

DAVID

A Man After God's Own Heart

Lessons and Devotions from the Life of David



He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus.

Acts 13:22-23

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Other books in this series:

Jesus Christ: The Only Begotten Son

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CONTENTS

- 1 SAUL'S ANOINTING 1**
 - Samuel The Last Judge 2
 - Saul Anointed The First King of Israel 14
 - Saul Rejected 26

- 2 DAVID'S FIRST ANOINTING 37**
 - The Shepherd Boy 38
 - David Anointed by Samuel 74
 - David and Goliath 89
 - David and Jonathan 95
 - Saul's Jealousy of David 99
 - David Flees From Saul 104
 - Saul's Misery and Decline 120

- 3 DAVID'S SECOND ANOINTING 131**
 - David Anointed Over Judah 132
 - David's Kindness 135
 - Israel and Judah At War 137

- 4 DAVID'S THIRD ANOINTING 145**
 - David Anointed Over All Israel 146
 - The Ark Of The Covenant 152
 - God's Covenant With David 157
 - David Finds Mephibosheth 168
 - David's Greatest Sin 172
 - Psalms 23 186
 - O Absalom 194
 - David's Gratitude 211
 - David Numbers the People 214
 - The Temple of The LORD 218
 - David's Final Chapter 230

- Index of Scriptures 257**

- Appendix 263**

The entries contained herein highlight some of the more pronounced experiences of David's life and have been incorporated with the Psalms and other Scriptures. The Psalms used throughout the book in conjunction with the accounts of David's life are used thematically, not necessarily historically. Many of the Psalms used, David indeed wrote at the time of the noted event or period in his life, but most are used simply for their theme and lesson.

Scriptures in the heading of each excerpt are in the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

Excerpts have been taken from the writings of C. T. Russell, author of *Zion's Watchtower* and other works. Reprint numbers or references are included after each entry.



May these writings serve as a source of personal reflection and devotion, as a reminder, an encouragement and an inspiration to the reader. While the words were written over a century ago, they still hold true today more than ever as the establishment of Christ's Kingdom approaches very near.

DAVID

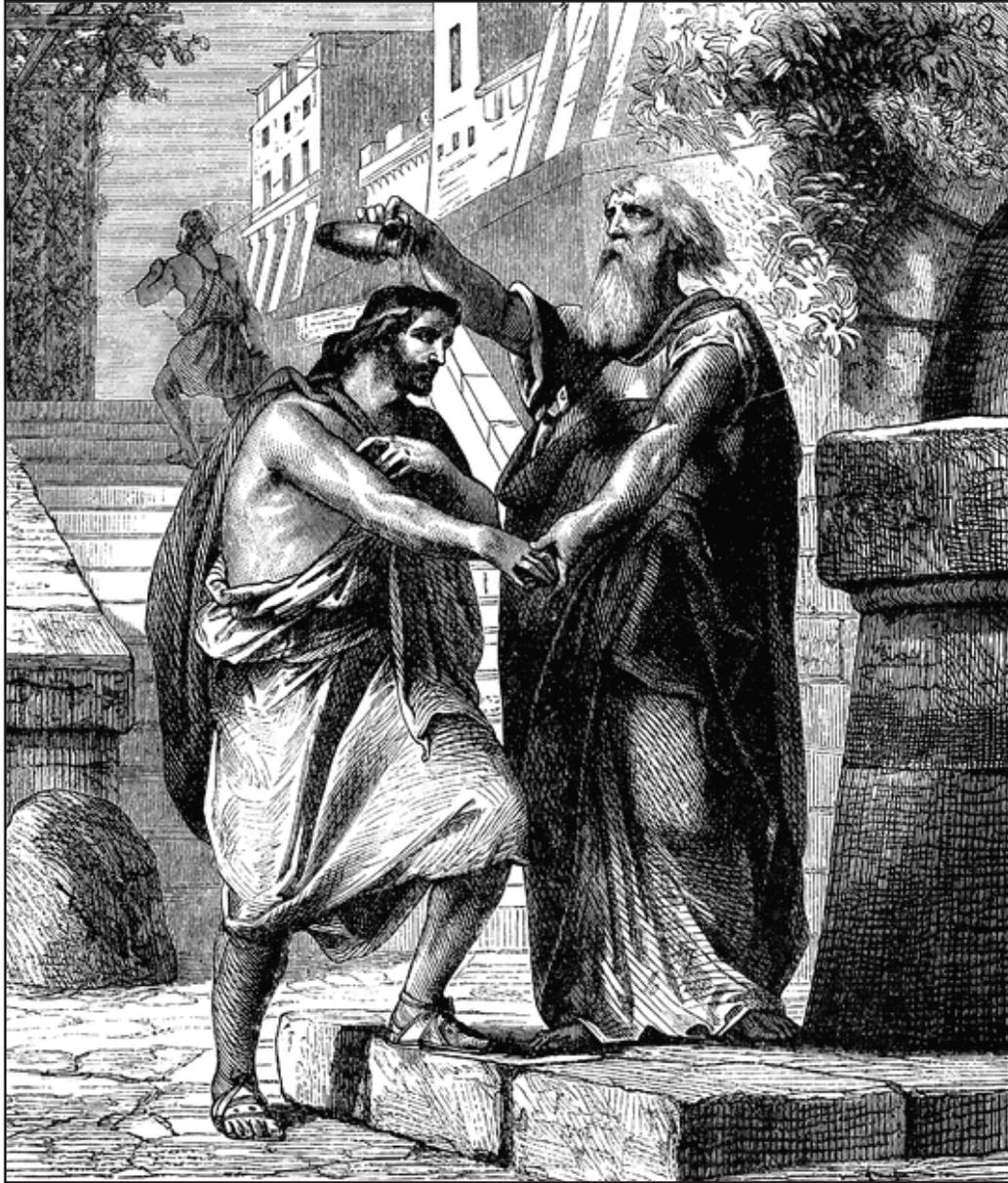
was a man of a high and varied order of natural ability, a combination of the rare qualities of the successful statesman, warrior, musician and poet. His disposition was, in the main, noble, generous, humble, kind, enthusiastic and heroic. He was reverential toward God, and seemed from his youth to have almost implicit faith in the promises and providences of God. Yet David was not a model saint: there were some strange inconsistencies in his character which stand out the more prominently in contrast with the beautiful and noble traits which fill us with admiration. But since these, so far as he was able to see them, were most sincerely repented of, we can appreciate the humility that led to repentance, and regard David from the same standpoint of that loving and merciful consideration from which God regards all his fallen and weak followers who struggle against inherent depravity, humbly acknowledging their shortcomings, and leaning upon his tender mercy. While in his youth, when God was about to anoint him king of Israel, it was said of David, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart." (1 Samuel 13:14).

The record of David's course from the time of his anointing to his establishment in the kingdom shows an implicit trust in God—that he who had called and anointed him was able also in his own good time to bring him to the throne and to establish his kingdom. He took no measures whatever to displace Saul, nor to undermine his authority, even when Saul was pursuing him to take his life. And when Saul was unconsciously in his power, so that he could have slain him, he would not put forth his hand to touch the Lord's anointed. He was willing to wait patiently the Lord's time, knowing that what God had promised he was able also to perform; and so, even after Saul's death, he was not in haste to claim the vacated office, but he first inquired of the Lord to know if his time had come.

Thus God not only chose, but trained, his servant for the duties to which he had called him. And this providence in David's case reminds us of God's providences in general, how wisely he adapts means to ends and guides in all things to the accomplishment of his will. Many of the most comforting psalms of David were the results of his hard experiences in this time of his exile. In fact, the peculiar and varied experiences of the man, and the lessons derived from those experiences as expressed in his psalms, have been the comfort and blessing of God's people in all ages since. In a general way, David's experiences correspond to those of the gospel Church whom God is similarly preparing for the Kingdom of heaven. And doubtless it is for this reason that the lessons of David's experience find an echo in so many of our hearts.

On coming to the throne David's course was marked with the same wisdom and magnanimity that had characterized him previously. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice" —is prophetic of that blessed time when the antitype of David's throne, the Kingdom of Jehovah's Anointed, our Lord Jesus, shall be established in all the earth. Then indeed may the earth rejoice; for that king will reign in righteousness, and justice and judgment will be the habitation of his throne. R. 1996

SAUL'S ANOINTING



*I gave you a king in My anger, and took him away in My wrath.
Hosea 13:11*

Samuel The Last Judge

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

– Proverbs 22:6 –

We must not forget that Samuel's training was with Eli, and that the sons of the latter turned out to be bribe-takers and generally scandalous in their misinterpretation of the divine law and justice. It was not, therefore, that Samuel was under the best environment and best teachers that would account for his grandeur of character and fidelity to principle. We must look further back, and find it in the fact that his parents consecrated him to the Lord, not only when a child but before his birth, and that this favorable influence contributed to his being well born in the reverence of the Lord. Undoubtedly the thoughts of parents, especially of the mother, during the period of a child's gestation, have great influence upon its mental character. Every child should be born with a large reverence for God, for justice, for truth, for goodness. To be thus born surely signifies a favorable start in the way of righteousness under present conditions. And we may be sure that the child thus begotten and born was well trained up to the time of his presentation to the Lord's service under Eli. Here we have a fresh testimony to the fact that if a child be trained up in the way he should go he is not likely to depart therefrom. Oh, that Christian parents could realize what a responsibility is in their hands in respect to the training of their children, and especially during their most impressionable years! R. 4193

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
Deuteronomy 6:5-9



I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven. I will give to your descendants all these lands, and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

– Genesis 26:4 –

Israel's national organization in the times of the judges was merely a voluntary and sentimental one. In reality each tribe managed its own affairs within its own border, and the heads of the tribes constituted its judges in ordinary affairs. The only thing which cemented the union between these tribes was the oneness of their speech and blood; but above all, the oneness of their hope toward God, based first upon the Covenant made with Abraham, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This promise was understood to include the nation of Israel—cemented as a nation by the Law Covenant, which was instituted through Moses its Mediator and which bound the nation to Jehovah as his people and servants, and Jehovah to that nation as its Law-Giver and King. The divine promise to Israel was that so long as they should walk in the statutes of the divine Law they would be God's peculiar people and receive his peculiar blessings in all their temporal affairs as well as in their higher interests of character development. But if they should neglect him and his statutes and ordinances he would chasten them with pestilences, with captivities, etc. Nevertheless, if they should repent and cry unto the Lord and seek again to do his will and to obey his laws, he would hearken unto them and raise up for them deliverers, who as his representatives, would judge them, i.e., would see that they obtained deliverance, help, instruction, guidance.

—Judges 2:16,18. R. 4192

When the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge.
Judges 2:18

Prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only.

– 1 Samuel 7:3 –

The government of Israel was different from that of every other government in the world. God was their real King, and in his providences, according to the covenant he had made with them, he supervised their affairs—whether by permitting them to go into temporary captivity to their enemies, because of sins and unfaithfulness to him, or by prospering the nation and delivering them and guiding their efforts favorably when living in obedience to him. Under the judgeship of Samuel they had no king, no emperor, no one except the Lord, to hold an autocratic position, and whose word would be law—the judges raised up for them from time to time being providentially guided by the Lord. The government was not a republic in the present day understanding of that term. The people did not choose their own head, or president, or judge; they merely looked for the leadings of divine providence and accepted such judges as the Lord raised up for them. Their condition was a most happy one in many respects: how much better to have the Lord's providential guidance in all our affairs than to trust in our own wisdom or in the wisdom of some other man or some royal family! R. 3216

If you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

Deuteronomy 28:1

2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: 3 Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. 5 Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 6 Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. 7 The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face. They shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. 8 The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. 9 The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. 10 Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. 11 And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. 12 The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 13 And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail. You shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. 14 So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Deuteronomy 28:2-14

Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day.

– Proverbs 23:17 –

Samuel was recognized by all the tribes as the divine representative and judge of Israel. Throughout his judgeship he traveled hither and thither, apparently hearing and deciding such cases as were too difficult for the local judges. Under his wise judgeship the Israelites were greatly blessed; but with their returning prosperity came the ambition to be like the nations round about them—to be a united kingdom under the dominion of a king who would lead them in war and rule over them as an entire nation and centralize their power and energy.

From every worldly standpoint the people decided wisely, but from the divine standpoint unwisely. They appealed to Samuel as God's representative, to anoint over them a king, and thus establish in their midst a central authority. "Distance lends enchantment to the view," is a common adage, which was true in Israel's case. As they looked at the nations round about them they beheld the glories of the king, his armies, his officers, his chariots. Such kings were war-lords to their people, and more or less the dignity, authority and power of these kings represented these qualities in the nations under them. The Israelites saw not the grievous burdens under which many of the people labored as a result of such kingly dignity and glory. They saw merely the outward glitter, and not the anguish and labor of the people who supported these kings. As we look into the matter from the divine standpoint, we may reach the divine conclusion that they were making a poor choice when they preferred to have a kingdom rather than a republic under a divine King. R. 4193

**Now make us a king to
judge us like all the nations.
1 Samuel 8:5**

I make peace and create calamity. I, the LORD, do all these things.

– Isaiah 45:7 –

[Israel's desire to have a king] would have been very commendable human prudence, and might be considered sound judgment in any other nation than the nation of Israel; but in their case it was not. They were forgetting, or rather ignoring, the fact that the Lord was their king, and that all their affairs present and future were in his hands; that so long as they were faithful to their covenant with him they should have peace and prosperity, and that no evil should befall them and no enemy could overcome them unless God permitted it as a punishment for national sins, as the Lord himself declared, saying, "Shall there be evil in a city, and I have not done it?" "I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." (Amos 3:6; Isa. 45:7.) This was not true of any other nation. Consequently Israel would have suffered no lack of prosperity or safety had they closely adhered to the Lord's leading. They had a powerful, though invisible, king, before whom none of their enemies could stand, and their only right course was to be loyal and obedient subjects. And if they were apprehensive of trouble in the future it was their privilege to draw near God; and in putting away sin and closely following him and committing themselves to his care, they would have been safe in every condition. R. 1887

He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

– Ephesians 1:22-23 –

The Lord's people of today may draw a valuable lesson in connection with the divine supervision of spiritual Israel. The Lord organized the Church very much along the same lines as he organized natural Israel. He is the Head of the Church—the guide and director and instructor of the Church. He guarantees that all things shall work together for good to those who love him and follow his guidance. For a time the Lord's people were content with such leadership as he raised up for them in his own way, content that the Lord should direct through the leaders of Zion and that no man should be called lord, or master, or king. For a time spiritual Israel looked only for such instructors, lawgivers, judges, teachers and assistants in the spiritual way as the Lord in his providences raised up for them. But, by and by, there came a time when they said, Let us make us a king—let us have a head in the Christian Church such as there is in all the heathen religions around us. The Lord had already pointed out to his people a great Leader by whom he had made them free; that they all were brethren, and that only one was Lord and Master; that they should recognize no man as lord, and should recognize each other only as servants; and that the one who served most thoroughly—through

**He is the head of the body,
the church.
Colossians 1:18**

the Lord's supervision—was to be esteemed as raised up and provided by divine providence for the service, and to be esteemed in proportion to his humility and loyalty to the Lord and his Word. R. 3217

**For us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.
1 Corinthians 8:6**

The spirit of subserviency and the desire to have a head led, first, to a division amongst the Lord's people into two classes called clergy and laity, a division not recognized nor sanctioned in the Word of the Lord; and, secondly, amongst the clergy it led to the exaltation of some, called archbishops, to the position of lordship over districts; and, thirdly, it led to the choice amongst the archbishops of one to be a chief, or pope; and ultimately it led to this chief being considered infallible and a divinely appointed king over spiritual Israel. As there were some better and some worse amongst the kings of natural Israel, so there were some better and some worse amongst the popes who ruled in spiritual Israel for centuries. Finally, as there was a split in the kingdom of Israel between the ten tribes and the two tribes, so there came in time a split in spiritual Israel nominal, and Protestantism arose, no longer recognizing the popes as kings in spiritual Israel. However, the spirit of subserviency being still present, and the spirit of liberty wherewith Christ had made his people free being still lacking, the Reformation movement led to the appointment and recognition of numerous petty kingdoms in spiritual Israel—the Lutheran house and the Episcopal house and the Presbyterian house and the Methodist house, etc., etc., with their various ecclesiastical princes and potentates, doctors of divinity, etc. —lording it over God's heritage. —1 Pet. 5:3. R. 3217

And the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.”

– 1 Samuel 8:7 –

Few characters shine out on the pages of history with such a pure light as does Samuel. When the Israelites made the request for a king Samuel was grieved. He knew he had served the people faithfully, that he had been self-sacrificing and generous to the last degree, spending his life in their interest. It seemed strange to him that a people should be so unthankful. But the Lord pointed out that their ingratitude was not to Samuel, but to their great King, Jehovah, saying, “They have not rejected thee but me.” Nevertheless, the Lord bade Samuel hearken to the request of the people and anoint them a king, meantime assuring them that the truth of the divine prediction would be fully verified and that they were really choosing second best rather than the best. It was then that Samuel dismissed the people, assuring them that their request would be granted and a king anointed—such a one as the Lord would direct. Meantime Samuel wrote out for the people a statement or report of his judgeship, recorded in chapter 12. In this he shows most distinctly how he had avoided bribery and in everything had sought to do the will of the Lord, and he called upon the people to witness to the truthfulness of this, and they did, and attested it. What a noble character! R. 4193

The Lord pointed out that the people were not rejecting Samuel, but were rejecting him. Indeed, that they had not rejected Samuel was evident from the fact that they came to him with the request. It was their lack of faith in the Lord that led them to fear what would happen after Samuel should die, or when his usefulness should become impaired through old age. The Lord points out that this had been the attitude of Israel from the first— “all the works that they have done since I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherein they have forsaken me and served other gods, —so do they also unto thee.” They, of course, forsook Samuel as their judge; for the king whom he would anoint would be the judge instead. But the discredit to Samuel was nothing in comparison to their discrediting and rejecting the One whom he represented. R. 3217

**He is your praise, and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen.
– Deuteronomy 10:21 –**

Of all crimes, ingratitude appears to be one of the most inexcusable, and has so been esteemed amongst all people and at all times. Lycurgus, the great law-giver and statesman of Greece, wrote, “I make no law, perhaps, punishing ingratitude; I leave that for the gods to punish.” Amongst the Athenians, if a slave, being freed, was afterward convicted of ingratitude toward his liberator, he was sent back again into slavery. Someone has written, “Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul; and the heart of man knoweth none more fragrant.” Shakespeare wrote:

*This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stabbed,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms,
Quite vanquished him; then burst his mighty heart.*

Gratitude not only is a fragrant flower, but is indigenous to the soul of every true and noble heart. Accepting this standard, we are bound to conclude that comparatively few of the human family are noble in this respect. Even amongst the Lord's people the grateful seem to be comparatively few in number.



Who shall say that amongst those who have accepted the divine call and been made partakers of the divine favors granted to all the sons of God, begotten of the Spirit—who shall say that these will remain ungrateful? Who shall say that the grace of God would not have a transforming influence on their hearts, so that however ungrateful they might be by nature, they would be so changed by grace that gratitude would be one of the chief elements of their disposition?

Who shall say that the grace of God would not have a transforming influence on their hearts, so that however ungrateful they might be by nature, they would be so changed by grace that gratitude would be one of the chief elements of their disposition?

We believe that this is true; and that the Lord's people may in considerable degree measure their spiritual growth and development in this manner. If they find in themselves a spirit of murmuring and complaining against the Lord, it is a sure sign that they are ungrateful; for we know that he is faithful, and faith tells us that it is surely true

Gratitude is therefore a keeping power in our hearts, there to repel the suggestions of the evil one, and to stop our imperfect fleshly mind if it attempts to assert itself. Gratitude is closely akin to love; and where they dwell together in the heart, there is little room for the Adversary to get in his work.

that all the experiences of life permitted to come to us are working for our good. (Rom. 8:28.) Whoever has this faith can give thanks to the Lord and can rejoice even through his trial and sorrow. And if we have gratitude to God for his blessings and favors, if we cultivate the true nobility of heart which is impelled by love and appreciation of divine care, it will make us appreciative of all the affairs of life and of all those with whom we have contact. R. 4200

O Israel, you are destroyed, but your help is from Me. I will be your King!

– Hosea 13:9 –

What might have been the condition of Israel had they not prayed for a king, we cannot know particularly; but we can know, on the strength of the Lord's Word, that it would have been more favorable to them if they had been in a condition of heart which would have led them to thank God for his care, and to rejoice in him as their King, and to have made no such petition for an earthly monarch as is here recorded. The Lord through the Prophet Hosea (13:9-11) intimates that the answer of this prayer for a king was disadvantageous to the nation; saying, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath."

