovah and His troops, he expressed the most lovely confidence of faith, that, should all natural resources of supply fail him, yet would he "rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation!" Thus he would prove the joy of the Lord to be his strength, and his feet would tread both safely and assuredly, even in the most testing and perilous ascents.

Habakkuk's burden was first "the mystery of iniquity" in a world where evil seemed to hold almost undisputed sway. His first resource was a prayer full of enquiries and appeals (Ch. 1:1-4), next God's revelation of His strange work" (ch. 1:5-11), then a second prayer of fuller faith and intelligence (1:12-17), then a holy purpose to watch for the answer (2:1), next, the Lord's answer (2:2-4). Then the prophet's five-fold message of "woes" and finally in our chapter his prayer, his proclamation and his praise, all combined to be melody for the chief singer on his stringed instruments. B. C. G.

## UNSEEN ETERNAL VERITIES\*

"The things which are not seen are eternal.—(2 Cor. 4:18).

**Eternal Life**—(John 3:15).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36).

**Eternal Judgment**—(Heb. 6:2).

"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

**Eternal Salvation**—Heb. 5:9).

"Because I live ye shall live also" (John 14:19. Spoken by Christ to those who believed on Him.)

**Eternal Damnation**—(Mark 3:29).

"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

**Eternal Glory**—(1 Peter v. 10).

The portion of every believer in Christ. Read Col. 1:12-23.

**Eternal Fire**—(Jude 7).

The portion of every Christ-rejector. Read 2 Thess. 1:8, 9.

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it" (Eccl. 3:14).  
H. E. H.

### A NOTE ON PSALM LXVIII.

This Psalm celebrates the intervention of God, Jehovah-Adonai, on behalf of His earthly people, "God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered, and they that hate him shall flee before him." Moses could ask God to do this when the ark of the Lord was lifted up for each journey in the wilderness. The psalmist here uses similar language, with this difference; Moses asks God to arise that the desired result may be obtained; the psalmist awaits in confidence its accomplishment, describing in the two following verses what the issue will be to the wicked and to the righteous. After this to verse 9 we have God's character set forth, as manifested in His actions, for which He is to be praised, and His majesty as displayed when marching before His people through the wilderness.

But the remembrance of His ways of old strengthens the hope in the hearts of His faithful people of yet further displays of power and goodness on behalf of the nation. The prophetic description of this forms the chief subject of the psalm, grounded on what is stated in verse 18, the ascension of Adonai leading captive captivity, and receiving gifts in the man, that Jehovah-God might dwell among them. The Church now enjoys gifts secured to her by His ascension. Israel also has gifts secured to her, but not yet to be enjoyed; so the psalmist from verse 9 to 24 speaks almost always in the future. This the Authorized Version in part fails to point out. So, I submit, we should read: "Thou,

O God, wilt send a plentiful rain on thine inheritance." On what is this hope based? His past dealings with them. "When weary, thou hast refreshed it;" moreover, it has been in former times the dwelling-place of His congregation. "Thy congregation hath dwelt therein." Hence they draw the conclusion, and rightly, "Thou, O God, wilt prepare of thy goodness for the afflicted. Adonai will give a word, the armies who publish it shall be a great host. Kings with their armies shall flee, shall flee; she that tarrieth at home shall divide the spoil. If ye shall lie among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold. When the Almighty scatters kings in her, she shall be as white as snow in Salmon." Again, "God has desired to dwell in." (Ver. 16.)