The king whom the Lord intends to give to Israel and to the world is Messiah. In due time the Lord will set his king upon his holy hill Zion; the law shall go forth from Mount Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; in his day the righteous shall flourish and evil doers shall be cut off. The Lord took away the kings of Israel when the people went into captivity to Babylon; there have been no independent kings of their nation since. Today, after centuries of experience without a king of their own, and under various kings of various nations, they are probably in a better condition of heart than ever before to receive the great blessing which God intends to bring to them first amongst the nations of the world. The prophet declares of them respecting Messiah's Kingdom, that they shall be ready to hail it and shall say, "This is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us." They certainly had serious experiences, not only under their own kings, but under all the kings of the earth; they certainly should be glad that the time shall again come when the Lord will be King over them—and over all the earth; when he shall restore to them a system of lawgivers and judges, and bless all the families of the earth through the seed of Abraham, —Messiah and his bride, the overcomers of spiritual Israel. — Gal. 3:16,29. R. 3217

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

– James 4:3 –

How many of us in our ignorance and blindness have at some time in life prayed for the various systems of bondage, for the various sects of Christendom, and labored, too, for their upbuilding, only to find ourselves injured spiritually by that which we prayed for and labored for. We asked amiss, as did the Elders of Israel, while, instead, our hearts as well as theirs should have inquired continually for the ways of the Lord, for his leadings, not asking to have him favor and bless that which we ignorantly and mistakenly supposed to be for his glory and our own good. Let us learn to pray aright, as well as to labor and to hope aright; and in order so to do let us be swift to hear, slow to speak, swift to hearken to the Word of the Lord and to the lesson which he has already given us, and to his method of instructing us and guiding us and blessing us. Let us be slow to tell him what our preferences are; indeed, let us seek to attain that development of Christian character which will permit us always not to seek our own wills, but the will and way of our Father in heaven. The properly exercised and heart-developed children of God should expect to attain to the place where all of their prayers are answered, and answered in the best possible way, and most satisfactorily, because the Lord's Word dwells in them richly. They would not ask amiss—would not ask anything contrary to the divine will and providences; but rather, trusting to the divine wisdom, their prayer would be,

"Lord, thy will, not mine, be done." R. 3217

I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.

– Isaiah 1:26 –

The Israelites had passed through several centuries of divine guidance under the judges, and we have comparatively little knowledge of their progress during that time, the history of that period being much less ample than that which followed their organization as a kingdom; but we may be sure, nevertheless, that their spiritual interests were really forwarded more under the judges than under the kings. Centralization of government does not always mean greater blessing and progress. It usually means less in individuality and personal progress. A similar condition of things is noticed in the history of the Church. We have no history whatever of that period which followed the days of the apostles for more than a century, for the same reason that we have no history regarding the real Church, which is unrecognized of men. “The world knoweth us not.” That the rule of the judges was superior to that of the kings is evident from the Lord’s promise to Israel, “I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning.” (Isa. 1:26.) The lawgivers as at the first will be the greater than Moses—the Christ, Head and Body. The judges as at the beginning will be the Ancient Worthies, in full authority as the prophets or teachers and judges amongst men, under the supervision of Immanuel’s heavenly Kingdom. R. 4201

Before that grand condition—of which the Jewish law-givers and judges were merely the crudest types—can be realized, it will be necessary for the great King Immanuel to take his great power and reign and subdue all things unto himself. Then, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power” —they will be ready to hearken to the voice of the Lord through those whom he will eventually appoint and recognize as his mouthpieces. R. 3216

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things.

– Hebrews 1:1-2 –

In view of the danger of placing great power in the hands of a ruler and the advisability of the republican form of government of the people, by the people and for the people, the question arises, How will it be with Immanuel’s Kingdom? We reply that the Scriptures teach that his Empire will be autocratic in the extreme. Nevertheless, no one who understands the matter need have any fear, as he who is to take the throne to be the Emperor of the World is the one who so loved the world as to give himself a ransom for all. Instead of his Empire being one of selfishness; which would ruin its subjects for its own aggrandizement, he has shown his Spirit to be the very reverse of this, in that he left the glory of the higher courts and humbled himself to a lower nature and became man’s substitute, a ransom for man’s penalty, “tasted death for every man.” It is this One who is now highly exalted and appointed heir of all things.

Who need fear an autocratic government in the hands of such a glorious King? Indeed, we may say that such a government will be the most helpful, the most profitable, that the world could possibly have—wise, just, loving, helpful! While others are seeking for earthly honors, earthly name and fame and substance, let us who have been called to this high calling lay aside every weight and every besetting sin and, by the Lord’s assistance, gain this great prize of joint-heirship with our Master in his Kingdom and have a share with him in the blessing and uplifting of mankind! R. 4193

So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king.

– 1 Samuel 8:10 –

The Lord was willing to let them have their experiences with kings; nevertheless, Samuel was instructed to fully inform them what would be the consequences, what would be the manners of the kings, what would be the difficulties. He explained that their liberties would be fewer—that the kings would exercise a more or less autocratic power and would conscript their sons for servants and for soldiers and for public works, and that thus their liberties would be greatly abridged, the wealth of the people would more or less flow into the coffers of the king, and the best of their lands and of everything would gradually pass into his control. Instead of being the sovereigns, the people would be the slaves of the sovereign, retaining at best only a portion of their rights, etc.

The people, however, had set their heart on having a king. Already they were imagining how a king would lead them forth and give them dignity, marshal their hosts, and cause fear of them in the hearts of their enemies. R. 5636

Respecting Samuel's moral heroism in promptly assisting to incorporate the kingdom, which would displace himself as the Lord's representative and judge in their midst, Professor Elmslie well says, "I think that one of the most magnanimous and majestic and heroic deeds ever done in our world's history was done by Samuel, when, convinced that it was the will of God, he set himself to do what no other man could do—to forsake all his past, to abandon all the lines of action on which he had worked through the best years of his life, and to put into other men's hands fresh possibilities. I call that conduct magnificent." R. 4193

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

– 1 Samuel 8:19-20 –

Their course in requesting a king gave evidence of:

- (1) a lack of faith in the power and love and faithfulness of God, notwithstanding the marvels of divine providence toward them in the past;
- (2) weariness in well-doing—of only a slack hold upon those principles of righteousness in conformity to which alone could they enjoy the favor and blessings of God; and
- (3) a desire to appear great themselves in the eyes of the other nations.

In this they incurred the divine displeasure; nevertheless the Lord granted their request, but at the same time foretold the evils that would accompany their choice (8:11-22), which evils were realized in varying measure until God removed the diadem from the head of Zedekiah, their last king. R.1887

**So the LORD said to Samuel,
“Heed their voice, and make them a king.”
1 Samuel 8:22**

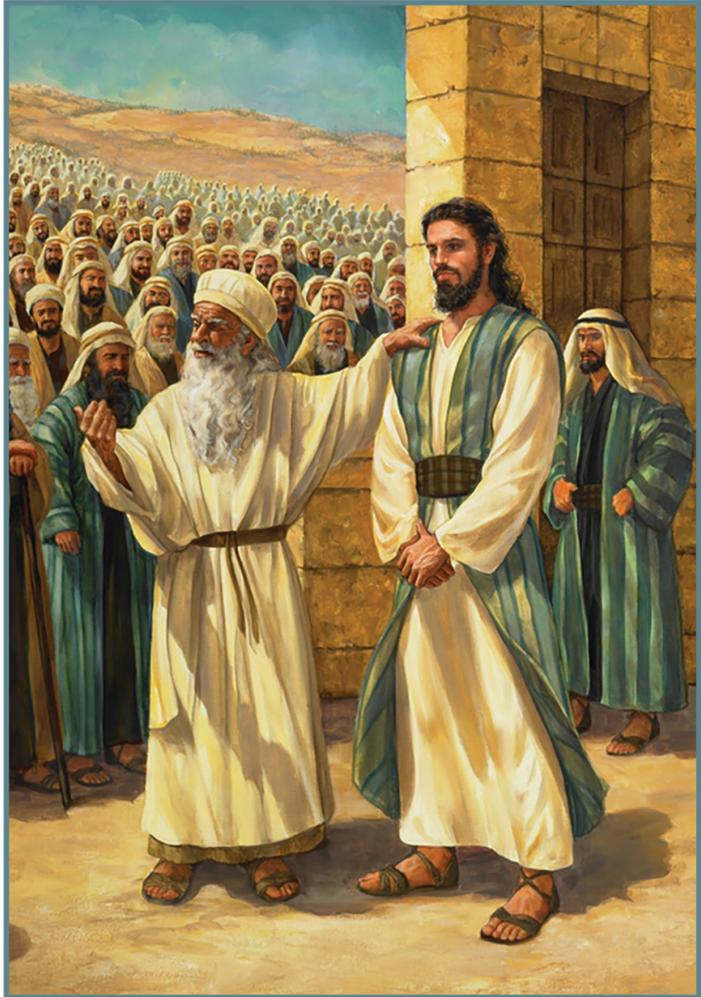
Saul Anointed The First King of Israel

There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

1 Samuel 9:1-2

Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying, "Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines, for I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me."

1 Samuel 9:15-16



So when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people."

1 Samuel 9:17

Saul was well suited to the office in various respects. First, he belonged to the small tribe of Benjamin, whose territory lay between that of the two principal tribes, Judah and Ephraim; he would, consequently, be more likely to have the sympathy and cooperation of the people of the most influential tribes, who would have been more likely to have feelings of opposition and jealousy toward any man from an important tribe. We read that he stood head and shoulders above his fellows, and the intimation is that he was quite muscular. In olden times, when physical force had so much to do with military fighting, we can readily see that such a type of man appealed strongly to the sentiments of the people. R. 4197

Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?

– 1 Samuel 9:21 –

Although Saul was tall and athletic, a wonderful man in his way, he was humble withal, as the Lord testified: “Thou wast little in thine own sight.” (1 Sam. 15:17.) This is another characteristic which belongs to those whom the Lord is now choosing to be kings and priests unto God under their Lord in the Millennium. They must really be taller than their fellows in respect to character as New Creatures, even if not according to the flesh; but they must be humble, “little in their own sight.” They must realize that they are not worthy of such honor, that it is only of God’s grace, and that the honor thus conferred upon them is not merely for themselves, but that they may be used of the Lord in connection with the blessing which he intends to confer upon humanity in and through the Kingdom of his dear Son. R. 4197

As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us.” And he went on. “But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God.”

1 Samuel 9:27

Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: “Is it not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance?”

– 1 Samuel 10:1 –

Guided by the Lord, Saul, a young man from an influential family, of the tribe of Benjamin, was anointed to be king. He was brought to the prophet for the anointing by a peculiar train of circumstances. His father owned a valuable herd of asses which strayed away, and Saul, after seeking them in vain, appealed to the prophet for assistance in locating them, and thus he showed his confidence in God, and in Samuel as his prophet. Nothing is recorded respecting the young man’s interest in religious matters up to this time; but he is mentioned favorably as a “goodly” young man. After his anointing he kept the matter secret with becoming modesty, waiting for the Lord’s plan to develop more fully and to bring him ultimately into prominence before the nation. It is quite probable that this secretiveness was at the instigation of Samuel. R. 3216

Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

– 1 Samuel 10:6 –

We may be in doubt as to just what is meant by this statement of Saul's change, but we can have no doubt that it would not signify that God's holy Spirit came upon him as it came upon the Church at Pentecost and as it is with all of the consecrated from that time to the present; because this Pentecostal blessing is a seal of sonship and grants an enlightenment of the mind respecting the deep things of God's Word and plan, such as was not granted to any previous to our Lord's anointing with the Spirit. Respecting this Pentecostal sealing we are informed that the holy Spirit was not yet given, even to the disciples, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Saul's experience gave him practical demonstration of a divine power outside of himself, and thus tended to fix his mind upon the more sober things of life and God's relationship to these. The result was that, returning to his duties as a farmer, he was thereafter a changed man, or had a new heart, a new purpose. The experiences through which he had passed led his mind out into new channels, new ambitions. The sports of life in which he had previously spent considerable time were unworthy of his attention now, because he had been lifted to a higher plane and had his mind full of conjectures and resolutions respecting the Kingdom; wondering, perhaps, how the Lord would bring it to pass that one so obscure as himself should come to a place of such political prominence in the nation.

The Spirit of God upon Saul was more physical in its manifestation, controlling his words and actions rather than enlightening his mind in respect to the deep things of God. This was true of all the prophets who spake and wrote as they were moved by the holy Spirit, but who did not understand in full degree the things which they uttered. --1 Pet. 1:10; 2 Pet. 1:21.

We are to remember that the Spirit of God signifies simply an invisible power from God. Those coming under this power sometimes acted in one way and sometimes in another--sometimes speaking, sometimes writing, as they were moved by the Power of the Holy One, Jehovah. R. 5637

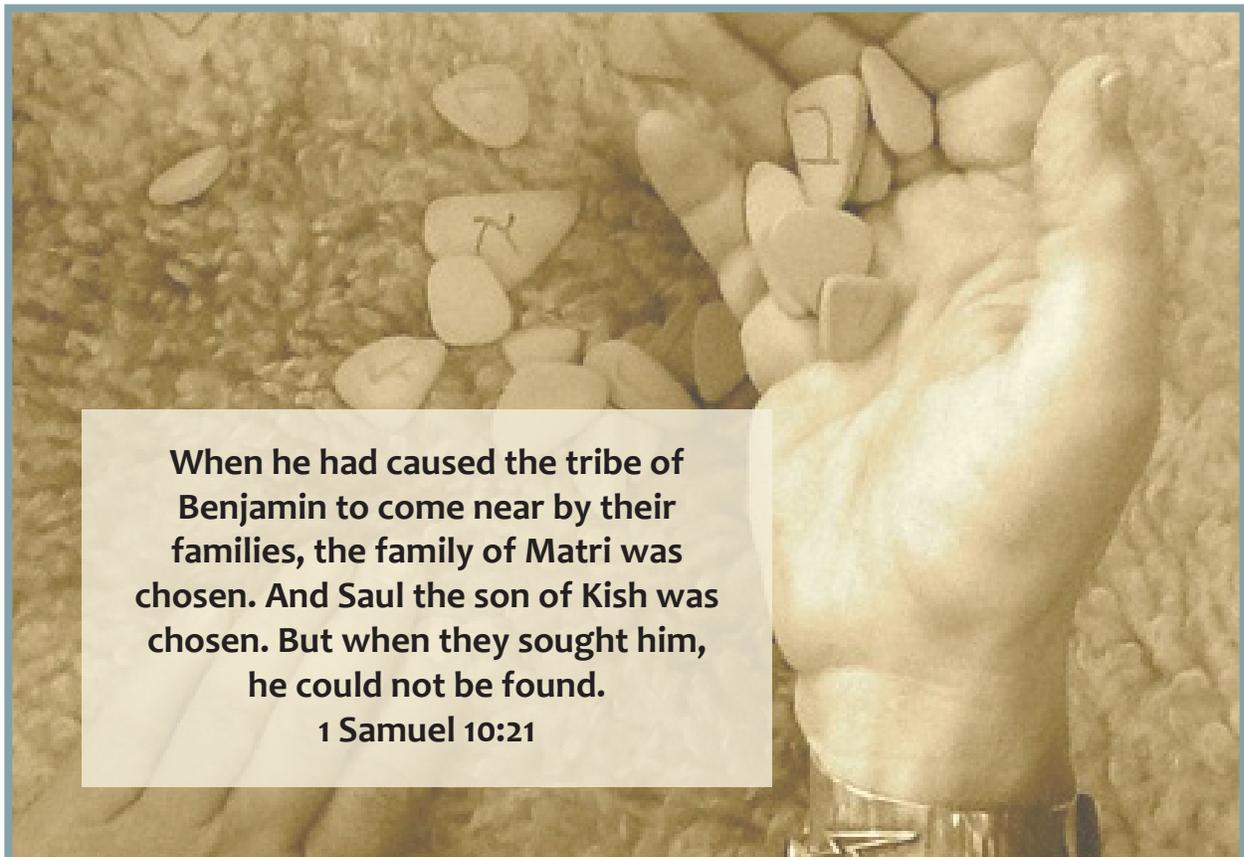
Similarly we may suggest that those who believe God's message and accept the anointing of the holy Spirit, typified by the oil poured upon Saul, also find new aims, new impulses, new hopes, new desires, and are also disposed to join themselves to a school of the prophets, to associate with those who are studying the divine Word and will. And similarly these in all of life's affairs are changed men. Yet not similarly either, because the change to these is much greater and of a different kind, as

we have already suggested. The Scriptures explain to us that the Lord's people, now being selected for joint-heirship in his Millennial Kingdom, are changed in a most remarkable manner. All things become new to them, and things which they once loved now they hate, and things which once they hated now they love. R. 4197

.....
● So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God ●
● gave him another heart, and all those signs came to pass that day. When ●
● they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him. ●
● Then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. ●
●
● 1 Samuel 10:9-10 ●
.....

**Do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
– Ephesians 5:17 –**

In due time, in harmony with the will of the Judges of Israel and with the Divine consent, the people came together to Samuel to have the matter of a king amongst them decided—to have the will of the Lord expressed in the matter. Samuel rehearsed to them the Lord's favor as it had been with them during the previous centuries, beginning with their miraculous deliverance from Egypt. He impressed upon them the fact that all of the Lord's care over them had been for their good; that no king could have done them better service than their great King; and that no government could have been more to their happiness than that they had enjoyed and which they were now rejecting in their request for a king, which petition the Lord had determined to grant. In harmony with this they had assembled—not all the people, but representatives from all the tribes and from the various families of each tribe. Ignoring the anointing of Saul already accomplished, Samuel proceeded to cast lots, that the people might thus know that the choice to be made was the Lord's choice and not Samuel's. The lot fell on Saul as Samuel knew it would do and as Saul also knew; for they believed the Lord's hand was in the matter. R. 5637 and R. 3218



When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found.

1 Samuel 10:21

The fact that they used this method of casting lots should not be considered as an endorsement of such a method today; for we are living under different institutions; and neither the Natural nor the Spiritual Israelites are in that relationship with God in which He proposes to guide their affairs by the casting of lots. R. 5637

**'I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the LORD of hosts.
– Haggai 2:7 –**

We are reminded of the fact that God is now about to establish a Kingdom in the world and is choosing a King. The Millennial kingdom might not be necessary in the form in which it will be introduced, were the people in the right attitude of heart to desire and to obey the divine will; but they prefer to have the laws of righteousness **enforced** rather than voluntarily to submit themselves to the Lord. In due time they shall have a king, Immanuel—like Saul in some respects, but very unlike him in others. The Lord is now selecting this King Immanuel. He is passing by the great tribes, the prominent people, and choosing the little and the humble—not many great, not many wise, not many learned has God chosen, but the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom. (1 Cor. 1:26-28.) The selection is going on in the sight of all the people. They will be witnesses, when all the steps of the election of God have been taken, that the choice is the Lord's without peradventure; and yet the Lord foreknew his choice in advance of this public selection. He foreknew Jesus as the Head of the Church, the Head of the great King; he anointed him in advance "with the oil of gladness above his fellows," to be King; yet, so far as the people in general are concerned, they know not the Lord's anointed—the matter is kept secret for a time. The members of the body of Christ must all be like the Head. As the Apostle declares, God has predestinated that every one who shall become a member of that body shall be "conformed to the image of his Son." (Rom. 8:29.) By and by, when the outward election is complete, when the world shall come properly to feel its need for a great King, search will be made to find the Lord's Anointed, and he will be found at his second advent. "The desire of all nations shall come"; the Christ of God will be the desired one of all nations. (The name Saul, singularly enough, signifies Desired.)

**As the men of Israel gave a shout when they recognized Saul's stateliness,
so the world of mankind will shout for joy when they shall
realize the presence of the Christ of God,**

The Great King,

their deliverer from Satan, from misrule, from every enemy—the Lord who "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet—the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Not only shall it be true that the Lord's Anointed One shall be head and shoulders above all others, "the chiefest amongst ten thousand, the one altogether lovely," but it should also be true to a considerable extent that all those who are intimately associated with the members of the body of Christ in the present life—before he is proclaimed King of the whole world—should be able to recognize the largeness and grandeur of character in those whom the Lord is choosing for this place of honor in the affairs of men. R. 3218

But Saul said, “Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel.”

– 1 Samuel 11:13 –

Very shortly after Saul's appointment to the kingdom he had opportunity to show his ability in delivering the people, for a neighboring king advanced upon Israel with a considerable army. Saul gathered his troops from the various tribes, to the number of 330,000 men, and totally routed Nahash and his army of the Ammonites. This victory cemented the hearts of the people of Israel to their king, and they in their loyalty demanded the execution of the sons of Belial who had spoken against him; but the nobility of King Saul is shown in his refusal to accede to this suggestion, and his saying, “There shall not a man be put to death today.” So when the power of the glorious King of the Millennial age shall be manifested in the routing of the enemies of righteousness, the general sentiment of the world toward him will be loyalty, and then he will have an opportunity of showing his mercy and forbearance toward those who during the darkness of the present time have spoken evil of him and sought to oppose his Kingdom. The declaration shall then go forth that none shall die the Second Death on account of Adamic weaknesses, blindness and insubordination;—that none shall die the Second Death except as the result of personal and willful sin after having been brought to a knowledge of the truth. R. 3219

The LORD is our King. He will save us.