I would add that we have in this psalm nearly all the different names of God: El, Elohim (God); Shaddai (Almighty); Jehovah, Adonai, Jah (Lord). Elohim is the name of God in creation (Gen. 1); Shaddai and Jehovah, the names under which God revealed Himself respectively to Abraham and Israel. Adonai, as here described, is the One who has ascended up on high; but if ascended, He descended first into the lower parts of the earth. Yet He is Jehovah. (Ver. 20.) "To Jehovah Adonai belong the goings out to death." Jah is first met with in Exodus 15:2, after the deliverance of the people from Pharaoh at the Red Sea. Often met with in the Psalms in the well-known compound, Hallelu-jah; it occurs also in Exodus 17:16; twice in this Psalm, 4, 18; also in Psalms 77:11; 89:8; 94:7, 12; 102:18; 115:17, 18; 118:5, 14, 17, 18, 19; 122:4; 130:3; 135:4; 150:6; and in Isaiah 12:2; 26:4; 38:11. If we examine the context of most of the places where it occurs, I think we shall be persuaded it is not a mere abbreviation of Jehovah, but has a significance of its own, reminding His people that He has, and will, interpose in power on their behalf. So Jehovah characterizes God as the one true and self-existing Being (in opposition to the false gods of the heathen) who has made a covenant with Israel. Jah characterizes Him specially as the Deliverer of His people from Egypt in time past, who will deliver them from all their enemies again. C. E. S.



## THE CROOKED STICK\*

"What doth the Lord require of thee?" Mic. 6:8.

"Christ has a service for all His members," said James Therrall, an old carpenter in a village on Salisbury Plain, to a young Christian who complained that she was unworthy to work for the Lord. "Let not one of the members say, 'The Head has no need of me.' I used to think as you do long ago, but He taught me otherwise by a Crooked Stick.

"One day my son went to a sale of timber, and in the lot was a stick so twisted and bent, that I spoke sharply to him, saying, 'You have a bad bargain there, lad; that crooked stick will be of no use to any one.'

"It's all timber," replied my son, not the least vexed by my reproof. 'I paid the same price for it as the rest. Depend upon it, no tree grows for nothing. Wait a bit; don't fret, father; let us keep a look out; there's a place somewhere for it.'

"A little time after this I had a cottage to build; a queer bit of a house it was, and pretty enough when it was finished; there was a corner to turn in it, and not a stick in the yard would fit. I thought of the crooked one, and fetched it. Many a hard day's work would have failed to prepare a joist like it. It seemed as if the tree had grown aside for this very purpose.

"Then," said I, "There's a place for the Crooked Stick after all! Then there's a place for poor James Therrall. Dear Lord! show him the place into which he may fit in building Thy heavenly temple.' That very day I learned that what God gives me, He gives me for His glory; and poor and unlettered as I was, there was a work for me. There is a work for YOU; God has something for YOU to do, and nobody else can do it!"

This village carpenter had neither the knowledge of the schoolman, nor had he taken a degree at college; yet he was a teacher of divine truths, and he was wise in the wisdom of the children of light. He would often recur to the time when, looking solely on his own weakness and infirmities, he overlooked his only source of

strength, and thought he was too poor and ignorant to do anything for the Lord he loved! He lived to a good old age, a blessing to the souls in his neighbourhood, and where, as he liked best to say, he watched for his Master. When some who loved their ease too well, or child or servant or sick one complained, "I can do nothing" he would point to the best-built cottage on the Plain, with its pretty bay-window and slanting roof, and tell them he had once thought the same himself, but his error had been corrected by a dumb instructor—a beam in that roof—a crooked stick which seemed fit for nothing; but it found its proper place in the building at last, and gave it a grace and strength which no other timber, however superior in other respects, could have imparted. Thus the warped tree had preached to him a sermon on true humility, and made him from that day a humble steward of the things of the kingdom.

## WHY??

"Thou shalt know hereafter" (Jno. 13:7.)

I will not ask my Father why  
His loving purpose is concealed.  
I'll wait in peace till by and by  
In His good time it is revealed.  
His choice is ever best for me,  
And wiser far than mine would be.

I will not ask why He should lead  
My pathway up the mountain high,  
Why o'er its rocks my feet must bleed,  
Its rugged steeps my courage try.  
I may behold up in the height,  
Transfiguration's holy light.

I will not ask Him why apart  
Into the weary desert place,  
He calls my faint and hungry heart  
To walk with Him in lonely ways,  
It may be there He leadeth me,  
His miracle of loaves to see.