– Isaiah 33:22 –



The sentiments of [this verse] should be deeply impressed upon the hearts of all the Lord's people. The world may cry out, saying, “We have no king but Caesar,” but the Lord's people, the Israelites indeed, will feel the reverse of this,—that “the Lord is our king.” In harmony with his command, we will honor earthly kings and obey earthly laws in every particular in which they do not conflict with the divine law; but, nevertheless, above earthly kings, our esteem, homage and obedience must be to him whom the Lord hath appointed, King Immanuel. If he be enthroned in our hearts it will be comparatively easy for us to be loyal to him in our conduct and in our words, wherever we may be. If we deny him, he will also deny us; but if we confess him he will also confess us before the Father and the holy angels—he will save us and ultimately through us as his Church, his body, he will, according to the original promise, bless all the families of the earth which we, with him, will then inherit. —Gal. 3:29. R. 3219



**The LORD
is witness
against you,
and
His anointed
is witness
this day.
– 1 Samuel 12:5 –**

SAMUEL the Prophet stands out on the pages of sacred history a very noble character—very similar in many respects to Moses. He had served the Lord and the people faithfully for a long period, and then, at the urgent request of the people and with God's assent, he had anointed Saul their king. Samuel perceived that the right time had come for a public coronation of the king, and the formal transfer of allegiance to him as the Lord's representative in the temporal affairs of the nation. Accordingly, a general convocation of the people was called to meet at Gilgal—one of the several prominent places for public gatherings—one of the places at which Samuel was in the habit of holding court when, as a kind of supreme judge.

Upon the assembling of the people, the prophet Samuel opened his address by calling upon God and the people to witness to his own rectitude of character in all of his dealings with them for the many years in which he had served them;

**Here is the king whom you have
chosen and whom you have desired. And
take note, the LORD has set a king over you.
1 Samuel 12:13**

to his justice in seeking to decide their various questions righteously; to his honesty, in that he never received even the smallest bribe, nor permitted anything to vitiate his judgment; neither had he been an oppressor of his people, but had always sought their good. With united voice the people concurred in the excellence and purity of his administration—a wonderful tribute, one which would be almost inconceivable in our day, in which we find that even the best and noblest officials are sure to have enemies, traducers, backbiters, slanderers. We are not to suppose that Samuel was merely eulogizing his own administration, but are, rather, to attribute to such a noble character a nobler object. He wished to make a lasting impression with this address and this transfer of authority to King Saul; and, to make his words more impressive and more effective in the interests of his successor and in the interests of the Lord's people, he impressed upon his hearers the fact that his entire life had been one of devotion, and that they might well understand that his words now were in full accord with all the course of his previous life. They would thus realize that he had their best interests at heart, that he was thoroughly loyal to the Lord, and that his example, as well as his advice, would be beneficial to them. R. 3222

The LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people.

– 1 Samuel 12:22 –

The sentiment of [this verse] is very beautiful, and, doubtless, was very encouraging to the Israelites in assuring them of God's continued love and favor toward them because of his having adopted them as his people. Applying this verse to spiritual Israel, we may take great comfort from it, too. If it was a favor to natural Israel to be adopted as the Lord's peculiar people, as the house of servants, how much greater is the blessing to spiritual Israel, adopted of the Lord as the house of sons under the chief Son, Jesus; "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end!" (Heb. 3:6.) It is well that the Lord's people be called upon to fear, to reverence, the Lord; but if the Scriptures were entirely made up of commands and reproofs, the Lord's people would all surely have been discouraged long ago. On the contrary, with the reproofs and corrections, the Lord gives us very precious testimonies respecting his love and mercy, his goodness and long-suffering kindness, to encourage us. All the members of the body of Christ laboring against the course of this world and against public opinion and against the weaknesses of their own flesh and against the great adversary Satan, need spiritual encouragement—assurances that the Lord is for them. The Apostle points this out, saying, "If God be for us who can be against us?"—what will all the opposition against us amount to if God be on our side? He again encourages us with precious words, reminding us of the unchangeableness of God and of the fact that he has already done great things for us and is preparing to do still greater things. If while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly, much more shall his favor be with us now that we are adopted into his family and are seeking to walk in his ways as members of the body of Christ. R. 3223

Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you, but I will teach you the good and the right way.

– 1 Samuel 12:23 –

The grandeur of the Prophet's character shines out in the twenty-third verse again: he seems to have none of the petty animosities which some smaller creatures might have under the circumstances, and was a patriot to the core of his heart, as well as a faithful representative and ambassador of the Lord and mediator of his people. What a sublime character is thus brought to our view! It is the more remarkable when we note that Samuel did not belong to the Spirit dispensation; that he therefore had not all the advantages which we, the Lord's people of this Gospel Age since Pentecost, enjoy, and yet, alas! how few of the Spirit-begotten ones manifest this spirit, this same degree of likeness to the Lord's character and Spirit! In how many would the natural mind rise up and say, You have a king now, I have foretold you that it was a sin of ingratitude against the Almighty and against me, now go your way and see if what I have told you does not come true, and that you will be worse off.

On the contrary, notice the prophet's words. They show that he felt that he had a duty toward the people of Israel as his brethren, whether they felt similarly toward him or not. Although they had rejected him after his faithful service of many years, he assured them that he would pray for them and consider their very highest welfare, and that he would consider the matter from the very best standpoint, viz.: that it was a part of his duty, if he would be in harmony with the Lord, and that he could do nothing less than pray for them and seek their every good. How is it with those who slight us? Has the new spirit, the new mind of Christ, gained sufficiency of foothold for us to say as Samuel did, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord and cease to pray for you." R. 3223 and R. 4201

Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider what great things He has done for you.

– 1 Samuel 12:24 –

It is well that we note the distinction between the outward service and that of the heart, the mind, the affections. Outward service that does not spring from the heart will soon wither away, whether under adversity or prosperity. Hence the Lord always appeals to our hearts, "Give me thine heart." (Prov. 23:26.) So long as our heart is loyal to the Lord, it will control all of the products of life, because it will lead us to seek to know the Lord's will in everything. This will take us to the Lord in prayer. It will take us to the Word for instruction, and it will assist us in understanding the Word, giving us more and more the spirit of a sound mind.

Samuel appealed to fleshly Israel to remember the great things that God had done for them, as a ground for thankfulness and faithfulness—their delivery from Egypt, their guidance through the wilderness and their entrance into the land of Israel;

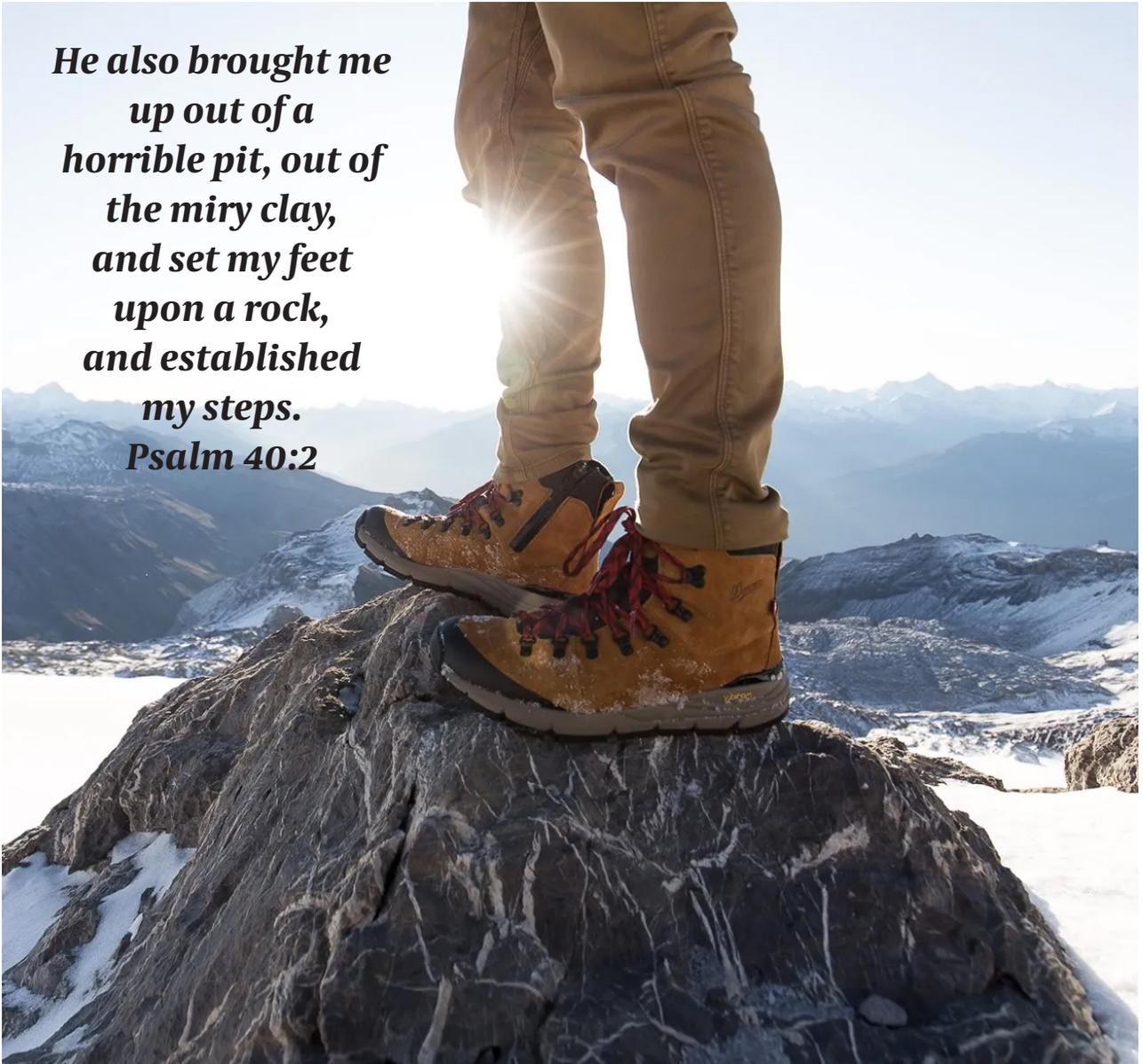
**but if we apply these words to Spiritual Israel,
with what greater force do they come to us!**

The Lord has delivered us from Egyptian bondage, the bondage of sin and death. He has led us out of darkness into his marvelous light. He not only lifted our feet from the horrible pit and the miry clay, but he placed them upon the Rock, Christ Jesus; yea, more! he has put a new song into our mouths, even the loving kindness of our God. He not only forgave our sins, but accepted us in Jesus, and invited us to joint-heirship with Christ. He not only gave us exceeding great and precious promises to cheer our hearts in the wilderness journey, but has in reservation for us things exceeding great and precious, of which he has given us a glimpse or foretaste through the holy Spirit, an earnest of our inheritance. R. 4201

Recurring, however, to the principal point of his instructions, [Samuel] points out that reverence for the Lord, serving him in truth with all their heart, was not only a proper course, but a course which would bring them the Lord's blessing. And as a help to our flagging zeal, we should continually remind ourselves of the Lord's great blessings to us. Faithfulness to God should be the keynote of all our desires. R. 3224

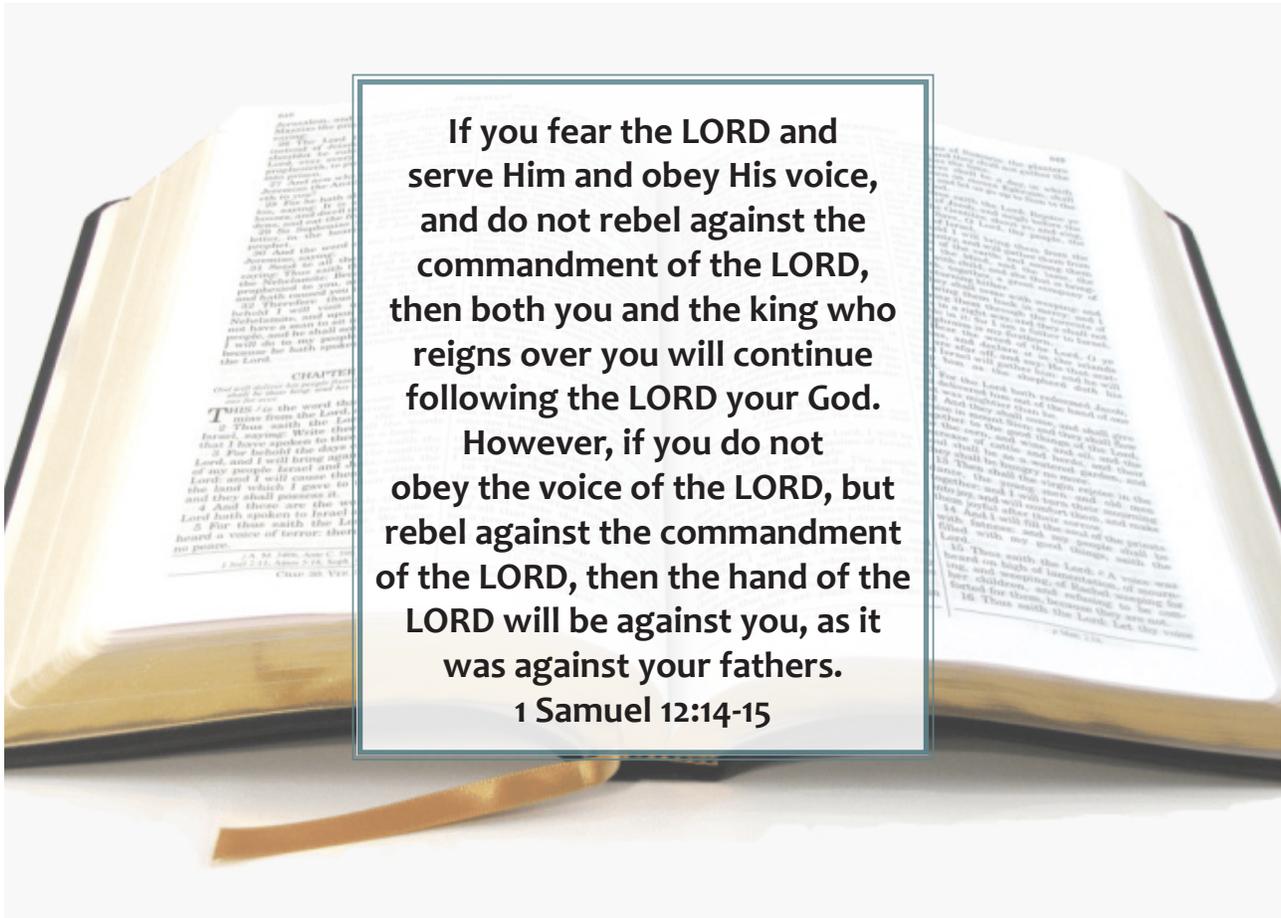
With great patience and long suffering the Lord had mercy upon the typical people, the house of servants, called to constitute and to make types illustrating his gracious purposes for the house of sons which would follow it, and, incidentally, to prepare the "Israelites without guile" for the spiritual blessings to result from their transfer to the "house of sons." And not only preparing this remnant, but also all those who were faithful as members of the "house of servants," attesting their loyalty to the Lord, whose reward is to be the privilege of representing the heavenly Kingdom as its human agents on the earth. But while this is true, how much greater is God's mercy as seen and experienced by us who are of the house of sons, accepted in the Beloved One! How merciful is the Lord toward all those who are seeking to walk in the footsteps of the Captain of their salvation! How bountiful are the provisions made, not only for their ultimate reward, but also for their encouragement during the sojourn toward the heavenly city, with provision also for the passing over, the covering and the ultimate blotting out of their weaknesses by and through him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood. R. 3425

***He also brought me
up out of a
horrible pit, out of
the miry clay,
and set my feet
upon a rock,
and established
my steps.
Psalm 40:2***



***He has put a new song in my mouth---
Praise to our God!
Many will see it and fear, and
will trust in the LORD.
Psalm 40:3***

Saul Rejected



**If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers.
1 Samuel 12:14-15**

Obedience to the Lord would bring blessings both to the people and their king, and disobedience and rebellion or any measure of irreverence toward the Lord and his commandments would bring upon them divine disfavor and injury. Not that the Lord would vindictively render evil for evil, but the hand of the Lord would be against them in the same sense that the current of the river is against the persons who attempt to go contrary to it. Divine justice has its steady flow. It is irrepensible; it opposes anything that comes against it, and favors anything that goes in harmony with it. We can recognize something of this principle in various laws of nature; as, for instance, gravitation. Let us also recognize that the principles of divine government operate in a very similar manner. As fire burns the evil or the good when they come in contact with it, and as the law of gravitation operates in respect to all, whether good or bad, who come into the line of its influence, so the principles of divine justice operate automatically. R. 3223

The LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.

– Deuteronomy 26:10 –

It must be remembered that God's government has never been established in the world except over the one nation of Israel; and, hence, only in that one nation should we expect to find the laws of retribution operating automatically. The Lord said of Israel, "You only have I known [recognized] of all the families of the earth." (Amos 3:2.) Again, the Apostle asks, "What advantage hath the Jew?" and, answering, declares, "Much every way; chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." God entered into obligations with Israel that if they, as a people, would obey his laws and keep his statutes, they would be blessed in proportion to their faithfulness and obedience; and if they should fail of obedience, they would be correspondingly punished; that he would permit to come upon them various chastisements—diseases, etc. —as the natural results of the violations of the principles of his government. But such an arrangement has not been made with other nations at any time in the world's history. R. 3223

**You only have I known of
all the families of the earth.
Therefore I will punish you
for all your iniquities.
Amos 3:2**



No one should be shaken by these afflictions, for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.

– 1 Thessalonians 3:3 –

With spiritual Israel God's blessings and chastisements are spiritual, and do not extend to temporal affairs. In proportion to their faithfulness they grow spiritually strong and beautiful; and in proportion to their unfaithfulness they grow spiritually weak and receive chastisements and lose divine favor. It is not true with the spiritual Israelite as it was with the natural Israelite, that by obeying the Lord he would be blessed temporally in all his undertakings. On the contrary, to the spiritual Israelite the Lord gives the express declaration and encouragement: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall [in this life] suffer persecution"; "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you"; "Ye know that it hated me before it hated you"; "Blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you for my sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven" —in spiritual things, not in temporal matters. —2 Tim. 3:12; 1 John 3:13; John 15:18; Matt. 5:11,12. R. 3223

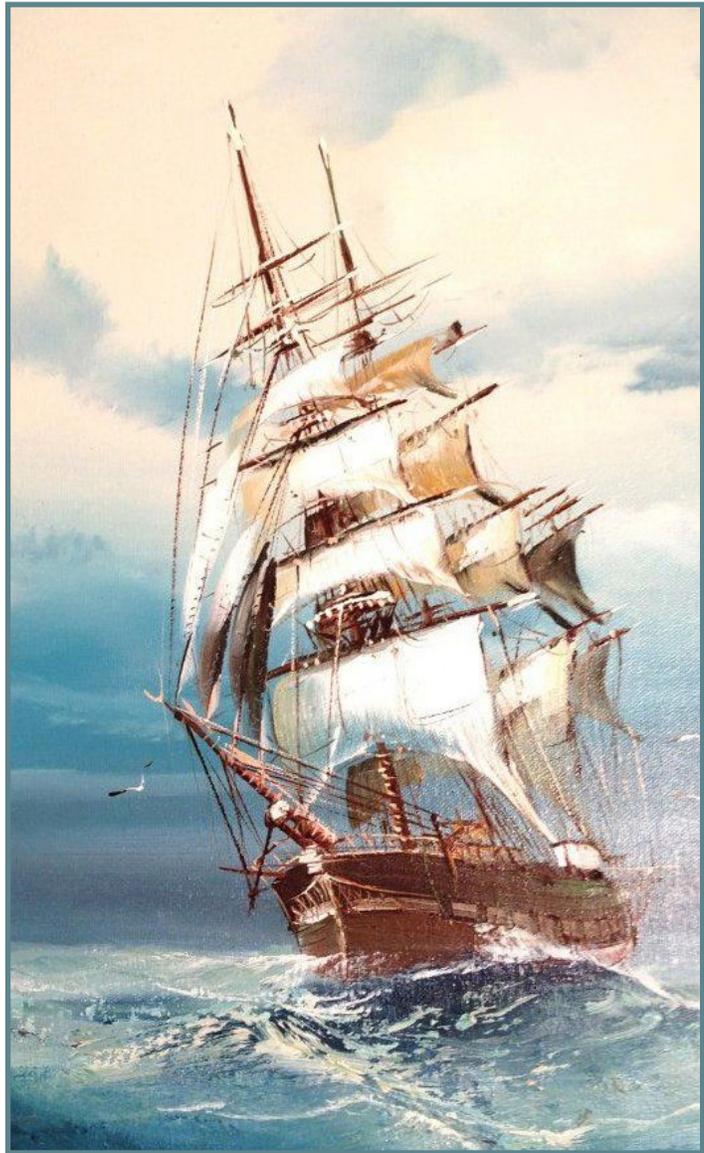


**Grow in the grace and knowledge of
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
To Him be the glory both now and forever.
2 Peter 3:18**

**See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.
– Ephesians 5:15 –**

Inattention to [God's] direct will would mark us as proportionately unfit for his direct service, either here or hereafter. This implies on our part such a loyalty to the Lord, such a carefulness in respect to his service, such a recognition of each other in respect to the Lord and his service, that we would go about very carefully in our endeavors to serve his cause. So the Apostle exhorts, "Let us walk circumspectly," carefully, scrutinizingly.

As the mariner guides the course of his ship by certain charts which show hidden rocks and shoals, and by the stars in their courses, so the Christian is furnished with a chart which shows him the course which he should pursue, and the things which would be displeasing to God and injurious to himself. That chart is the Bible, and whoever would be in harmony with God must not only hearken for his message but keep track also of the hidden dangers which beset his course. Each one of us is on trial. This Gospel Age is our Day of Judgment, of testing. The Lord himself is scrutinizing the course we are taking. It is not sufficient to him that we shall have zeal. The zeal which he will approve is that which operates from love and along the lines of his instruction. The zeal which disregards the divine instruction is not approved; it leads to shipwreck. R. 4206



Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him. So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering. Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. And Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."

1 Samuel 13:8-12

Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.”

– 1 Samuel 13:13 –

The difficulty was Saul’s failure to respect the divine arrangement, his presumption in undertaking to do what had not been committed to his care, but was under the charge of another. The Lord’s cause was not hindered; but King Saul’s own prosperity was interfered with by his neglect of the divine arrangement.

What lesson may we draw from this incident? If for the moment we think of Saul as representing those who have been favored of God, and called to joint-heirship with Jesus in his Kingdom and anointed with the holy Spirit, we may see in his early victories a picture of our good beginning, when we trusted God implicitly, and sought to do merely as he directed, and to wait patiently and trustfully for him to guide in all of our affairs. As Saul should have made progress and become stronger in his faith and patience and obedience, so should our earliest experiences as the Lord’s servants bring to us increasing patience, perseverance, faith, confidence, implicit obedience. But as this was not the case with King Saul, so it is not the case with many of those who have been anointed for joint-heirship with the Lord in his Kingdom. Many of these have similar experiences to that of Saul. Instead of their growing more dependent upon the Lord, the favors received at his hand make them less particular to know and to do his will. They still reverence the Lord; they still recognize that without him they could do nothing; but they are not sufficiently careful to note just what he would have them to do. Sometimes they undertake to do the work of others, and to that extent are “busybodies in other men’s matters,” as King Saul busybodied and sinned in attempting to do the work that belonged to the prophet. R. 4206

Now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.

– 1 Samuel 13:14 –

The words of our caption are the Lord’s rebuke to King Saul by the prophet Samuel, in connection with the announcement that Saul, by disobedience to the heavenly King, had forfeited his privilege of representing him on the throne of Israel. The rending of the kingdom from the hands of Saul meant more than his own displacement: it meant that his son and successive heirs should not continue the Lord’s representatives in the kingdom. Saul waited several days for Samuel to come to offer the sacrifices of the Lord previous to the beginning of the battle. Samuel was providentially hindered, and Saul, after waiting for a time, offered the sacrifices to the Lord himself, contrary to the arrangement, and then proceeded to battle, the result being a considerable defeat to his forces. Apparently he was not evilly intentioned, but lacked proper respect and reverence for the Lord and his arrangements. This may be said to have been the beginning of Saul’s rejection by the Lord. R. 3224

The words of the prophet [here] must have been uttered about the time of David’s birth. Thus we have another illustration of God’s foreknowledge and design, in respect to those whom he specially uses in his service, from their very earliest moments. R. 3225

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.

– Ephesians 1:7 –

It is a further lesson, which only Christians have learned, that it is impossible to live up to the standards of [the] Law, and that we need the covering of the Redeemer's merit—even after we have surrendered all to Him to seek to walk in His steps—to cover our shortcomings and to continue us in relationship with God. Another lesson which the Christian learns is that those continuing in relationship with God find not only forgiveness for trespasses unintentionally committed, but find also grace to help, assistances for every need—through the same Savior.

Thus the Christian is learning of his own weaknesses and of God's mercy, and growing strong in battling for the right day by day. He not only has a second chance, but has many repeated chances, day by day, of repentance of sin and of making a fresh start after recovery from the stumbling, through the merit of Christ.

King Saul had no such experiences; the Savior had not yet died. He had not yet appeared in the presence of God, to offer an atonement or to open up a new way of life. Saul, therefore, had only the arrangement which was common to all Jews—the typical Day of Atonement, once every year, to atone for the sins of the whole people for one year, including the typical priesthood, through whom the message of God was communicated to them. And being himself partly a type, King Saul was necessarily dealt with along the lines of strict justice, and the kingdom was declared to be forfeited by his family because of his offering to the Lord a sacrifice not authorized.

***I wish that there were some wonderful place
Called the Land of Beginning-again,
Where all our mistakes and all our heartaches
And all our poor, selfish grief
Could be dropped, like a shabby old coat, at the door
And never put on again.***

The poet's words are to come true, and the time is near at hand. The time of putting off the "shabby old coat" of present imperfection on the part of mankind in general is near at hand. Surely all who have themselves put off the filthy rags of their own righteousness, and by faith put on the Robe of Christ's Righteousness, can rejoice that the poor world—heathen, Jew, and civilized Gentiles—may all have so good an opportunity as God's love and mercy have provided for them through the great Sacrifice made at Calvary, when "Jesus Christ by the grace of God, tasted death for every man"; that he who believeth on Him, whether now or in the future, should not perish, but might gain everlasting life. R. 5638

**I will greatly rejoice in the LORD!
My soul shall be joyful in my God, for
He has clothed me with the
garments of salvation, He has
covered me with the robe of
righteousness, as a bridegroom
decks himself with ornaments, and
as a bride adorns herself with her
jewels. For as the earth brings forth
its bud, as the garden causes the
things that are sown in it to spring
forth, so the Lord GOD will cause
righteousness and praise to spring
forth before all the nations.**

Isaiah 61:10-11

Evidently quite a number of years intervened [before] King Saul's second test. In the interim Israel had grown strong as a nation; and the time had come for the carrying out of a divine declaration made long before; namely, that the Amalekites should be utterly destroyed. As one branch of Esau's family, they were related to the Israelites and to the Arabs of today. Like the latter they were horsemen, and a kind of brigand, who flourished by pillaging their neighbors. Not strong enough themselves to injure the Israelites they associated themselves with others of the enemies of Israel, either directly participating in war or indirectly, following after battles to gather up the spoils. It will be remembered that they fought against the Israelites in the wilderness when on their way toward Canaan. (Exod. 17:8-16.) It will be remembered also that they again opposed the Israelites in conquering the land of promise; and that the Lord had declared through Moses that these should be utterly destroyed, and had given Israel this command. —Deut. 25:17-19.

The fulfilling of these commands was deferred, probably for two reasons. First, the Israelites had no cavalry and would have found it difficult to cope with these marauders, who would swoop down upon them and be off. Secondly, it is probable that the Lord permitted the Amalekites to continue as a thorn in the side of the Israelites for their chastening. But now in Samuel's day the message came to King Saul to destroy utterly the Amalekites, not only all the people, great and small, but all of their belongings—sheep, cattle, horses—everything. The Israelites were to do this as the sword of the Lord, as inflicting the judgment which God had decreed.

It must not be said of them that they had turned brigands and thieves, to war against their neighbors and to profit by their pelf. This must be a witness not only to the nations round about, but to the Israelites themselves.

It must be a lesson.

They must not get the impression that warfare against their neighbors would be undertaken for any selfish, mercenary motives. They were God's scourge in this instance.

The people were all slaughtered except the king, whom King Saul spared, keeping him as a kind of trophy. The animals also were all destroyed, except the choicest of the flocks and herds, which additionally was contrary to the divine command.

When the prophet Samuel came to the king, the latter saluted him as God's representative and reported that he had done according to the divine command. Then came the inquiry, "If so, what means the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle?" Saul's answer was probably a prevarication; that these were kept in order to be offered to the Lord in sacrifice. Then Samuel reproved him, pointing out that he had violated the command of the Lord in preserving any of them. The king, however, protested that the people had kept them; that Israel had desired them; and we can readily suppose that there would have been amongst the Israelites quite an opposition to the waste of the good things of the Amalekites, so accustomed were people of that time, as well as of today, to desire valuables. Saul might have indeed complied with the divine decree by rendering obedience to the Lord and thus put himself in disfavor with the people; but he would have maintained the divine approval thereby. R. 4207

We are not to draw the inference that today God gives any command to any nation to blot out another people. We are to remember, on the contrary, that Israel was a picture-nation, a type nation; and that through their experience and history the Lord dealt peculiarly to illustrate principles; that he used Israel as his sword, as his pen, as his mouthpiece.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.

– 1 Samuel 15:22 –

“Obedience is better than sacrifice.” In how many ways we may see expressions of this same condition amongst many who profess the Lord’s name today! We should learn from this lesson, given us in Saul’s experience, that our heavenly Father wishes us to be very attentive to his Word, and not to think for a moment that we can improve thereon, or that times and circumstances will alter the propriety of our obedience to him. Had Saul been obedient and the results disastrous, he would at

Samuel said: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.”

1 Samuel 15:22

least have had a clear conscience; he could have said that he had been obedient to God and was not responsible for the results. But if he had been obedient God would have been responsible for the results, and we know that divine power would have brought about the proper results. Let us apply the lesson to ourselves in respect to our daily conduct in every matter of life: let us hearken to the Word of the Lord and keep close to it, not fearing the results,

but having faith that he who keeps us never slumbers nor sleeps and is too wise to err, as well as competent to meet every emergency that could possibly come upon us as a result of our obedience. His message to us is that to obey is better than sacrifice: leave the matter of your sacrifice in my hands; —it will amount to nothing anyway unless I accept it, and I accept sacrifices only from those who are first obedient.

King Saul sought to defend his course, to put as good a face upon the matter as possible and to lay the responsibility for the saving of the spoil upon the hosts of Israel, who with himself were very desirous of offering sacrifices to the Lord. [The Prophet Samuel] clearly pointed out to the king what the latter should have known and what all should recognize; namely, that offering sacrifices is far less pleasing to the Lord than is obedience to His Word. No one could offer an acceptable sacrifice to God unless he was obedient in his heart and unless the sacrifice represented that obedience.

R. 3224 and R. 5648

We should see that in the divine mind obedience is one of the most important elements of character. The Lord has us in training in the school of Christ for a great work in the future; and the first prerequisite for future honors and opportunities very properly must be our obedience to the opportunities and directions of the Lord in the present time. This our Lord explained clearly in his parables, saying that to some of his servants he had entrusted more talents than to others; that each would be called upon to give an account for the proper exercise of the talents, responsibilities and commands that had been put upon him, and that each would be rewarded in proportion as he used the talents given to him. Our Lord’s expression on the subject is, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.” —Luke 16:10. R. 4207

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!

– Deuteronomy 5:29 –

Saul's difficulty and tests may represent some of ours.

1 **A selfish spirit**, a desire for some of the best of the things which the Lord has condemned; a willingness to spare these because they appeal to us from a selfish viewpoint, the fleshly viewpoint.

2 **A man-fearing spirit.** As Saul feared to bring upon himself the reproaches of the people, fearing to be thought too narrow on the one hand and too wasteful on the other, so a temptation comes to the Lord's people to guide their course not entirely by the Word of the Lord, but with a deference to the sentiments of others. This is the fear of man that brings a snare. (Prov. 29:25.) We are ensnared by the spirit of the world. Of such the Lord says, "How can ye believe [continue in proper discipleship] which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" —John 5:44.

3 Saul's third difficulty was that he had **too slack an appreciation of the Lord's Word**; and this is the difficulty which specially besets nearly every one of the Lord's followers who stray away into error of doctrine or of conduct. With what care ought we to guard ourselves, lest having become partakers of so great a blessing as our anointing implies, any of us should seem to come short of its glorious realization in the Kingdom. Let us see to it that we put away all love of sin in its every form, and that we esteem the Lord's favor so highly that the consideration of human friendships would not have a particle of weight or influence with us, except as the same should be in full accord with the divine programme; and in order to the maintenance of these proper relationships, let us take heed to his Word.

The Scriptures clearly indicate a great trial and testing for the Church. It will determine with very many what Saul's testing determined for him, whether or not God's favor will continue, with its Kingdom privileges and opportunities. To the faithful the Lord says, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." The others will be answered as was Saul, "Obedience is better than sacrifice;" thou art rejected. R. 4208

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?

– Jeremiah 17:9 –

The Divine message calls attention to the fact that Saul was humble when he was chosen as the Lord's representative upon the throne, and that at that time he was very willing to give strict obedience to the Heavenly voice; but the intimation is that he had grown more self-confident, and therefore less reliant upon the Lord and less attentive to the Lord's commands. Getting into the wrong attitude of heart, he had failed to execute properly a very plain, specific direction. Knowingly and in violation of the Lord's command he had the spoil separated, and had spared the best when the Lord had commanded the reverse.

If, in applying the principles of this lesson to the Lord's people today, we think of the Amalekites as representing sins and remember that the Lord's command comes to us to put away sin entirely, we may get a good lesson. Like Saul, many are disposed to destroy the vilest things connected with sin, but to save alive the king sin, merely making him a prisoner. Many are disposed, also, to seek out the things which they realize to be condemned of the Lord to destruction—such things as would be choice and desirable to their taste; and frequently, like Saul, they claim that even these sins of the less obnoxious kind are held on to for the purpose of sacrificing them in order thus to honor God. How deceitful above all things is the heart! How necessary it is that all who would be in accord with the Lord should be thoroughly true-hearted, thoroughly sincere; and that under the Lord's direction we should seek to take away the life of every sinful principle, evil teaching, evil doctrine and all unholy words, deeds and thoughts! R. 5648

Although fully rejected, Saul's removal was not yet due. Samuel associated himself with him in a public sacrifice, commemorating the victory over the Amalekites, and on this occasion he slew Agag with his own hand—departing then to his own home. He never afterward saw Saul, yet the Scriptures declare, "Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul" —thus again showing us the beauty and strength of his character. He was ready to do the command of the Lord in any and every particular, yet was not without a feeling of compassion for those who were out of the way; —not a compassion which would make them his friends and lead him to cooperate with them in their wrong course, but a compassion which would have been glad to have cooperated with them at any time in a righteous course.

When sent to anoint David, Samuel exhibited a power not elsewhere noticeable in his character. He did not hesitate to perform the Lord's bidding, but intimated that he clearly understood that it meant the risk of his own life—that Saul would kill him as a traitor if he should anoint a successor to the kingdom. The Lord made it clear to him that it was not the intention to make the matter known at once, and directed him that he should go to Bethlehem and make a sacrifice there, and, incidentally, improve the opportunity of finding and anointing the one who, in due time, would be made known and exalted to the throne.... R. 3225 and R. 3226

**Now the LORD said to Samuel,
“How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing
I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?
Fill your horn with oil, and go. I am
sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For
I have provided Myself a king among his sons.”
1 Samuel 16:1**

DAVID'S FIRST ANOINTING



*He also chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds.
Psalm 78:70*

The Shepherd Boy

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

O LORD,

You have searched me and known me.

You know my sitting down and my rising up.

You understand my thought afar off.

You comprehend my path and my lying down,

and are acquainted with all my ways.

**For there is not a word on my tongue,
but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.**

**You have hedged me behind and before,
and laid Your hand upon me.**

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me!

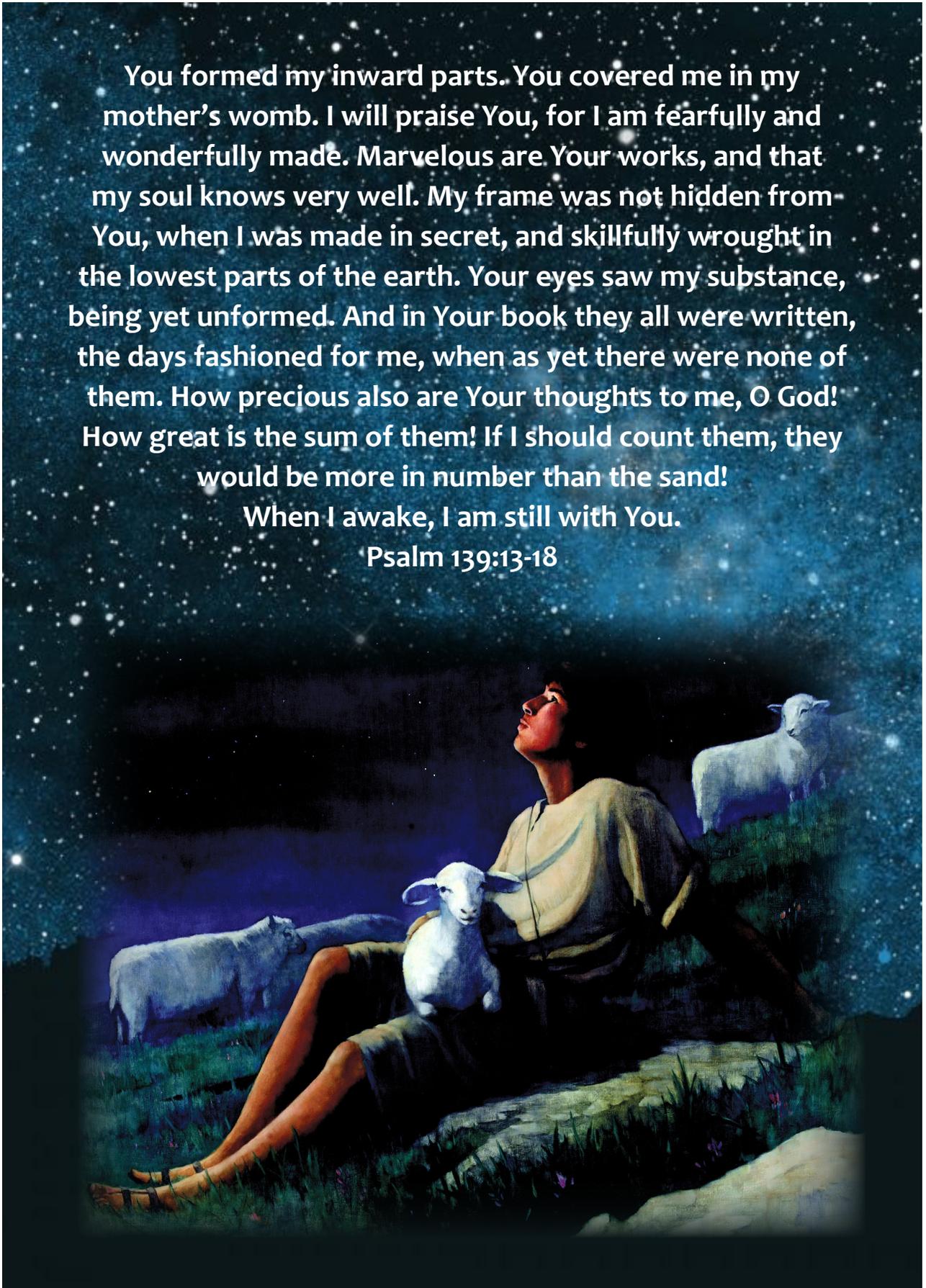
It is high, I cannot attain it.

Psalm 139:1-6

You formed my inward parts. You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand!

When I awake, I am still with You.

Psalm 139:13-18



Nature was his nurse, his companion, his teacher. Bethlehem is situated six miles to the south of Jerusalem, by the main road leading to Hebron. Its site is two thousand feet above the level of the Mediterranean, on the north-east slope of a long grey ridge, with a deep valley on either side; these unite at some little distance to the east, and run down toward the Dead Sea. On the gentle slopes of the hills the fig, olive, and vine grow luxuriantly; and in the valleys are the rich cornfields, where Ruth once gleaned, and which gave the place its name, the House of Bread. The moorlands around Bethlehem, forming the greater part of the Judaeian plateau, do not, however, present features of soft beauty; but are wild, gaunt, strong—character-breeding. There shepherds have always led and watched their flocks; and there David first imbibed that knowledge of natural scenery and of pastoral pursuits which colored all his after life and poetry, as the contents of the vat the dyer's hand. Such were the schools and schoolmasters of his youth. But pre-eminently his spirit lay open to the Spirit of God, which brooded over his young life, teaching, quickening, and ennobling him, opening to him the books of nature and revelation, and pervading his heart with such ingenuous trust.

His soul is reflected in the Psalms that must be attributed to this period of his life, because so free from the pressure of sorrow and anxiety, and the strife of tongues. Amongst them are the eighth, nineteenth, twenty-third, and twenty-ninth. So full of wonder that the Lord should care for man, and yet so sure that He was his shepherd; so deeply stirred by the aspect of the heavens, and yet convinced that the words of God were equally Divine; so afraid of secret faults and presumptuous sins; so anxious to join in the universal chorus of praise, ascending from the orchestra of nature, but yet so certain that there were yearnings and faculties within his soul, in which it could not participate, and which made him its high-priest and chorister.