I will not ask my Father why  
He spreads His cloud upon the Throne,  
But wait in peace till by and by  
In His good time it is made known  
Time and eternity shall prove  
That all His purposes are love.

A. E. Miller.

## LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM'S HISTORY

## The Way of Blessing

## Chap. 16-17

God has unfolded His purpose concerning Abram's seed and the inheritance. Now He unfolds in connection with Abram's actions the only way in which the promises of blessing can be accomplished. First, however, God allows him to make his own efforts to bring about the fulfillment of the promise, and to reap the bitter fruits which always grow out of fleshly activity. In this 16th chapter Abram is like a man who having begun in the spirit, as we see in the preceding chapter, now seeks to be made perfect by the flesh. This never produces the desired fruitfulness. The true way we shall find taught us in the 17th chapter.

Abram is anxious to have the seed God has promised, and Sarai persuades him to take Hagar as a means of accomplishing God's purpose. God is not sought in this matter, but human expediency is evidently followed. This is a disastrous principle for the man of faith, as results clearly prove. We learn from Galatians of the typical interpretation of these two women. Hagar is the legal covenant which produces bondage, and Sarai stands for grace and freedom. It is the natural man, man in the flesh, who is connected with the former, for only by such agency can the law be fulfilled, indeed it is to him as in the flesh that it is addressed. It is the new man, the new nature, which is connected with the covenant of grace. Now the new mind which we have as possessing the new nature through faith needs to learn the way of fruitfulness, and to know that it is apart from all self effort, that it only springs up by the word of God and submission to it by which word also the promises were alone given and known to faith. Hagar may well speak to us of the flesh and our efforts to product fruit by it, even at the suggestion of Sarai, the new mind formed by the knowledge of grace, but evidently needing further instruction in the ways of God. Thus legal means are taken up in conjunction with the flesh, and the experience of Romans seven is the result. There is fruit, Hagar brings forth Ishmael, a wild man, a man of strife (v.

12). This is the prominent feature of that experience recorded by the apostle.

But notice that the fruit produced brings strife and separation between Sarai and Hagar. Sarai is first despised by Hagar. For it is natural that the flesh by which it is sought to fulfill the law should despise grace which in its true nature and character can give no place to the flesh, so that when its fruit is manifested grace becomes anxious to get rid of it. The spirit of impatience is seen throughout the actions here, and the man of faith is under its power (verses 3, 4 and 6), he has not waited upon or sought God in the matter. Sarai sends Hagar away, but the Lord commands her to return and submit herself to her mistress (v. 6, 9). She must remain, and indeed be kept as an handmaid, even by Sarai, until the time when it can be said with God's approval "cast out the bondwoman and her son." Meanwhile the experience is that of learning that in the flesh there dwells no good thing, and that the law and the flesh by which alone its demands are sought to be fulfilled can only be at most an handmaid to grace; but it is when in this place that it can be made fruitful after its own order by showing on the one hand what we are, and on the other our helplessness to be, or do, what we desire. But in connection with this we are made to know that we are drinking at "the well of Him who liveth and seeth me" (Beer-lahai-roi), and it is the half way station between Bered, "hail" of judgment and Kadesh, the "sanctuary," our place of security and blessing. The issue of the experience is that "God will hear" (Ishmael), but it is not the experience which brings us into the sanctuary. What that means for us is not found in connection with Hagar, the bondmaid of Egypt, nor by means of what she typifies, law, which now, as the apostle declares, forms "the principles of the world" (Gal. 4:3), which are "weak and beggarly" (v. 9), to which there is to be no turning back.

The Lord now appears to Abram again, and the way in which He introduces Himself is perfectly suited to the preceding circumstances. "I am the Almighty God." Abram, did I not promise you a seed, and am I not able to fulfill my promise, am I not the Almighty? How

is it that you have tried to bring about the accomplishment of it, and that without ever inquiring of Me concerning the matter? "Walk before Me," you have been walking by sight and in impatience of spirit instead of by faith and as counting upon Me. "And be thou perfect," your actions and ways have been very imperfect for you have not been walking before Me. These words must have searched Abraham's heart, but then how sweet the grace that immediately affirms the covenant and renews the promise of great fruitfulness. No wonder Abram falls upon his face. He takes the place of humiliation, confession and worship. Then God opened up His mind and purpose to him in a still larger way (v. 4:22). It is at this time that his name is changed to Abraham, "father of a great multitude," from Abram, "father is high." This is done in connection with God's emphatic and amplified restatement of His covenant of promise. Then follows the institution of the rite of circumcision as the sign of the covenant. In type it is the cross and its application to us. In the 15th chapter the cross was before us in the sacrifice, but there in its relation to the promise and God's covenant, here it is in its application to us. It is the lesson of death as to the flesh and all that is of it, the perfect antidote to what the 16th chapter has shown us at work in the man of faith. All that is of this nature has been judged at the cross where our blessed Lord was made an offering for sin, condemning sin in the flesh, so that we are now to reckon that we "have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ" (Col. 2: 11 J. N. D.). If we constantly maintain the truth of this in our souls we will know practical deliverance and a walk not according to the flesh but the spirit.

If the lesson in circumcision is judgment and death, we now get in the promised fruitfulness of Sarah the lesson of resurrection, and so of that new life and portion which we obtain through it. Sarah, though 90 years old, is to have the son with whom all blessing is linked and God's covenant established. God acts in resurrection power when all according to nature is dead.

To bring forth fruit we must not only know but also maintain in our souls the truth of that new life which is the law of the spirit, even life in Christ Jesus. It is the truth of our identification with Him in resurrection which gives power, while faith reckons according to the judicial account of God that death has been passed upon all of the flesh and its evil.

In closing we have Abraham's appeal for Ishmael and God's promise. Even the man of nature, of the flesh, gains a blessing through the activity of faith, of faith which for itself rises up to the blessing of resurrection power. Thus in a general way Christianity has brought blessing to the world at large, to this all history witnesses, while as to the sphere of the individual, that which is of nature with him, which in one way belongs to the scene to which the flesh is attached, is brought into blessing, elevated above its own level through faith and the living truths in which it reposes. The closing scene of our chapter illustrates the beautiful faithfulness of testimony manifested in Abraham. He brings all connected with him into the knowledge of the covenanted blessings which God had proclaimed to him.

May we lay firmer hold of the truths which this history suggests to us, and be more faithful in both walk and testimony to Him who hath called us with a holy calling.

John Bloore.

#### THE BOOK ON THE COUNTER\*

In days long ago George Miles, of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, would hire a small native sailing-boat and travel up and down the Yang Tse River, preaching the Gospel and selling Bibles. "Yes, honored sir, I will buy one," said a shop-keeper in Hwang Shih Kang. He left the Gospel on his counter, however. Presently a customer entered. While waiting for his goods he read the Ma Ko Fu Yin (the Gospel of Mark). "What book is this?" he asked of the shopkeeper. "I never read it before." "Oh, honored sir," was the answer, "a missionary passed my shop selling those books, and I bought one. But it is of no interest to me; I beg you to take it with you." "Profound thanks," said the customer, and he placed the book in his pocket.

The customer was a scholarly man, a herbalist, who, after years of unbelief, now hungered after the truth. So great had this hunger after God become that he daily stood at the door of his house and worshipped the rising sun. It was the grandest object he could see. But still that soul-hunger remained. That same evening Chia K'un Shan sat down to study his book. He began at the beginning and read on far into the night. "This is what I need," he said to himself. "This tells me about the forgiveness of sins."