Ah, guileless, blessed boy! Thou shalt teach us many a lesson as we turn again the pages of thy wonderful career—poet, minstrel, soldier, exile, king, and read them in the light that streams from the face of thy greatest Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, but was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead! —F. B. Meyer

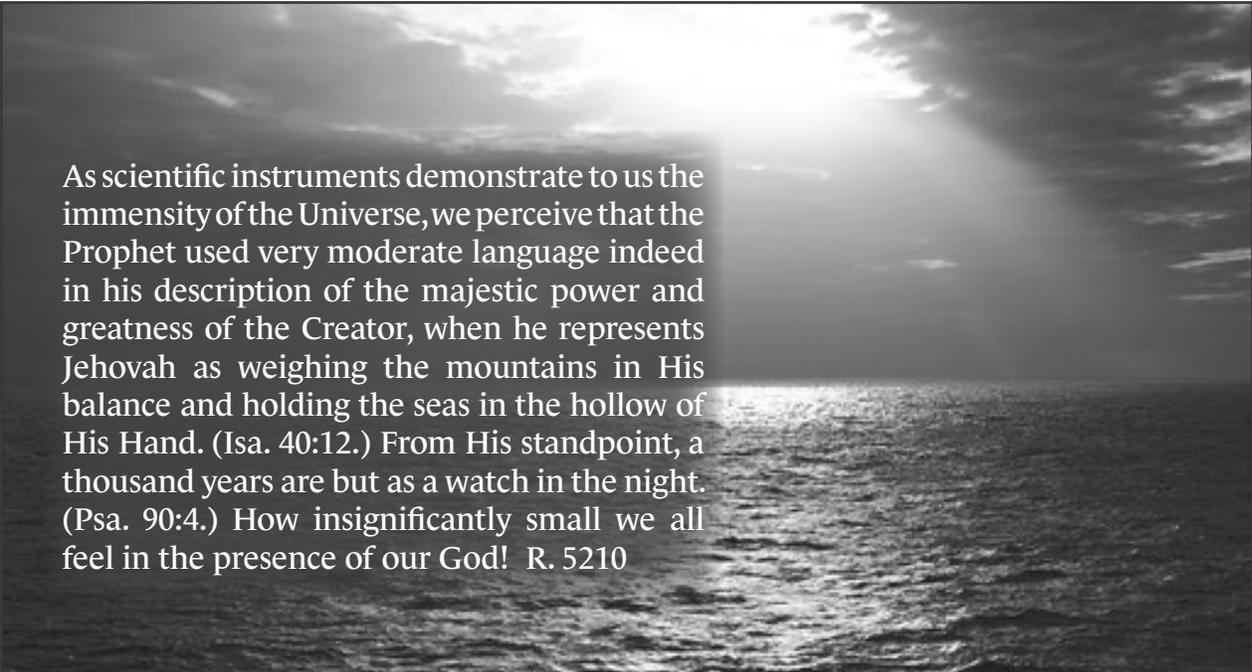
Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised and His greatness is unsearchable. I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. The LORD is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works.

– Psalm 145:2-3,5,9 –

The Psalmist says, “The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.” This sweeping statement takes in the utmost bounds of the material universe and also the humblest, as well as the most exalted, sentient being. The whole creation is his care. Jehovah, our God, is the great Emperor of the whole universe, and his wisdom, power, goodness and benevolence are abundantly equal to all the responsibilities of so exalted an office. The human mind staggers in its efforts to comprehend the mental resources of a being who is able to assume and to bear such responsibility. Think for a moment of the memory that never fails; of the judgment that never errs; of the wisdom that plans for eternity without the possibility of failure, and that times that plan with unerring precision for the ages to come; of the power and skill which can harness even every opposing element, animate or inanimate, and make them all work together for the accomplishment of his grand designs; of the tireless vigilance that never ceases, nor seeks relief from the pressing cares of universal dominion—whose eye never sleeps, whose ear is ever open, and who is ever cognizant of all the necessities, and active in all the interests, of his broad domains. R. 1560

For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night.

– Psalm 90:4 –



As scientific instruments demonstrate to us the immensity of the Universe, we perceive that the Prophet used very moderate language indeed in his description of the majestic power and greatness of the Creator, when he represents Jehovah as weighing the mountains in His balance and holding the seas in the hollow of His Hand. (Isa. 40:12.) From His standpoint, a thousand years are but as a watch in the night. (Psa. 90:4.) How insignificantly small we all feel in the presence of our God! R. 5210

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech and night unto night reveals knowledge.

– Psalm 19:1-2 –

Well has the Psalmist said, in consideration of the immensity and the minutiae of God's providence over all his works—"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (Psa. 139:6.) No, we cannot; but Oh, what a thrilling sense of mingled reverence, love and adoration fills the heart, when thus we catch a glimpse of the intellectual and moral glory and majesty of our God! As we thus contemplate him, all nature becomes eloquent with his praise: the heavens truly declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handiwork: day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. (Psa. 19:1,2.) They tell of the order and harmony of the circling spheres, and the benevolent purpose of their great Creator and Controller, as the changing seasons and the alternating days and nights fill up the copious horn of plenty and refresh and invigorate the animate creation. R. 1560

**Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool."
– Isaiah 66:1 –**

The One who has His seat in Heaven and whose footstool is the earth is a great God! But this is, of course, a forceful figure of speech, showing His all-embracing power and control. God does not actually sit in a certain part of His Universe and have His literal feet in another part. The language of Scripture accommodates itself to the mind of man, and speaks of God as if He possessed the same bodily members as humanity. But actually we know not what a spirit body is like. "It doth not yet appear," even to the saints of the Lord who are still in the flesh. R. 5547

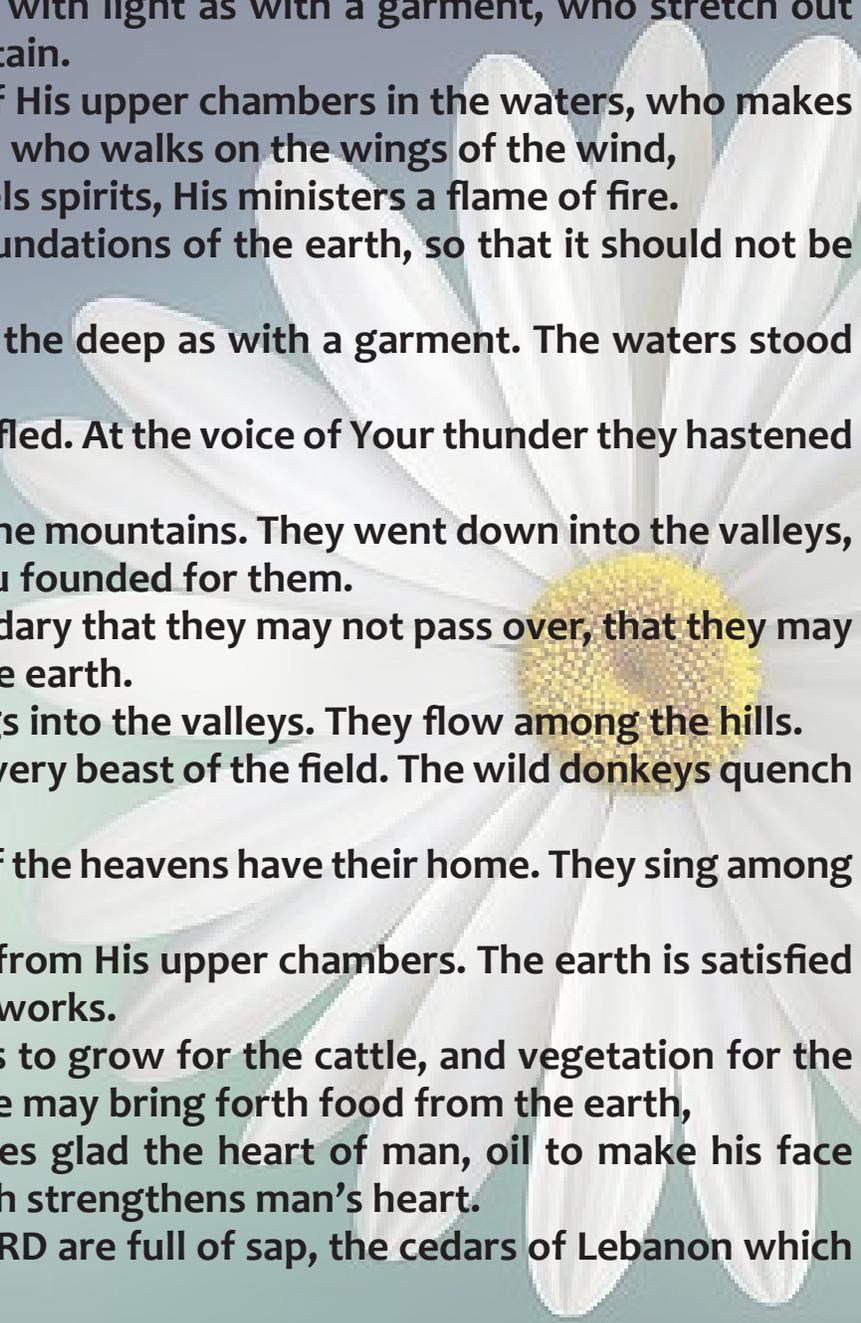
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne. Mercy and truth go before Your face.

– Psalm 89:14 –

The Scriptures encourage us to reason from the known to the unknown. They tell us that although God is so great, so wise, so powerful, He is also just and loving. And the more we consider the matter, the more reasonable the Bible description of the Almighty appears. His Power we see demonstrated. The Wisdom of One so great cannot be doubted. When we come to consider, Could One so wise and so powerful be unjust or ungenerous? Our hearts answer, No! No one is really great who is devoid of justice and love. So surely as our God is Jehovah, He must possess these qualities.

When we came in contact with the Bible, and particularly after we learned something of its teachings and got rid of the misrepresentations which gathered about it during the Dark Ages—then we began to recognize it as the Message of Jehovah to His creatures. It informs us that the great Creator of the Universe is not only Almighty and All-wise, but loving and kind, with Justice as the foundation of His Empire. (Psalm 89:13,14.) From the Bible we learn, too, that our Creator has been pleased to make us in His own image, in His own moral likeness, to the intent that we may enjoy Him and the fruits of His righteousness to all eternity. R. 5210

PSALM 104



1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty,
2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.
3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, who makes the clouds His chariot, who walks on the wings of the wind,
4 who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.
5 You who laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever.
6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains.
7 At Your rebuke they fled. At the voice of Your thunder they hastened away.
8 They went up over the mountains. They went down into the valleys, to the place which You founded for them.
9 You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, that they may not return to cover the earth.
10 He sends the springs into the valleys. They flow among the hills.
11 They give drink to every beast of the field. The wild donkeys quench their thirst.
12 By them the birds of the heavens have their home. They sing among the branches.
13 He waters the hills from His upper chambers. The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works.
14 He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth,
15 and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart.
16 The trees of the LORD are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted,
17 Where the birds make their nests. The stork has her home in the fir trees.
18 The high hills are for the wild goats. The cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers.
19 He appointed the moon for seasons. The sun knows its going down.

20 You make darkness, and it is night, in which all the beasts of the forest creep about.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God.

22 When the sun rises, they gather together and lie down in their dens.

23 Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening.

24 O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions—

25 This great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great.

26 There the ships sail about. There is that Leviathan which You have made to play there.

27 These all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season.

28 What You give them they gather in. You open Your hand, they are filled with good.

29 You hide Your face, they are troubled. You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.

31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever. May the LORD rejoice in His works.

32 He looks on the earth, and it trembles. He touches the hills, and they smoke.

33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live. I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 May my meditation be sweet to Him. I will be glad in the LORD.

35 May sinners be consumed from the earth, and the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!

The Book of Nature and the Book of Revelation, when rightly read, harmoniously declare the glory of God; and blessed is the man whose character is ennobled and purified and blessed by constant meditation on these glorious themes. How it refreshes and strengthens every noble and generous aspiration, checks every tendency to evil and sin, purifies the heart, kindles hope, awakens zeal and starts and keeps us in the heavenly race with its glorious end in view. The great Emperor of this wonderful universe upon which we daily and nightly cast our wondering gaze has called even us to be the bride of and joint-heir with his only begotten Son, the heir of all things; and in these glorious revelations of himself is supplied the inspiration and instruction necessary to enable us to run with patience the race set before us, if we make them the centre of our meditations. R. 1390

**Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.
– Psalm 90:2 –**

The completeness of the Divine perfection is such that companionship is not necessary to the happiness of Jehovah. The One who “inhabith eternity” is self-centered. The creation of angels and of man was indeed His pleasure, because, benevolently, He desires to do good, to give capacity for pleasure and to afford it opportunity for gratification. Furthermore, the highest good of His creatures calls for an exhibition to the full of all the elements of Divine character—Divine Justice, Love, Power and Wisdom.

The deliberateness of Divine providence often astounds us. Our lives are so brief, our limitations so many, that any plans we may have must be pushed to completion as rapidly as we are able. But not so with the Almighty, who is “from everlasting to everlasting God.” He has unlimited time at His disposal, and accordingly is working out His sovereign will with great deliberation. It is a comfort to His people to be assured that He knew the end from the beginning, and is working all things according to the counsel of His own will. R. 5209 and R. 5251

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Your throne is established from of old. You are from everlasting.
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Psalm 93:2
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**For I am the LORD, I do not change.
– Malachi 3:6 –**

With what different feelings we read the blessed words, “With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” —we who have been so wonderfully enlightened through the Scriptures concerning God’s plan: as to how it was wisely designed before the creation began; how it has been developing in the ages past; what is its present status and mode of development; and what and when will be the glorious outcome. As we take in the grand scope of the wondrous plan and perceive the blessings in store through it for all creation, both spiritual and human, our hearts are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory as we read, “With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” “I am the Lord, I change not.” “My word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Do not err, beloved brethren: every good and perfect gift comes from God. God’s plans for mankind are all good and perfect, and when fully realized in his appointed time will amply demonstrate his glorious and benevolent character. Every purpose of God is for the ultimate good of his creatures.

—Mal. 3:6; Isa. 55:11. R. 904

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**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and
comes down from the Father of lights, with
whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**
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James 1:17
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I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Marvelous are Your works,
and that my soul knows very well.

Psalm 139:14

God created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.

– Genesis 1:27 –

When we read that God created man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26,27), we may know that man is not God. He was merely made in the image of God. Because God is perfect, therefore the human being made in His image would be satisfactory to God. That human being had knowledge. But he neglected the Word of God, and thus he learned something by his neglect. What he learned is mentioned in the Scriptures. “He is become as one of Us [the Elohim], to know good and evil.” (Genesis 3:22.) This statement proves that God knows good and evil. If God did not know evil from good, then He could not be our Instructor.

By His laws, His principles, God sets before our minds that which is right and that which is wrong.

**The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
keeping watch on the evil and the good.**

Proverbs 15:3

Character may be viewed from two different standpoints. When Adam was created, he was a man of great and good character— “crowned with glory and honor.” He was perfect, the image of God. There is a difference, however, between a character thus given, and one that is **developed** and **tested** by the exercise of **free will**. Our Heavenly Father desires that His intelligent creatures exercise their wills. Therefore instead of giving Adam a part of His own character-likeness and eliminating that which we call moral choice, He chose to give Adam His character-likeness, including free moral agency. “So God created man in His own image.” God foreknew the fall of man and all the circumstances connected with it. He knew that the permission of evil for a time would ultimately result in great blessings for all. He knew that the time would come when every creature in heaven and in earth would be obedient to Him, not only because there was no opportunity of doing otherwise, but from **choice**.

Those who are appreciative of God’s character should desire to have this character-likeness. Only such will merit everlasting life amongst either angels or men. God is testing along these lines the worthiness of those who are on trial for life eternal. Hence, “The Father seeketh such to worship Him” as “worship Him in spirit and in truth”—intelligently. —John 4:23,24. R. 5210 and R. 5082

God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.

– Genesis 1:31 –

This creature which God “had made,” completed, and declared to be a copy, an image of himself, a manifestation of himself in flesh, he was also pleased to own as his son (Luke 3:38), and as Paul says—“If a son, then an heir;” for God brings no son into existence for whom he has not made ample provision. And as a son he had the rich token of his Father’s loving providence in the vast domain of earth which he was to subdue and take possession of as his posterity would increase and require it; and all its products—animal, vegetable and mineral—were subject to his control and use. [Gen. 1:28-30] How like a wise and loving father! How bountiful the provision, yet how wisely bestowed! —not in a way to cultivate indolence and undue dependence upon paternal care, but in a way to stimulate industry and thrift and to cultivate a spirit of appreciation and thankfulness for the blessings and advantages received. When we thus view the newly created man in the light in which the Bible presents him, as a son and an heir of God, beloved and owned of God and so richly blessed with such lavish tokens of the divine favor, we must conclude that he was indeed a creditable “image” of God, and one that God was not ashamed to own—a perfect creature, therefore, filled with grace and crowned with glory. R. 1266

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please.

– Isaiah 55:11 –

We see from the Bible testimony that man was originally perfect, an image or copy of God in flesh. Of the fall from that original perfection and the results to the entire race of Adam, we also have the clear testimony of the Scriptures, showing just how it came about—that it was a willful transgression of known righteous law, in the face of a distinct warning of the penalty of such a course. It was a sin on man’s part only, and from which God is fully exonerated in that man was left under no necessity of want and with full instruction as to the right course and as to the results of a wrong course of action. The only cause of man’s fall, then, which is traceable to the Creator, lies in the fact that he created him in his own image—with a free will of his own. But this endowment, we see, was the crowning act of God’s favor to man, and man’s choicest blessing. And so it was the lack of appreciation, and an abuse of God’s abounding favor and goodness, and not any lack on God’s part, which led to the fall.

We see the grandeur of man as originally created in God’s image and can appreciate the significance of God’s statement, that he was crowned with dignity and honor as the lord and master of earth, with dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the heavens and the fishes of the sea, in likeness of his Creator, the Lord and Ruler over all things. We have seen, too, how all this arrangement was interrupted by sin. But while God permitted this interruption, he has not permitted, nor does he purpose to permit, a failure of his plans. All his purposes shall be accomplished (Isa. 55:11), because they were all devised in full view of all the circumstances which would attend them—in view of man’s free agency, in view of his temptation and fall into sin and of its death penalty, and in view, also, of the possibility of his recovery from that condition through the sacrifice and mediation of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

This favor of a new trial for the condemned race was provided by God in the gift of his Son, our Lord Jesus, who left his former glory and took our human nature, and then, as a man, freely gave himself as our ransom or corresponding price. Wherefore, says the Apostle, God has now highly exalted him, even to the divine nature, that he might have power to justify or restore the redeemed race to the perfection and glory and dominion of earth lost in Eden; for the Son of man came to seek and to recover that which was lost. —Luke 19:10. R. 1267

O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens!

– Psalm 8:1 –

With the Psalmist our hearts exclaim, “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens;” —for, however grand and glorious are the wonders of creation, they proclaim only the superior grandeur and greatness of their Creator. Do we admire intellectual vigor, nobility of conception and skill in execution, comprehensive scope and minute particularity? We see it there! And while recognizing that even we ourselves are his workmanship — “fearfully and wonderfully made,” and not beneath his notice and Fatherly care, we feel humbled as we recognize our Father’s majesty, and in our hearts we say with the Psalmist, again, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? for thou hast made him [but] a little lower than the angels and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the [earthly] works of thy hands.” (Psa. 8.) High indeed was the honor conferred upon man and the glory of his dominion (lost in Adam, redeemed in Christ) over the earth which God made “not in vain,” but for human habitation. And while, as Job tells us, he “hanged the earth upon nothing,” but launched it out in the abyss of space subject to those fixed laws which his wisdom established, we rejoice to know that “The Lord hath prepared his throne [power, dominion, control] in the heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.” (Psa. 103:19.) Surely no confusion or mishap can befall the remotest fragment of his vast empire, the Universe. Yea, Lord, we rejoice to realize that, —

**“The whole creation is thy charge,
But saints are thy peculiar care.” –R. 1815**

Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.’

– Isaiah 46:9-10 –

Since God tells us that He has a definitely fixed purpose, and that all His purposes shall be accomplished, it behooves us, as His children, to inquire diligently what those plans are, that we may be found in harmony with them. Notice how emphatically Jehovah affirms the fixedness of His purpose: “Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it be.” “The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?” “I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me.... My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.... Yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” (Isa. 14:24-27; 46:9-11) Therefore, however haphazard or mysterious God’s dealings with men may appear, those who believe this testimony of His Word must acknowledge that His original and unalterable Plan has been, and still is, progressing systematically to completion.

It is the privilege of the child of God to see by faith and the light of his “lamp” the foretold glories of the future, and thereby to appreciate the otherwise mysterious dealings of the past and the present. Therefore, as interested sons of God and heirs of a promised inheritance, we apply to our Father’s Word, that we may understand His purposes from the plans and specifications therein given. HG537

Thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

– Isaiah 57:15 –

JEHOVAH is the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity. Before the mountains were brought forth, or the hills, before the First-born was created, He is God. To Moses at the burning bush, He said, "I AM THAT I AM." (Exodus 3:14.) Our God is very great, very wise, very high. Nevertheless, the Scriptures show us that He is also very sympathetic. He is a God of Mercy and of Love. He remembers that we are dust, and has compassion upon us. In this respect He is different from the gods of the heathen, who are domineering, apparently bent on wreaking vengeance upon those in their power.