Before he retired he had finished the little book, and for the first time had read the story of Calvary. Chia K'un Shan was powerfully moved by what he read. The very next day he returned to the town and enquired for the missionary. But no one knew where he had gone. "When next he comes this way," said he to the shopkeeper, "please tell him I desire to see him." The meeting took place. Mr. Miles was amazed to find how Chia had grasped the truth. He gave him a complete New Testament and taught him to pray. Thus furnished with the armoury of prayer and of the Word of God, Chia returned home and announced that he had become a Christian. Then followed persecution. His brother and son declared he must cease this folly. He was watched, and allowed no time for quiet study or prayer. He was subjected to a hundred petty annoyances. But at night, when all were afraid to venture out because of wild animals and evil spirits, he crept away to the thicket of trees on the hilltop, and lighting a candle, read and prayed, and communed with his Lord.

Then persecution became still more active and violent. He was reported to the Government, and forthwith deprived of his official appointment. By this Chia lost one-half of his income.

But the brave man persevered. In June, 1891, he was baptized. By his daily Christ-life for twelve years, he lived down persecution. Many were won by him to a faith in Christ.

With his money and that of his converts a chapel was built, and had at last the joy of seeing his two sons ministering in that chapel. Before he died, sixty in his own village had accepted Christ as their Saviour.

"Read to me," said he to one of his sons, when he felt that the end was near. "My father, what shall I read?" "Why, of course, the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of John," he replied. The young man read those portions, and then prayed with his father. "I cannot talk," whispered the dying saint; "I am meditating with my Saviour." "Put into my hands my New Testament," he said, presently. They knew which he meant, and gave him the one which he had received from Mr. Miles. "My sins are heavy enough to send me to hell, but Jesus Saves." When we scatter the good seed of God's Word, we may be certain of this, that it will not be lost, but will bear fruit in due season.

H. D. L.

### FAITH IN GOD

There is always strength in looking to God, but if the mind rests upon the weakness otherwise than to cast it upon God, it becomes unbelief. Difficulties may arise, God may allow many things to come in to prove our weakness, but the simple path of faith is to go on not looking beforehand at what we have to do, but reckoning upon the help that we shall need and find when the time arrives. It was no matter to David whether it was the lion, the bear, or this giant of the Philistines; it was all one to him, for in himself he was as weak in the presence of one as in the other, but he went on quietly doing his duty, taking it for granted that God would be with him. **This is Faith.**

J. N. D.

### GOD IS GOOD

"Thou art good, and doest good" (Psa. cxix. 68.)

God is so good! But none the less in sorrow,  
Than when we walk along a path of light;  
For these are stars that day can never borrow,  
And God's best promises shine best at night.

God is so good! Oh for a tongue of fire!  
Oh for a heart to feel it as I should!  
Lord, I am Thine! my heart and tongue inspire,  
Till my whole life proclaim that God is good!

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**"THOU KNOWEST ALL THINGS"\***

Here is the response of faith. "Thou knowest!"—what a pillow for the heart to repose upon! "Thou knowest!"—what few but comprehensive words to sum up and express the heart's difficulties and perplexities and trials. "Thou knowest!"—what an inexpressibly sweet resting-place in the midst of life's tumultuous heavings; in the midst of a sea that knows no calm; in the midst of a scene in which tossings to and fro are the hourly history! What an answer they contain for every heart that can find no words to express its big emotions; for a heart whose sorrows are too deep for language to find its way to God! Oh, that they were ever uppermost in the soul, as the response to every difficulty in our path! They are God's answer to everything we cannot fathom; God's answer for our hearts to rest upon, and our lips to utter, when every way is hedged up so that we cannot pass. "Lord, thou knowest!" Rest here, believer. Lean thy soul on these words. Rest calmly on the bosom of thy God, and carry them with thee into every scene of life.

F. W.

**"JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING"**

There must be thorns amid life's flowers,  
you know,  
And you and I, wherever we may go,  
Can find no bliss that is not mixed with  
pain—  
No path without a cloud. It would be vain  
For me to wish that not a single tear  
Might dim the gladness of what you hold  
dear.  
I am not wise enough to understand  
All that is best for you. The Master's  
hand  
Must sometimes touch life's saddest chords  
to reach  
Its sweetest music, and His child to teach  
To trust His love, till the long, weeping  
night  
Is all forgotten in the morning light.  
Trust—trust Him, then, and thus shall  
good or ill

Your trustful soul with present blessing  
fill.

Each loss is truest gain if, day by day,  
He fills the place of all He takes away!

**BROKEN COMMUNION**

"I sought Him, but I found Him not."—  
Song of Sol. 3:1.

Tell me where you lost the company of Christ and I will tell you the most likely place to find Him. Have you lost Christ in the closet by restraining prayer? Then it is there you must seek and find Him. Did you lose Christ by sin? You will find him in no other way than by the judging of the sin, and seeking by the Holy Spirit to mortify the member in which the lust doth well. Did you lose Christ by neglecting the Scriptures? You must find Him in the Scriptures. It is a true proverb: "Look for a thing where you dropped it; it is there." So look for Christ where you lost Him, for He has not gone away. "Return," says He. That implies that the departure has all been on your side.

S.

**ALL THE WAY HOME**

Read the following scriptures:

- (1) Mark 4:35-41. A Stormy Sea.
- (2) Matt. 14:13-21. A Desert Place.
- (3) Matt. 16:28 and 17:1-13. A Mountain Top.
- (4) Matt. 26:36-54. A Garden.

At first sight there may not seem to be much connection between these passages, but one thing may be easily seen, they were all places where the Lord Jesus was. One scene a stormy sea, the next a desert scene, the third a mountain top scene, and the fourth a garden scene. These different experiences are all our portion as we pass through this scene with Him. The Lord never waited for Sunday or a pulpit in order to preach the Word. He preached at all times and in all kinds of places. Being "full of grace and truth" He was always ready to distribute it. He had also different things for different people; unlike a patent medicine vendor, who assumes to

cure all kinds of diseases with the same medicine. When a blind man, an Israelite, cries: "O Lord, thou Son of David, have mercy on me," He gives him sight at his call. Not so, however, with the Canaanitish woman who beseeches Him in the same way: "O Lord, thou Son of David." He answers her not a word, although pressed to do so by His disciples. The blind man was an Israelite, and she was not, but a Canaanite, and as such she had no claim whatever upon Him, and had to be taught her true place, and then He took His. A young woman, upon hearing some who were attending the meeting singing hymns this morning, said, "I don't make any profession, but I believe in the Golden Rule." She might as well try to stop Niagara Falls with a straw as to carry out the Sermon on the Mount while unsaved. God hates hypocrites, and will judge them, if they continue such, but many say that they make no profession, but everybody in the world professes something, and those who claim to make no profession often make the loudest profession of all, as to living Christianity without Christ.

In Mark 4, the Lord had been teaching some of His wonderful parables, and then said: "Let us pass over unto the other side. . . . And they took Him even as He was in the ship." Twelve men went with Him in the right ship. We read that there were "other little ships," which are put in contrast with the one with Christ on board, which came safely to the other side. So there is only one way to be saved while there are ten thousand ways to be lost. There is only one ship with Jesus on, so make sure of the right ship. Have you heard Him say: "Take passage with Me"? A lady once asked us, "What is this Conversion? Once I was going through an old church when I felt a holy feeling come over me, do you think that was it?" "Fifty 'good' feelings may have Satan at the back of them, did you ever have a bad feeling come over you? Did you ever face your sins? For our Lord says, "Except ye be converted, ye shall all likewise perish." Let us then pass over unto the other side, take passage with Christ, step aboard and leave the world behind—then chartered with Him He will take us all safely to the other side. The first day we learned that

the Brethren included all true Christians was while taking a brother around and we called on a poor woman in much trouble but a Christian. In ministering to this woman the brother spoke from Mark 4. He had an impediment in his speech and sometimes could not say what he wished. With much difficulty could he utter the word "p-p-p-pillow," as he sought to show that some one loved our Lord enough to put a pillow beneath His head. We can each do so, as we accept His will, do what He wants us to, and so make a pillow for Him.