Besides being very great and lofty, our God is particularly sympathetic towards those who are of a broken and contrite heart, whose spirit is humble, who realize that they are imperfect, who desire to be in accord with Him, and to dwell in holiness. To such He is ever near—to revive the spirit of the humble, to give them strength. He will not trample them into the dust, as many an earthly potentate has done to his subjects, but will assist them in the right way, and revive the heart of the contrite. These are to know that our God is a God of sympathy, compassion and love, who takes pleasure in reviving their hearts and in bringing them back into harmony with Him, if they are willing to be led. R. 5717

So far as our humanity is concerned, we are undone by reason of the fall. It behooves us, then, to be very humble, to feel our own littleness, our own fallen condition. It becomes us to be very contrite, very much in opposition to sin, to feel that sin is the great blight upon the whole race, and that God will not be in harmony with anything except that which is righteous and holy. All, therefore, who would be in harmony with God must be repentant in respect to their own shortcomings and must be appreciative of His lofty standards—His holy standards. He, in turn, informs these that they have His sympathy, and that they shall have His succor. He appreciates the attitude of mind in which they are; and therefore, as our text tells us, He is ready to revive the spirit of the humble and contrite ones. To such He will show His salvation; to others He will not. R. 5718

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?

– Psalm 8:3-4 –

The suggestion of the Prophet respecting man is one which we believe has occurred to every intelligent being. As one upon the deep looks out upon the vast expanse of water and the riding of the vessel upon it, he thinks, How little is man! How small a speck in the Universe! When we look up into the heavens and realize that they represent so much more of Divine power, we are still more surprised. When we consider the heavens, and realize that all these stars, except the planets which belong to our own system, are really suns, and that around each of these suns revolve planets, as our earth revolves around our sun, and when we think of the number of these suns and their planets, we are amazed, and we feel our own littleness all the more! We ask astronomers as to the number of these suns, and they tell us that there are a hundred millions of them in sight. And if we would average the planets around these hundred million suns at ten, it would be ten hundred millions of planets. And then they tell us, further, that if we could take our stand upon the very farthermost one of these we would see still beyond us as many more, and as many more.

Our minds are appalled as we begin to think of the heavens, the work of God's fingers, and then consider man, how small a work in God's sight! We have an appreciation then of what the Scriptures say man is like in God's sight—as "the dust in the balance," that is not worthy to be taken into account. We have all been in the grocer's shop and noticed that he pays no attention to the dust in the scoop of his scale. So man is so small in the sight of the great Creator that we wonder that God should have any interest at all in humanity.

Except for the Bible we should have no knowledge of God's interest in us, and we might think that God is so great that He would pay no heed to us. But, when God reveals Himself to us in the Bible, we begin to see that there is not only Divine power exercised and manifested in the creation of all these worlds, but we see also this Divine power manifested in God's dealings with us, and also the love of God, which the Scriptures state "passeth all understanding." What wonderful condescension on the part of the Creator that He should give heed to us! R. 4972

For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary. From heaven the LORD viewed the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner, to release those appointed to death.

– Psalm 102:19-20 –

God looked down from His holy habitation, and beheld our sorrow, and heard, figuratively, "the groaning of the prisoners" —humanity—all groaning and travailing under this penalty of death—some with few aches and pains, and some with more aches and pains; some with few sorrows, and some with greater sorrows, but all groaning and travailing in pain. But God's sympathy was manifested; and we read that, "He looked down and beheld that there was no eye to pity and no arm to save" and with "His own Arm He brought salvation." This is what was promised to Abraham—that one should come from his posterity who would be the **Savior of the world**. R. 4963

We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love.

– 1 John 4:16 –

God is Love in the sense that the term Love represents the central principle of the Divine character. There is nothing contrary to love in God. The Scriptures do not teach that there is nothing except love anywhere—that God is everywhere and love is everywhere. But they teach that God is a loving character. This does not militate against the other statements that God is just, wise and powerful. But this quality of Love best of all represents the Divine Being. All of His Justice is in harmony with His Love. There is no exercise of Justice or Power in an evil sense, for all His attributes work together for good to all His creatures.

All the Power, all the Justice, all the Wisdom, of God must be used in accordance with His own character, which is Love. It will therefore be loving Wisdom, loving Justice, which He will use toward all creation in the exercise of His loving Power for their good. He created man. He permitted Adam to disobey His Law, telling us that He knew in advance what man would do and that He permitted man to do wrong. —Isaiah 46:9,10.

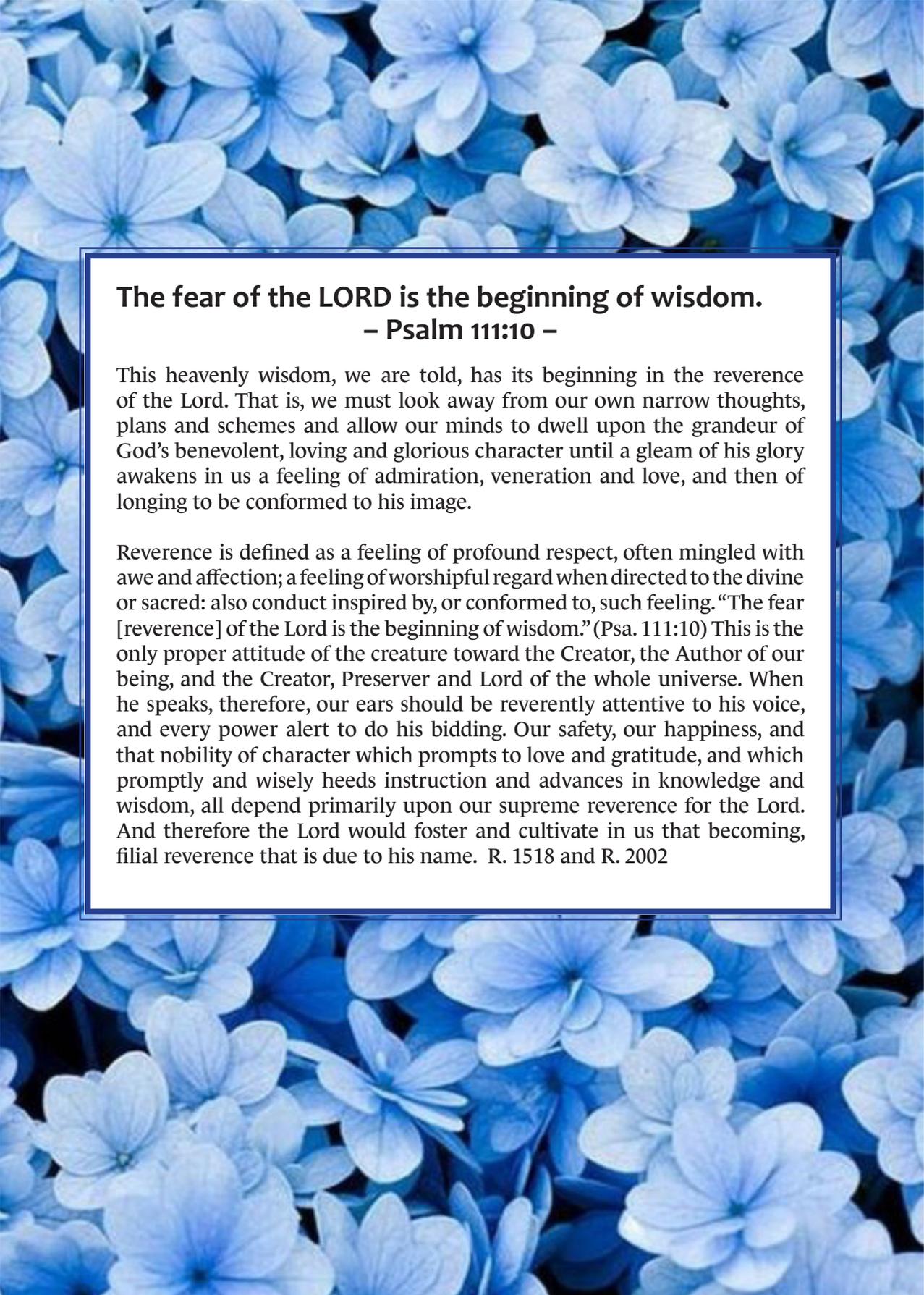
In permitting sin to enter the world, God had two ends in view. He purposed to give an illustration to the angels respecting the results of obedience and of disobedience. He also intended that the human family should gain a lesson from this experience. The lesson thus far taught is the goodness and the severity of God—His goodness in bringing us into being, and His severity in the punishment of Father Adam's willful transgression; also to both men and angels, Justice, unswerving Justice. The next lesson to be taught to God's intelligent creatures is that God is Love. The foundation for these lessons is already laid in the Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus, through and on account of which He becomes the world's Redeemer and Restorer. A few can believe this Message by faith; but not many have the ear of faith or the eye of faith. Only the saints are able to appreciate this great fact at the present time. R. 5211

Truly You are God, who hides Yourself.

– Isaiah 45:15 –

How true! As a result the world by wisdom knows not God. He is near in His Wisdom and Love, yet He can be seen only by those whose eyes of understanding have been opened. But we are glad that the time is coming when all the blind eyes shall see clearly. "As truly as I live," says Jehovah, "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14.) Then all shall see what God hath wrought, and our temporary blindness will but accentuate the glorious brightness of His Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power.

That which is now secret and understood only by the few is shortly to be made manifest to every creature in heaven and in earth. All will then see and be able to appreciate the great fact that the redemption accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus is world-wide and means a full deliverance from the sin-and-death condemnation which passed upon Adam and all of his race, to all who will accept the same as a gift from God. R. 5210



The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.

– Psalm 111:10 –

This heavenly wisdom, we are told, has its beginning in the reverence of the Lord. That is, we must look away from our own narrow thoughts, plans and schemes and allow our minds to dwell upon the grandeur of God's benevolent, loving and glorious character until a gleam of his glory awakens in us a feeling of admiration, veneration and love, and then of longing to be conformed to his image.

Reverence is defined as a feeling of profound respect, often mingled with awe and affection; a feeling of worshipful regard when directed to the divine or sacred: also conduct inspired by, or conformed to, such feeling. "The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psa. 111:10) This is the only proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator, the Author of our being, and the Creator, Preserver and Lord of the whole universe. When he speaks, therefore, our ears should be reverently attentive to his voice, and every power alert to do his bidding. Our safety, our happiness, and that nobility of character which prompts to love and gratitude, and which promptly and wisely heeds instruction and advances in knowledge and wisdom, all depend primarily upon our supreme reverence for the Lord. And therefore the Lord would foster and cultivate in us that becoming, filial reverence that is due to his name. R. 1518 and R. 2002

The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy.

– Psalm 147:11 –

Not only is the fear of the Lord valuable as a beginning of true wisdom, but it is valuable all our journey through. One tendency amongst those who have received the light of present truth, and who lose thereby the terrible and slavish fear inspired by misrepresentations of the divine character and plan, is to lose all fear. And according to the Scriptures this is a very dangerous condition, an ultra freedom that is apt to lead to license, under our present imperfect conditions.

**The fear of the LORD is
the beginning of wisdom.
Psalm 111:10**

It is true that “perfect love casteth out fear,” but it is also true that perfect love is a very scarce commodity on earth even amongst the saints. Hence the Apostle urges, “Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it.” (Heb. 4:1.) The fear which we are to lose entirely is “the fear of man which bringeth a snare.” He who loses the fear of God, and the fear of losing the great prize which God has held out before us, is in a very dangerous position: he is likely to become self-conscious and self-satisfied, and readily drops into the condition where he does not believe even in the just sentence against sinners, the second death, and where he is proportionately careless respecting the keeping of his own words and thoughts and deeds in strictest alignment with the principles laid down in the Word of the Lord. Having lost his fear of the Lord, he rapidly loses carefulness respecting the Word of the Lord, and inclines more and more to “lean to his own understanding,” and becomes blinded to his own faults.

**Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!
There is no want to those who fear Him.
Psalm 34:9**

The lesson is that, to lose fear of God, in the sense of losing fear of his displeasure or fearing to come short of the grand possibilities which he has so graciously put within our reach, would be a most serious loss, as it would probably cost us our eternal life; for those who have lost this fear are like steam-engines which have lost their governors, and are apt to run with too much liberty to self-destruction and unfitness for service. Hence, as the Apostle again says to the pilgrims who seek the heavenly country, — “If ye call on him as Father, ... pass the time of your sojourning here in fear” (1 Pet. 1:17); not in levity, nor in worldly frivolities, nor in sensualities, nor in land and money grabbing, nor even carelessly and slothfully, but in earnest watchfulness of every word and act, to please the Lord and to copy his character and thus to make your calling and election sure to a place in his Kingdom, when it shall be established in power and great glory. R. 2289

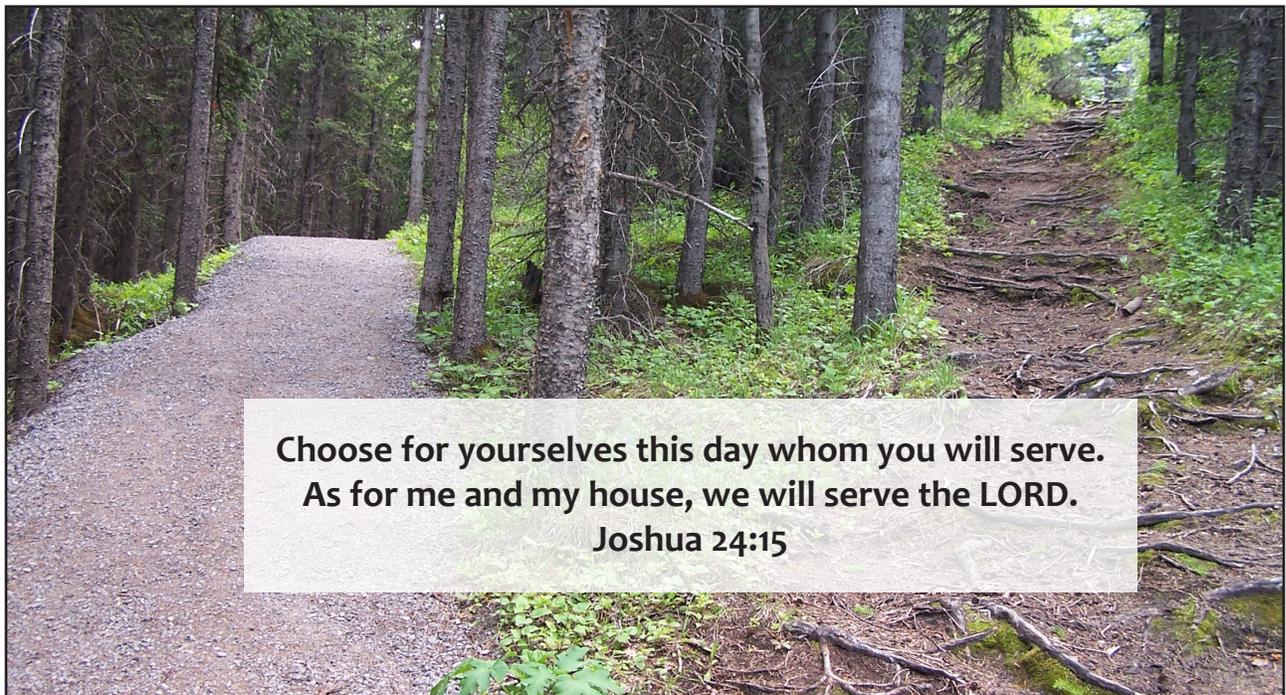
**He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him.
He also will hear their cry and save them.
Psalm 145:19**

**The mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children.
– Psalm 103:17 –**

It was a proper reverence for the Lord that controlled Noah and his family, and kept them separate from the evil of their time, and that brought to them ultimately the divine blessing and preservation through the flood. It was a proper reverence for the Lord that enabled Abraham to forsake home and country in response to a divine promise, and that guided him throughout his pilgrimage and kept him separate from the Sodomites and the evil influences of that time. Similarly, on Isaac's part, it was reverence for the Lord which kept him in his father's footsteps; and we have just seen how fully Jacob was imbued with this reverence for divinity, and for all the gracious promises by which the Lord represented himself to him. We have seen the hand of the Lord with all those who had this reverence, and that even though they passed through numerous and severe trials, difficulties, etc., they were not forsaken, but upheld.

On the other hand, we have seen Lot's insufficiency of reverence, which permitted him to associate with evil-doers, and which ultimately brought upon him a share of their trouble. We have seen Ishmael's lack of reverence, and Esau's lack of reverence, and how these though not injured of the Lord, nevertheless missed greater blessing which a different course might have brought to them.

The lesson for us is that which Joshua expressed to Israel later, saying, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15.) Let others reverence whom and what they will; we, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we, who have come to know him through his Word, and through his providences, and through the power of the spirit by which we are begotten again to newness of life—we can do naught else than reverence our God; and reverencing him we must trust him implicitly; and trusting him implicitly we will gladly walk in whatever way he may mark out for us; and thus trusting, and thus walking we are content, whatever lot we see, since 'tis his hand that leadeth us. And let us be assured that following the true Shepherd after this manner, we shall ultimately reach the heavenly fold. In these assurances we have joy and peace and blessing of heart, even in the house of our pilgrimage, before we reach the heavenly city. R. 2872



**Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.
As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.
Joshua 24:15**

Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords!
For His mercy endures forever!
To Him who alone does great wonders,
for His mercy endures forever.
To Him who by wisdom made the heavens,
for His mercy endures forever.
To Him who laid out the earth above the waters,
for His mercy endures forever.
To Him who made great lights,
for His mercy endures forever---
The sun to rule by day,
for His mercy endures forever.
The moon and stars to rule by night,
for His mercy endures forever.
Who remembered us in our lowly state,
for His mercy endures forever,
and rescued us from our enemies,
for His mercy endures forever!
– Psalm 136:3-9,23-24 –

His mercy sent His Son, the Under Shepherd, to be our Redeemer, and to help us back into His favor. His mercy will pursue the lost sheep until every member of Adam's race shall have been brought to a knowledge of the Truth and to a full opportunity of returning to the fold of God. To this end the Messianic Kingdom is to be established. To this end also is the present call for the Church, to be a Royal Priesthood, that under the guidance of the great Deliverer, they may be co-laborers with Him in carrying the Message of God's grace to all the members of Adam's family.

Oh, how different this view of our loving Creator from the one which was handed down to us from the Dark Ages! How different from the one which represented the Almighty as angry in a vicious sense! --as having prepared in advance a place for the eternal torture of the human family, except a few who would have the hearing ears and happen to hear the Message in the present life. On the contrary, we find that God's loving provision is only beginning to be manifested, in His favor toward Christ and the Church; and that ultimately the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth, until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God. R. 5427



Give to the LORD the glory due His name. Bring an offering, and come into His courts. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth.

– Psalm 96:8-9 –

Our God is a God to be revered: he is not one like ourselves, our equal, into whose presence we may come without that ceremony and decorum due to his glorious person and office. (Job 9:1-35.) The court of heaven has regulations and ceremonies of respect and due deference which must be complied with by every man who would gain an audience with the King of kings. Our prayers, to be acceptable to God, must express confident faith, loving esteem and reverence, full sympathy with the divine plan and submission to the divine will, childlike dependence upon God, acknowledgment of sins and shortcomings and desire for forgiveness, with a forgiving disposition on our part toward others, and an humble craving for the divine guidance and protection. These may not always all be expressed in words, but such must at least be the attitude of the soul.

Those who thus come to God are privileged always to have their interests considered at the throne of grace, and the welcome we shall always find there may be judged of by the cordial invitations to come often and tarry long. Well might we hesitate to avail ourselves of such privileges were we not thus assured, but having this assurance we may come with confidence to the throne of grace.

—Heb. 4:16; 13:6.

The worship of the one true and righteous God, whom we are commanded to worship in the beauty of holiness (Psa. 29:2; 96:9), is elevating and ennobling, and calculated to develop in us the glorious moral likeness of God; and only those do truly worship him in the spirit of the truth—in the beauty of holiness—whose fruit is always unto praise and honor and glory. R. 1865 and R. 1836

How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.