When we repent of our sins and trust Christ we step on board His ship, then we should trust Him at all times. He retires to the back of the ship and is asleep on a pillow. Look at Him, journeying on to be the Sin-Bearer, and saying to His Father, "Thy will be done." He is to see us safely across, but the disciples are not satisfied to have Him lying there asleep and come to Him to wake Him up. They should have rested (in their hearts at least) in seeing Him rest, but they come and say, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" We, too, worry about many things down here which is a dishonor to Christ. He knew it was best for them to be tested by this storm. So sickness, sorrow, poverty and trials may come to us but let us turn to the Lord in it all. (2 Chron. 16:12.) Part of our education in going through this world is lessons in the stormy sea, in the desert, on the mountain top, and in the garden. The disciples think if a calm would come, they would be all right, but when it does come, they are still not at rest, the storm seems to go into their hearts. So if our troubles were removed we think how happy we would be, but it would not be so. Let Jesus sleep on then and let us have the storm. He needs to speak to our hearts rather than change our circumstances.

2. Why did He go to a desert place? He went to be alone, but the multitudes following, He does not turn them away. He ministers to them. He says, "If this be my Father's will, let it be done." He, at once, addresses Himself to the need at hand. He again tests His disciples, too, and they find they are shut up to Him with no resources outside of Him. Look at our desert places—sickness and death, loss of

business, poverty of circumstances, etc., but to meet all Christ is enough. Sometimes a meeting may have dwindled down to but two or three, that too may be a desert place. But Enoch walked with God and had no meetings to attend. We do not need anything but Christ to be a happy people. Here Christ gives another command, "make the men sit down." There is no bread in sight, so it brings faith into activity—is a test of faith for both the disciples and the multitude. While they are standing up there are many different heights, but when they get down, they are all the same size. So we read, "For there is no difference, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." At the end they have more left than when they began to pass the bread around.

3. Matthew gives us eight mountain scenes, each one of which shows us the Lord in a different character, e. g., in chap. 5 we have Him as the Divine Teacher; in chap. 24, as the Prophet; here (chap. 17), as the King. When they were doing wonderful things in His Name they must be brought to a desert place apart, when He would give them courage for the rugged way He takes them up into an "exceeding high mountain." He wants them to see Him in His Coming Glory. Peter says, "Lord it is good for us to be here; that odious us. "Let us make three tabernacles"—more wrong again. But Peter was "sore afraid and wist not what to say," surely a time to stop talking. God says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." Peter in his Epistle later speaks of his rebuke, but not of himself, as he did then.

4. The last, a garden scene, generally a beautiful place. Judas is gone—one result of choosing silver instead of Christ. He comes with His disciples to Gethsemane (the place of oil presses). To eight of them He says, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." And three of them are led further on, brought into closer communion, and are given a double command—"watch and pray." They failed in both, their eyes being heavy with sleep. Not one of us can claim faithfulness. "While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." If it depended upon our watchfulness, none would go when the Lord came.

Eight of them are told, "Sit here"—they fail to do it. Three are told "watch and pray," and three times He comes to waken them up. He says to Peter, "What! could ye not watch with Me one hour?" After coming the third time, He stands over those sleeping forms, and keeps watch for them until the multitude comes with Judas at their head, then bids them, "Rise, let us be going," etc. Christ our Lord with us then pledges our safe conduct all the way home, whether on a stormy sea, through wilderness experiences, on the mountain tops or in a garden. Let Him then do what He will with us. It is sure to be right. "His will be done." B. C. G.

### LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM'S HISTORY The Fellowship of Faith in the Place of Separation Gen. 18-19.

We have seen in a brief way the great contrast between the two preceding chapters of Abraham's history, and now in the two chapters before us we also get what puts in sharpest contrast the child of God in the place of true fellowship and separation, and the child of God immersed in the world.