– Psalm 36:7 –

To the thoughtful, appreciative mind, one of the greatest privileges which the Word of God offers is that of personal audience and communion with the King of kings and Lord of lords. When we consider how great is our God, and how exalted his station, how wonderful is the condescension that thus regards our low estate! He it is whose glory covereth the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over the whole universe. He it is who is without beginning of days or end of years: “From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” He is the immortal, the self-existing One, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see.” The heavens declare his glory and the firmament showeth his handiwork. In all his vast universal domain there is nothing hidden from him, nor can he be wearied by its care. His wisdom, who can fathom? and his ways, who can find them out? or who hath been his counsellor? His mighty intellect grasps with ease all the interests of his wide dominion, from immensity to minutia. His eye never slumbers nor sleeps, nor can the smallest thing escape his notice, not even a sparrow’s fall; and the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. It is his skill which clothes with life and beauty the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven. And are not we, the creatures of his hand, “fearfully and wonderfully made,” and the subjects, too, of his love and care? — “O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways; for there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me,...even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” —Psa. 139:1-12. R. 1864

Fallen creatures though we be, from the noble estate in which we were created, God so loved our race, even while we were yet sinners, as to make provision at great cost for our redemption and restitution and subsequent eternal glory. And therefore it is, —because he loves us, —that through Christ he extends to us the gracious favor of coming to him as children to a father. Wonderful is the condescension, wonderful the love and favor of our God! R. 1864

The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

– Psalm 14:1 –

The Bible points out Jehovah God as the great first cause of all things. It addresses its counsels and promises only to those who recognize their Creator with the eyes of their understanding, and declares that those who do not recognize this great first cause, God, are so degraded, have their intellects so perverted, that they are non compos mentis—fools. (Psa. 14:1.) It further declares that God will not in the present age deal with any who are so depraved; but that “He that cometh unto God [acceptably] must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” —Heb.11:6. [The] children of God, begotten by his spirit, are seeking the wisdom that cometh from above, and are finding and knowing him whom to know is life eternal. They manifest a faith which is pleasing to him, and put themselves into a position of heart in which they may be “all taught of God,” and thus know things which the natural man cannot know—thus seeing and appreciating things which “eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath entered into the hearts of [natural] men, ...but which God hath revealed unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” —1 Cor. 2:9-10. R. 2834

The LORD takes pleasure in His people. He will beautify the humble with salvation.

– Psalm 149:4 –

As a Father, he shows us that he bears a father's love to all his intelligent creatures—“the whole family of God in heaven and in earth”—and that for his “pleasure they are and were created.” (Eph. 3:15; Rev. 4:11.) He created them in his own likeness—with the same mental and moral attributes, so that he might have communion and fellowship with them as sons, and they with him as a Father, that thus, in mutual fellowship and communion, the Creator and the creature might find pleasure, happiness and delight. This likeness of God includes in all not only the same mental faculties, but also the free exercise of the same in the formation of character. A creature incapable of thus forming character would not be in God's likeness. And for the purpose of developing character the alternative of good and evil must be placed before him. The right and wrong principles of action must be discerned and the individual left free to his own choice in the matter, that the pleasure of God may be realized in the virtuous character resultant from the free choice of righteousness. R. 1832

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens and Your glory above all the earth.

– Psalm 108:5 –

The sin of idolatry is most prominently set forth in the Jewish law, the very first commandment being, —“Thou shalt have no other gods before me;...for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous god.” The worship of the one true and righteous God, whom we are commanded to worship in the beauty of holiness (Psa.29:2; 96:9), is elevating and ennobling, and calculated to develop in us the glorious moral likeness of God; and only those do truly worship him in the spirit of the truth—in the beauty of holiness—whose fruit is always unto praise and honor and glory. R. 1835

PSALM 29

1 A Psalm of David. Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

2 Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name. Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters. The God of glory thunders. The LORD is over many waters.

4 The voice of the LORD is powerful. The voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars, yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon.

6 He makes them also skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.

7 The voice of the LORD divides the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness. The LORD shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare. And in His temple everyone says, "Glory!"

10 The LORD sat enthroned at the Flood, and the LORD sits as King forever.

11 The LORD will give strength to His people! The LORD will bless His people with peace!

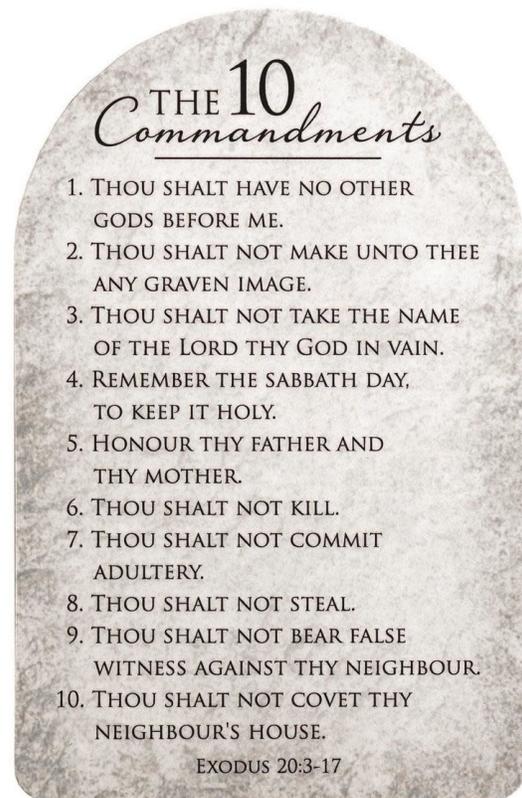
You shall have no other gods before Me. – Exodus 20:3 –

Bible students look in amazement at the simplicity of the Decalogue, and at first wonder which of its features the Jews and others were unable to perform fully, satisfactorily. The whole matter seems very simple indeed, just as it did to the Jews, until we perceive that the wonderful Law of God, represented by the Ten Commandments, has a depth of meaning not seen on the surface.

The lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the meaning of this Law were apparently seen by none until Jesus “magnified the Law and made it honorable.” He says that hatred toward a brother is incipient murder, and that adulterous desire in the heart is a violation of the seventh commandment. This throws a new light on the whole matter, and explains to us why none of the Jews or Gentiles have ever been able to keep this Law, except Jesus, since the fall of Adam.

The Great Teacher also explains that the first table of the Law, appertaining to man's duties toward his Creator, means more than merely avoiding image worship and profane swearing. It means that the True God shall be recognized and have first place in the human heart. It means “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.” Any division of the heart or strength or mind or soul violates this commandment.

God's Law to man was not originally given at Mt. Sinai. Indeed, the Mt. Sinai statement of the Law was given not to mankind in general, but merely to the Jewish nation—as a statement of the terms upon which they might become God's Royal Priesthood for the blessing of all nations. God's original Law to man was given in Eden, when man was created. God's Law was written in Adam's heart, in the sense that he was created in the Divine image—with attributes of mind and heart fully in accord with his Creator. He loved righteousness, and would have had a hatred for iniquity, had there been any to hate. But up to that time there was none. R. 5286



He answered and said, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.”
Luke 10:27

You shall not make for yourself a carved image---any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.

– Exodus 20:4-5 –

The Second Commandment is an elaboration of the first, lest the people might say, 'We will have no other gods, but we will make for us images to represent our one God so that they may help the mind through the eye. But the Lord prohibits this, and we can readily see the wisdom of the prohibition. Many Christian people have felt that they could pray before pictures of the Lord or while looking at a crucifix, better than without such an aid: indeed we know that Greek and Roman Catholics throughout the world (nearly three times as numerous as those termed Protestants) continually use images, pictures, beads, etc., as reminders and helps to the mind and faith; but we believe that the effect has been seriously injurious; the tendency downward rather than upward. The higher and purer worship of God recognizes no intermediary, no crucifix, no image, no picture, but communes directly with the Lord.

.....
 •
 • **I am the LORD, that is My name, and My glory I will not** •
 • **give to another, nor My praise to carved images.** •
 • **Isaiah 42:8** •
 •

The Gospel Church has a still higher thought than was given to the Jews on this subject. Our Master's words suggest that even fathers and mothers and wives and children might intrude upon our love and devotion and take the place of the Lord in our affections; and that this must not be permitted by any who would be of the elect. In comparison we must love less than God all other beings, so that the first strength of our love and devotion may be given to our Creator. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength." This would also include the thought that wealth, or self or ambition must not be permitted to take the chief place in those who would be the Lord's. Many seem to be in danger along these lines. We cannot read their hearts, but the vast majority not only of the world, but of those who profess devotion to the Lord, are bowing themselves down to idols of wealth, social ambition, personal ambition, etc., and serving these with all the strength and time and means and knowledge which they have consecrated to the Lord. We are not saying a word against the procuring of "things needful" in a manner "honest in the sight of all men;" we refer to something beyond this, --the attempt to lay up riches, honor, etc., with the time and knowledge and talents consecrated to the Lord. Is not this idol worship from the standpoint of the New Covenant?

The Lord announces himself as a jealous God who wants all of our affections, all of our confidence, our entire trust. He wants that we should be so fully in accord with him that his will shall be supreme in all the affairs of life. This is not to be considered selfishness on the part of the Almighty; because this, under his overruling providences, means to his creatures the largest amount of happiness, the largest amount of success in the duties and affairs of the present life, and the largest amount of preparation for the blessings which the Lord has prepared for and promised to those who love him. R. 3038

Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

– Hebrews 11:6 –

The class referred to in our text as coming to God or as willing to come to Him, have a heart-hunger for their Creator—a longing for Him that nothing else can satisfy. They say to themselves, “There is a God who made me. The more I learn respecting the vast Universe and of my own anatomy, the more I see the Wisdom and the Power of God, and the more I realize my own littleness and weakness and need. For this great God my soul is crying out, and I have been told that He has made a revelation of Himself, that to certain Prophets of old He revealed the fact that He takes an interest in His human creatures. I mean to study what He has declared through these His servants. I am also told that He has revealed Himself and His love further through Jesus Christ His Son; and that this Son of God came to earth and died for sinful man that he might live. If God has really given man His Message, I want that Message; I will draw near to this God, that I also may receive His blessing.” R. 5716

The law of the LORD is perfect converting the soul. The testimony of the LORD is sure making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

– Psalm 19:7-8 –

How true are these prophetic declarations may be comprehended only by those who have learned to appreciate the Word of God. It deters from sin, it encourages toward righteousness, it gives consolation in trouble, it gives strength and courage in a time of general fear and quaking, it gives wisdom in times of perplexity, and the result is that the people of the Lord have much advantage everyway through it as respects the present life, besides the hope, the encouragement and the preparation which it gives for the life which is to come. R. 3608

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

– Psalm 19:14 –

The inspired Psalmist not only puts this prayer in our mouth, but he suggests the means by which we may be acceptable to God, recommending the Word of the Lord as able to bring about this desired result, saying: “The law (margin–doctrine) of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul” —bringing us back to a condition of harmony with God. Without a close study of the teaching of our Father’s Word it is impossible to do or think those things that are pleasing in his sight. “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” Those who come to the Word of the Lord in simplicity of heart, with no other desire than to know his will, shall surely obtain the heavenly wisdom. [Let] us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, meditating much upon the precepts and teachings of his Word, that through them we may be imbued with their spirit. And thus the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart shall be acceptable in the sight of the Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. R. 524

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. And you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

– Isaiah 55:1 –

If the faith of any of God's children needs reinforcement from the Word of God, let him turn to the Lord's gracious invitation through the Prophet Isaiah to partake of the bounties therein offered. The call is not to every man, but to a certain class—"Ho every one that thirsteth!" (Vs. 1.) There is a blessing

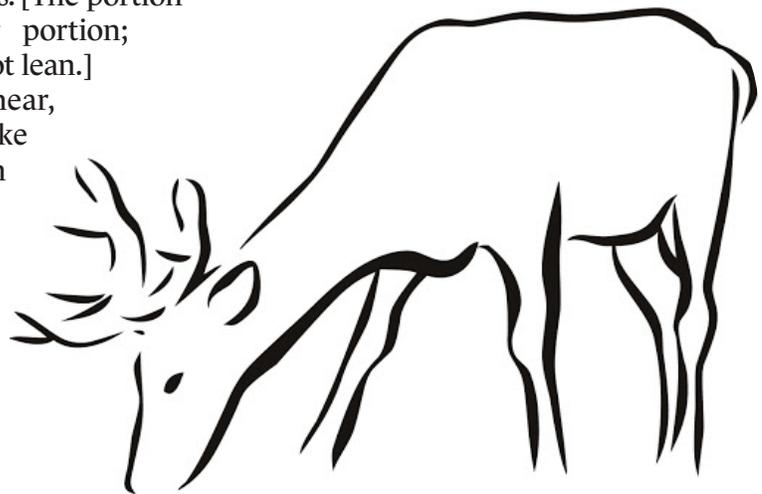
**As the deer pants for
the water brooks,
so pants my soul for
You, O God. My soul thirsts
for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and
appear before God?
Psalm 42:1-2**

for the thirsty soul. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness [Observe, not only after truth with a curiosity interest, but after that righteousness which comes through a knowledge of the truth]; for they shall be filled." The invitation is not to those who are satisfied with sin, but to those who have learned the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and whose aspirations are toward God; who thirst after God and his truth and his righteousness. It is to the class which the Psalmist describes as saying, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" —Psa. 42:1,2.

Are you of this class? then hearken to the gracious invitation—"Ho, **every one that thirsteth** [The call is to **you**], come ye to the waters [the refreshing waters of divine truth]; and he that hath no money [None of us have aught to offer as an equivalent for this priceless treasure: it is God's free gift to all the thirsty]; come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

And not only is the invitation thus liberal, but the Lord also condescends to reason with those of this class who still have some hope of finding the satisfying bread and water of life where already they have long looked for them in vain. He graciously inquires, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good [the "meat in due season" provided by the Lord for the household of faith], and let your soul delight itself in fatness. [The portion which the Lord supplies is a satisfying portion; and the soul that is fed at his table is not lean.]

Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." R. 1936



The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

– Psalm 25:14 –

Observation therefore sustains, as most literally true, the statement of our text that the Lord's plan is a secret: and it is in agreement with the statement of other Scriptures respecting the "mystery of God," "hidden from past ages and dispensations." In harmony with this is the fact that all the prophets have spoken more or less obscurely and in parables, not excepting the Great Prophet, our Lord Jesus, of whom it is written, that "he taught the people in parables and dark sayings" — "and without a parable spake he not unto the people." He promised, nevertheless, that in due time the holy spirit would be granted as a guide and instructor to his true disciples: "He will guide you into all truth" and "show you things to come." (John 16:13.) Some of the mysteries of God were due to be understood at once, and some more gradually down through the age, but the great unfolding of the divine mystery we are expressly told was reserved until the close of the Gospel age, when "the mystery of God should be finished," which he hath kept secret from the foundation of the world.

— Rev. 10:7.

This same thought is before us in [the verse above], "The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." As this has been true all the way down throughout this age, it is still true, and the finishing of "the mystery of God" in the close of this Gospel age must therefore be expected to be understood and appreciated only by this special class of the Lord's people, —those who fear or reverence him. We are to make a distinction between those who fear or reverence the Lord and those who fear or reverence man and the work of man, sectarian systems, creeds, etc. "The fear of man [and of man's churches] bringeth a snare," and hinders growth both in grace and in knowledge; —hinders an appreciation of the "Secret of the Lord." "But the fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and this wisdom, if continued, leads to fuller knowledge of God, to greater confidence in him, and to that degree of intimate friendship and sonship which is the key to the understanding of the "Secret of the Lord."

But our text adds, "He will show *them* his covenant." This is stated as though it were a very important matter to see or clearly understand God's Covenant: and it is an important matter, for God's Covenant is really the key to the entire divine plan. What God promised to Abraham in the Covenant, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," included directly and indirectly all the riches of divine grace. R. 2208

As for God, His way is perfect. The word of the LORD is proven.

– Psalm 18:30 –

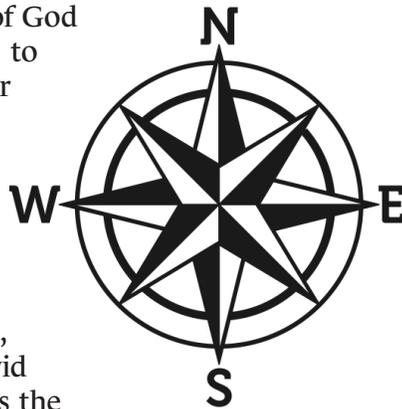
If we come to his Word as reverent students, expecting to find therein the delineation of the pure and righteous character and plan of our God, that plan and character will be revealed to us; but if we come to it in a captious spirit and with impure and unholy thoughts and ambitions, we have just the kind of poor, imperfect brains that can warp and twist the Scriptures to suit our own ideas. If we put on the colored glasses of prejudice we can read God's Word as seen through them only. And this is what the Psalmist implied when he said, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. For thou wilt save the humble people, but wilt bring down high looks." (Psa.18:25-27.) Oh, how we need to beware of "high looks" and of the pride that goeth before destruction and of the haughty spirit that precedeth a fall! (Pro. 16:18.) For if in pride we go about to establish our own ways, and do not fully submit ourselves to the right ways of the Lord, we will surely deceive ourselves and be led away by the error of the wicked, so that God's way or plan, as viewed through the colored glasses of our ambitions and prejudices, will seem to our obscured vision as the Psalmist describes—unmerciful, impure and perverse, instead of what it really is—merciful and holy and righteous altogether. R. 3336

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.

– Psalm 63:3 –

The Psalmist had a taste of the loving-kindness of God in his own experiences. When he was anointed to be king of Israel, he knew that he had found favor in God's sight. And later, when he did things that were wrong, God chastised him, punished him in love, because David was a man after the Lord's own heart —had a desire to do right—to do God's will. As the needle of a compass may under certain circumstances be detracted from its normal condition of pointing toward the pole, just so some attraction at times influenced David and led him into a wrong course. But as soon as the besetment was past, or he was led of the Lord to see his sin,

his heart returned fully to Jehovah, as the needle of the compass returns and again points to the pole. Therefore King David declared that life without God's loving-kindness would be worth nothing to him; he would not appreciate his life if cut off from the favor of the Lord. This being the case, his lips would always confess the Lord—tell forth His loving-kindness, show forth His praises. R. 5440



THE WORD OF TRUTH

*The Word of Truth is like a stained-glass window rare,
We stand outside and gaze, but see no beauty there,
No fair design, naught but confusion we behold;
'Tis only from within the glory will unfold,
And he who would drink in the rapture of the view
Must climb the winding stair, the portal enter through.
The sacred door of Truth's cathedral is most low,
And all who fain would enter there the knee must bow
In deep humility. But once inside, the light
Of day streams through and makes each color heavenly bright,
The Master's great design we see, our hands we raise
In reverent ecstasy of wonder, love and praise!*

Gertrude W. Seibert

Though the LORD is on high, yet He regards the lowly. But the proud He knows from afar.

– Psalm 138:6 –

There is a disposition on the part of many to be rather boastful on account of the Truth, as though we had originated the Truth. How foolish this is! We have made no truth. We have merely gotten rid of some of the errors that formerly blinded our eyes. **The Truth is God's.** He has allowed us to see out of the darkness of ignorance and superstition into the Truth of His Plan. If a man who had seen a beautiful picture should then boast as though he had painted it, we would say, "Foolish man! You did not **make** that picture. You merely **looked at it.** You have nothing to boast of concerning it."

Our proper course, therefore, is to make it plain at the very beginning that we are of the right spirit—the meek, humble spirit of the Master. God is permitting us to see things in His Word, concerning which it is His due time to turn on the light. The picture was there all along, but the clouds and darkness made it so dim that we were not able to discern its beauties. Now the light is being turned on, and, as the poet has expressed it, "Wonderful things in the Bible we see."

Instead of self-confidence, wisdom dictates a distrustfulness of self, remembering its weaknesses and imperfections, and correspondingly the greater reverence for God and reliance upon Him, which more than anything else will strengthen us and enable us to depart from the evil of our fallen estate. It is when we are thus humble and faithful that the Lord makes us His chosen vessels to bear His name to others. Thus, emptied of self and filled with His Spirit, and with His Truth, we can go forth, strong in the Lord of Hosts and in His mighty Power do valiant service as soldiers of the Cross. R.5185

Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

– Proverbs 3:7 –

The Scriptures everywhere make prominent the fact that those who would be in harmony with God must be humble. The Lord bestows blessings upon the humble, the meek, the teachable. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek." (Matt. 5:5.) The Apostle exhorts, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."—1 Pet. 5:6. The Word of God points to the fact that Jesus was meek and lowly. (Matt. 11:29,30.) This humility of mind and heart was, in many respects, the secret of His success. If He had not been humble, He would not have attained to the glorious station to which He was exalted.

There is a marked contrast between Jesus and Satan. The one thought to exalt himself, and the Other to humble Himself. (Isa. 14:13,14; Phil. 2:8.) Satan said, "I will elevate myself above the other angels; I will be like the Most High, and exert such a power as He does. I could show the angels very great wisdom if I were in control of affairs." Inspired by this wrong spirit, Satan became ambitious to make an exhibition of what he could do. The Scriptures give us to understand that Satan's inordinate desire to gain distinction was the secret of his fall. Ambition is good, but only when it is based upon humility. Any spirit that does not respect God's Wisdom is indeed foolish.

These two great examples afford us an impressive lesson. They show us that if we copy the ambitious and self-wise attitude of Satan, it will estrange us from God. We should realize the Wisdom of God and submit ourselves fully to His will. If we walk obediently in the footsteps of the Master, we shall attain glory and honor with our Lord. R. 5186

**God resists the
proud but gives
grace to the humble.
1 Peter 5:5**

My soul shall make its boast in the LORD.