In the 18th chapter we get four precious lessons: 1st, the tent door and the feast; 2nd, grace alone fruitful through resurrection; 3rd, the place of revelation as to God's purposes; 4th, the place of power where intercession can be made. These are the features which mark the dwelling of the man of faith at Mamre in Hebron (chap. 13:18), while in the next chapter we find the sad consequences of departure into the world and dwelling in the midst of it. Here Lot's history shows the pitiful results of choosing present material advantages and consequent worldly associations rather than the path of faith as illustrated in Abraham. We see that there is the loss of all true testimony as worldly place and influence are gained; and when a crisis comes there is no power to deliver others, even one's own kin (v. 14). How often this sad history has been repeated. May the Lord open our eyes to anything that would tend to lead into such a course and deliver us from it. Blessing and the power to bless are alone connected with the man of faith and separation (v. 29).

We turn with relief to the bright features of the preceding scene with the prayer that by His grace they may characterize us, for we are to walk by faith, not by sight. The beginning of our chapter carries us back in thought to the close of the 13th, of which we have previously spoken, and perfectly in accord with the lesson it taught us we see Abraham in his pilgrim tent doubtless in quiet meditation as he rested during the heat of the day. It is when thus engaged that the Lord appears to us and we are bowed in worship before Him and soon spread a feast for His entertainment. Pilgrim character, communion, worship and service are here all linked together in divine order. The Lord finds refreshment and rest, then a feast in company with His loved ones. May we, indeed, thus minister to Him by the way. The water may suggest to us the Word of God; the tree and its shade as affording a place of rest, of what the Lord finds His own to be to Him, for we are trees of the Lord's planting, while certainly the elements of the feast speak of Christ Himself. The three measures of meal kneaded and baked upon the hearth are typical of Christ as the perfect heavenly man, yet subject to suffering because of the nature of the scene through which He moved. In the calf we see His type as the perfect Servant and Sacrifice. A sweet and holy picture. May we know more of its reality for ourselves and so contribute to His own joy and pleasure.

Out of communion fruitfulness springs forth. This is suggested to us in the promise made concerning Sarah. It is when nature is found dead and useless that grace is made fruitful and this alone by the word and power of God. It is the truth of resurrection, of new life and power given to us from God. Thus communion is ever the occasion upon which we are made acquainted with the thought and purpose of the Divine Mind, this both as it relates to ourselves the special object of God's love, and as to the world. The Lord graciously brings His own into an intimate knowledge of His counsels. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.

Out of this place of intimacy there develops the privilege and power of interces-

sion. We see Abraham thus engaged in the closing part of our chapter, and from the Lord's response it is evidently pleasing to Him that His "friend" should thus make his appeal. There is the energy of love in Abraham. He does not forget his unthankful and unfaithful relative, but we see how faith works by love in him. We, too, are to fill an interesting place (1 Tim. 2:1-4), and who could be better equipped for it? Has not God made known to us His own purpose and grace for us? He has given us peace through the precious blood, has made us sons through faith, and has given us eternal glory as our portion. But then He has also revealed to us the future of this world through which we pass that we may be in fellowship with His mind and order all our manner of life in view of what He has given us to know. It is in view of these things, which find illustration in our chapter that we are to be intercessors before the Lord. May the truth He has imparted to us both sanctify and enable us to be deliverers of those ensnared by the world and in danger of being condemned with it.

When the day of judgment breaks the man of faith stands in the place of communion and looks out upon the scene of destruction. He loses nothing through the overthrow, not having had one interest or hope in those cities of the plain. He had been separate from them, his portion found outside their bounds, a portion in fellowship with God. Blessed place! How different it is with Lot. All his interests and possessions are found in the doomed cities. He is saved as by fire, and all his works burnt up. Sad, pitiful end! Truly, the mind of the flesh is death, and if one sows to his flesh he reaps corruption (Rom. 8:6, 13; Gal. 6:8). Abraham is after the mind of the Spirit, and has life and peace. Let us through the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body and live, that as thus sowing to the Spirit we may of the Spirit reap during this present time the joy and blessing of life everlasting.

John Bloore.

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