– Psalm 34:2 –

Let such a one “glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.” To thus know the Lord is not merely to know of him, to know something of his works and ways, but it is to know him by that intimate fellowship and communion which, by a living faith, seals the testimonies of his Word upon our hearts and makes us to realize that they are ours personally, that the Lord himself is our personal friend and helper and counselor and guide. We thus become acquainted with his spirit, his principles and methods of action, —we understand him, —we know how to interpret his providences, to mark his leadings, to observe his attitude toward us and thus daily to walk with him. Thus also we are led to a fuller appreciation of the Lord’s righteousness and of his loving kindness, which will in due time establish justice in all the earth. Well, indeed, may we glory in the Lord and in the fact of his great condescension to us personally, when thus we come to understand and know him. R. 1919

The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.

– Psalm 25:9 –

The great work of vanquishing sin and establishing righteousness in the earth is the Lord’s work: no human power is adequate to the emergencies of the case. Yet God is pleased to allow his power to operate through any human instrument that is meet for his use; i.e., that can be used without injury to itself. If God were to work his wonders through those whose hearts are inclined to pride, that pride would grow, and would arrogate to self the glory that belongs to God, instead of appreciating the honor of being a servant of God, an instrument in his mighty hand— “for the Master’s use made meet.”

Above almost every thing else, therefore, beloved, let us guard well our humility. It is only when we are little in our own eyes that God can use us with safety to ourselves. And yet he does not shield us from every test of fidelity. If therefore the Lord gives you a little exaltation today, a little encouragement of success in his service, receive it humbly, meekly remembering your own unworthiness and insufficiency except as God is pleased to work through you. R. 1919

By humility and the fear of the LORD are
riches and honor and life.
Proverbs 22:4

PSALM 148

1 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens! Praise Him in the heights! 2 Praise Him, all His angels! Praise Him, all His hosts! 3 Praise Him, sun and moon! Praise Him, all you stars of light! 4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. 6 He also established them forever and ever. He made a decree which shall not pass away. 7 Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all the depths. 8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds, stormy wind, fulfilling His word. 9 Mountains and all hills. Fruitful trees and all cedars. 10 Beasts and all cattle. Creeping things and flying fowl. 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples. Princes and all judges of the earth. 12 Both young men and maidens. Old men and children. 13 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is exalted. His glory is above the earth and heaven. 14 And He has exalted the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints—of the children of Israel, a people near to Him.

Praise the LORD!

David Anointed By Samuel

For the LORD does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

– 1 Samuel 16:7 –

God looked for the same characteristics in David that he now seeks in those whom in this age he calls to be anointed for the Kingdom. He found in him faith, meekness, courage, energy and loving obedience. Yet he was young and inexperienced and untrained and unskilled in the duties of the high office to which he was called. This latter condition, which, in the estimation of men, would have been an insurmountable barrier, was no obstacle in God's sight; for God is able to inspire his called ones with his spirit and to arm them with his might. So he did with David, and so he does with the Christ—our Lord Jesus and his body, the church.

Let all who have this glorious hope in them remember the words of [this verse]—

“The Lord looketh on the heart.”

He is looking to see who is worthy to sit on the throne of his Kingdom; and has shown us very clearly the traits of character for which he is looking. It behooves us, then, to see that our hearts (our will, purpose, intention and effort) are in such a condition of loyalty, faithfulness and obedience as will bear the inspection of the all-seeing eye, while we remember for our encouragement that, as shown in the type, no conditions of birth or station or circumstances can form any obstacle to our acceptance with God and our future exaltation with Christ if we are faithful. R. 1901

God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

Luke 16:15

Saul's rejection by the Lord because of disobedience meant not only his own ultimate removal from the kingdom, but that his family, his sons, should not succeed him in it. It meant, also, the Lord's selection of another man, another family, for the office of ruler in Israel and representative of the Lord upon the throne. The Lord's choice was David, to whom Samuel indirectly referred, saying, "The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou [Saul] hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." (1 Sam. 13:14.) R. 3225

Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.”

1 Samuel 16:10-11

This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

– Matthew 3:17 –

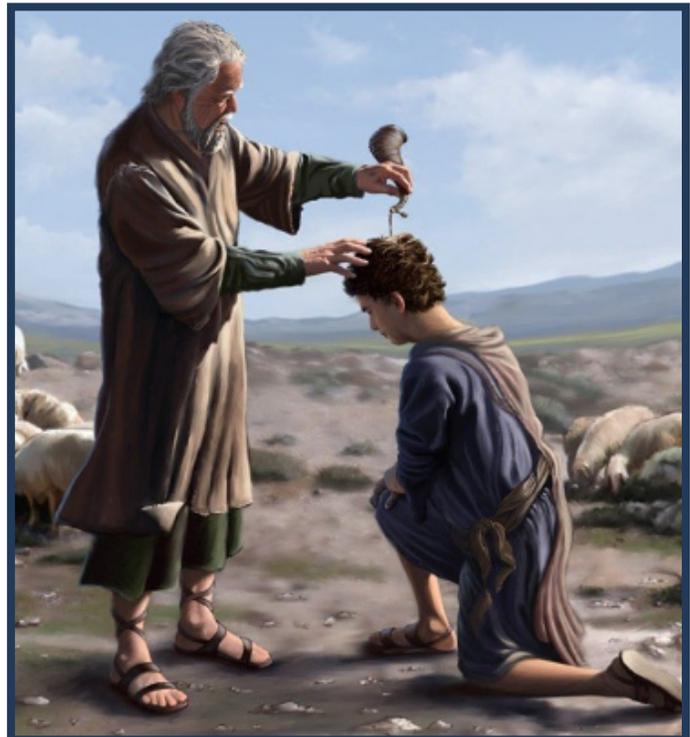
Samuel seems to have taken supervision of the family of Jesse to the intent that he might without public display find the man whom the Lord had chosen and anoint him to the office and give him the divine blessing in preparation for it. Jesse properly introduced his sons to the prophet according to the order of their birth, his eldest, Eliab, first; and as he was of fine appearance Samuel naturally assumed that he was the Lord's choice. Eliab was the most suitable person in Jesse's family to be the king over the nation; but not so in the Lord's sight. The Lord was looking at the heart and had already selected David as a man after his own heart.

The name David signifies “beloved,” and as it applied specially to our Lord and Master, of whom it was said by Jehovah, “This is my beloved Son,” so also it applies to all the members of his body, each one of whom must be beloved, else he cannot be acceptable as a member. The Head says of such, “The Father himself loveth you,” and again he says that we should love one another as he has loved us. It is not too much to say that all who receive this anointing of the Lord must ultimately be of this David, or beloved, character—the spirit of love must be in them, love for the Lord and love one for the other, else they are none of his. R. 3225

**So he sent and brought him in.
Now he was ruddy, with
bright eyes, and good-looking.
And the LORD said,
“Arise, anoint him,
for this is the one!”**

1 Samuel 16:12

David when anointed was but a youth. He was a bud of promise, a noble youth, — meek, modest, gentle, faithful, courageous in the line of duty, and brave to face danger and to endure hardness in any good work, especially wherever the interests of God's cause or God's people were at stake. Seeing in him this sterling stamp of character God called him to higher service. R. 1901



God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty. And the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

– 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 –

In seeking for the Lord's anointed who shall by and by reign in Millennial glory for the blessing of the world, as antitypes of David, we notice that as he was counted by his brethren too insignificant to be considered in this connection, so also are those whom the Lord is choosing and anointing for his heavenly Kingdom. Our Lord Jesus was disesteemed of his brethren, and when the suggestion was made that he should be the Lord's anointed, his people hid, as it were, their faces from him—disdained him, despised him, and considered him hopeless in respect to anything great or glorious—"as a root out of dry ground." The same has been true respecting the members of his body, the true elect Church; they also have been despised and rejected of men, and of them the Apostle declares, We are counted the filth and offscouring of the world; we are counted fools all the day long for Christ's sake — 1 Cor. 4:13.

Instructed respecting the Lord's methods, we are not to despise the least, the most ignoble or illiterate of those who give evidence of a purity and honesty of heart toward God, and to whom he seems to give the anointing of his spirit and the "ear to hear." Rather, while making known the message to all as we have opportunity, we are to rejoice specially with those upon whom the Lord's favor is manifested, regardless of their earthly surroundings, etc. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and it is for us to recognize, to honor and to cooperate with all such, as the ambassadors and representatives of our Lord and Master.

Had the Lord sent us forth to seek his bride, we might have ignorantly passed by some of his choice jewels and have gathered in some whom he rejects as unworthy—because we are unable to read the heart. This thought should make us very humble, gentle and meek toward all, and very trustful of the Lord and very much inclined to look for his leading in respect to our labors as his servants, just as Samuel looked to the Lord in connection with the anointing of David.
R. 3225

**For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.
1 Corinthians 1:18**

**We have been made as the filth of the world,
the offscouring of all things until now.
1 Corinthians 4:13**

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

– 1 Samuel 16:13 (a) –

Subsequent history shows that David's brethren did not understand that he had been anointed to be king. Samuel may have let Jesse into the secret, and may subsequently have whispered something to David on the subject; but most evidently the matter was kept a profound secret, with the understanding that David's anointing would give him no authority of kingship until in the providence of God the authority should be fully taken from the hands of Saul and put into David's hands; and with the full understanding also that David himself was to have nothing whatever to do with grasping the power. His anointing was a prophecy respecting his future, and also a type of the anointing of the Christ. Certain it is that the youthful David conducted himself most modestly, most becomingly, and that the experiences through which he subsequently passed in the Lord's providence in following his vocation were very helpful to him, fitting and preparing him for the office of king, which came to him in due time. R. 4209

I have found My servant David. With My holy oil I have anointed him.

– Psalm 89:20 –

David is introduced here as a typical character representing Christ—primarily our Lord Jesus, but subsequently the Christ complete—Head and body. In the meekness of his youth, his loyalty to God, his faithfulness, zeal, courage and wise discretion, David's character was a very beautiful type of the beloved One, to whom God referred when he said, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him."

Our Lord Jesus is the mighty One upon whom the help of the world is laid. He is the great deliverer, but it has pleased God also to associate with him in this great work the Church of the Gospel age, the elect "little flock," whose names are written in heaven. These, all chosen out of the people, constitute that one body,

which, with Christ Jesus their Head, shall bless all the families of the earth. These all possess the characteristics enumerated above, which are preeminently the characteristics of their Head. All, therefore, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, whose souls thirst after God as the hart for the water-brook, and who, having found him, have consecrated themselves to him and received the anointing of the holy spirit, witnessing with their spirits that they are the sons of God, and who as anointed sons can discover in themselves the worthy traits of true sons, enumerated above, —loyalty, faithfulness, zeal, energy, courage, discretion, etc., —these constitute the class with whom the Lord has made an everlasting covenant and to whom belong "the sure mercies of David." R. 1936

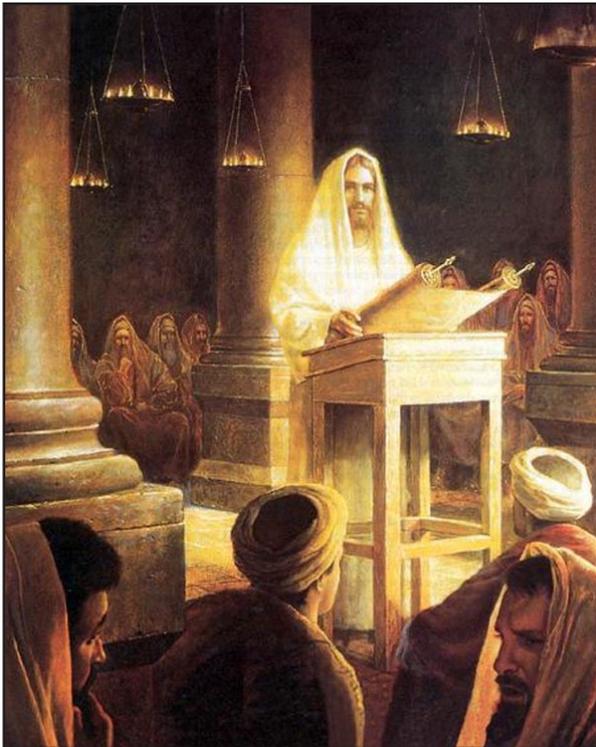
**Then You spoke in a vision to
Your holy one, and said: "I have given
help to one who is mighty. I have
exalted one chosen from the people."**

Psalm 89:19

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.

– Isaiah 61:1 –

In our text the word anointed is used in the sense of ordination. The high priests of Israel were successively anointed, or ordained, of God, the anointing oil representing the Holy Spirit. Their kings were anointed to reign over the typical kingdom of God, the oil here also representing the Holy Spirit. And so Christ, the great High Priest and King, was ordained of God by the anointing of the Spirit. It was not an anointing of men or by men.



**Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.
Luke 4:21**

In our Lord's case we know exactly when this prophecy was fulfilled. It was when He came to John at Jordan to be baptized, and there presented Himself in sacrifice to God. The anointing that was upon Christ Jesus continued with Him throughout His earthly ministry—the fullness, or completeness, of God's favor rested upon His every word and act. God was manifest in His flesh; for He was the perfect human representation of all the qualities of Jehovah's glorious character.

But while the prophecy was primarily fulfilled in Jesus, and applied especially to Him, we understand that it applies also to the members of Christ. These by becoming His Body, thus became a part of Himself. It is not because of any merit of their own.

This anointing that is on the Church comes to us through Christ, flowing down from the Head over all the Body members, as shown in the type of the high priest of Israel, and as declared by the Psalmist. (Psalm 133:2.) The Lord Jesus is our great Advocate with the Father, and in Him alone have we any standing before God. We are thus received of the Father as spirit-begotten sons, even as was our Head. We are begotten of the Spirit, as was He.

R. 5536

The fact that our Lord Jesus waited until He was thirty years of age before making His special consecration and receiving His ordination and commission to preach does not mean that His followers should wait until they are thirty before they begin to preach. It was necessary that Jesus should conform Himself to the requirements of the Law of Moses, given by God to the Jews; for Jesus as a man was a Jew, born under the Law and subject, therefore, to its every feature. Full manhood under the Law was not attained until the age of thirty. Our Lord came to give His life as a substitute for the forfeited life of Adam. Adam was a complete, perfect man, and our Lord must attain maturity as a perfect man before He could be a perfect substitute, a corresponding price. R. 5536

It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments.

– Psalm 133:2 –

The anointing of the high priest in the type represented the Divine appointment to office. Aaron was thus anointed of God. The Apostle Paul says that “no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron.” Even Christ took not this honor upon Himself. God appointed Him, saying, “Thou art a Priest forever, after the Order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 5:4-6.) God’s direct dealings were with the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the One acceptable to the Father. God gave His Holy Spirit to our Lord in fullest degree. Jesus Himself tells us that God gave not His Spirit by measure unto Him, because He was able to receive the Holy Spirit in full measure. Those who are counted as His members are not able to receive the Spirit in full measure, because of their imperfection. The less fallen man can receive more of the Spirit, and the more fallen man can receive less.

When Christ appeared in the presence of God for us, and applied His merit for those who would offer themselves to become members of His Body, to be associated with Him in the glorious Kingdom work, He received Divine approval and sanction, which was manifested by the begetting by the Holy Spirit of those who had presented themselves in consecration, the Holy Spirit being first given at Pentecost. The Apostle Peter says that God fulfilled His promise to Jesus by granting Him the Holy Spirit to shed forth upon His disciples. (Acts 2:33.) It is **of** the Father, and **by** the Son.

It was not necessary that the Heavenly Father should pour out His Holy Spirit upon each individual member of the body. We understand that the picture given in the type is quite complete. The Holy Spirit being poured out upon the Head of the great High Priest, and flowing down over the skirts of His garments, all His Body is thus anointed. We each receive our share of the anointing when we come into the Body, and under the Robe. R. 5424

The LORD has sworn and will not relent, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

– Psalm 110:4 –

It should be plain to all that our High Priest is truly a King, in whose hands absolute power is vested. And in looking back to the types God has given us we find Melchisedec, to whom we are cited as an illustration of this priesthood both by the Psalmist and the Apostle Paul. (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:5,10.) They show that Melchisedec, who was a priest upon his throne, represented the Christ in glory and power, while in the Aaronic priesthood the special features of the redemptive sacrifice were shadowed forth—its perfection, its completeness, its acceptableness, as also the share which the Church has with Christ in that sacrifice.

While the Aaronic priesthood furnishes typical illustrations of the sacrifices and sufferings of Christ and the blessings to follow, it did not completely illustrate the glorious, everlasting and unchangeable character of his priesthood during the Millennial age; and for this cause Melchisedec was presented as a type, that thus might be shown his glorious office of priest and king—a priest upon his throne. Here, too, the body of Christ is no longer shown as separate individuals, but as one, complete. In the work of sacrifice we have seen the head or chief priest and the under priests more or less separately sacrificing, as represented in Aaron and the under priests; but all will unitedly share in the future glory represented in Melchisedec alone. R. 3951

**And the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.
– 1 Samuel 16:13 (b) –**

The blessing and power of the Lord accompanied David's anointing in some manner—just how, we may not understand, because the manifestation of the spirit was not the same in that time as it is with us, the Church, since Pentecost, respecting which the Apostle declares, "The holy spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) However, in some manner God's blessing and power were with David, enabling him to progress in knowledge, etc., and fitting and preparing him for the duties of the office to which he had been anointed. May we not consider as an antitype to this, the anointing which comes upon the Church from the time of her acceptance with the Lord? Ours is not a physical anointing, nor are the blessings conferred of a temporal character: it is as New Creatures that we are anointed; as New Creatures that we grow in grace and knowledge and love; and as New Creatures that, by and by, we shall be perfected in the First Resurrection and come to the throne with our Lord and Master as our Head. R. 3225

Similarly, only in a higher and fuller sense and degree, the Lord's people of this Gospel Age, from the time they come under the influence of the holy Spirit of begetting, which was poured upon the Church at Pentecost—from that time onward they should be exercised by this Spirit of the Lord, and, as the Apostle expresses it, should be filled with the Spirit, "filled with all the fullness of God," filled more and more with a knowledge of God's will and with the spirit of obedience thereto. This feeling increases as we receive of the holy Spirit, and as it abounds and is shed forth in our hearts we are enlightened; our appreciation of God, our appreciation of our own privileges, our appreciation of his calling us to the high position of joint-heirship with Jesus and our appreciation of the necessity for learning the lessons which would fit us for that glorious position, is increased. R. 4210

You love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

– Psalm 45:7 –

Little known, not highly esteemed amongst men, not many of them great, wise or noble, the Lord is anointing all of the David class, the beloved class in the present time. They do not at once begin to reign, but do at once enter a school of experience designed by their Father to be helpful in preparing them for the duties and privileges of the Kingdom when the due time shall come for the Kingdom to be given to them. The world knoweth us not, saith the Apostle. Very true. They know not that we are anointed. Indeed, even many of our brethren who perceived the anointing know not what it signifies; they perceive not that we are anointed to be kings and joint-heirs with our Redeemer. However, the matter is communicated to us; as the Apostle declares, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye all know it." (1 John 2:20.) Under this unction, this blessing of the Lord, we are to develop more and more in preparation for our position of royalty, to which we shall attain in our change in the First Resurrection. R. 4209

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

– 1 Corinthians 1:26 –

This principle of the divine selection of things that are not [esteemed amongst men], to bring to naught the things that are [esteemed by men], is noticeable all throughout this Gospel age. Often have we, like Samuel, looked about us amongst men seemingly eligible to a place in the Kingdom—upon those who are high in position,—socially, intellectually, morally, educationally, —and in the esteem of men, and expect that surely the Lord would sanction their anointing with the oil of gladness, and grant them a knowledge of the truth pertaining to the Kingdom, etc., only to find ourselves mistaken, and to get a fresh lesson that God looketh not on the outward appearance but upon the heart. We concede that we are unable to read the heart, but we are fully satisfied to accept the divine decision in such matters, and to trust that when in due time all the secrets of this present time shall be disclosed, we then shall be able to understand the meaning of the Lord's selections more completely than we do now—we shall then be able to see what a difference there was between the hearts of those the Lord accepted and the hearts of those outwardly humble, whom he did not so highly favor in respect to the Kingdom call. Meantime, we must simply wait and trust the Lord and accept his decisions, as expressed by our dear Redeemer when he said, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemeth good in thy sight. —Luke 10:21." R. 3226

He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

– Luke 16:15 –

Jesse had been asked to send his sons one by one to the prophet and they came, the elder first. When Samuel looked upon Eliab he said within himself, Surely the Lord's anointed is before me; but the Lord answered, "Look not on his countenance, neither on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." What a wonderful lesson is here applicable to every member of the human family! The Lord Jesus used nearly similar language, saying, "That which is highly esteemed amongst men is an abomination in the sight of the Lord." (Luke 16:15.) Judge not by outward appearance. Saul in outward appearance was handsome, and head and shoulders above the majority of the people of Israel. The Lord permitted him to be chosen king, and gave an exhibition of the fact that outward appearance is not always a sure token of the attitude of heart pleasing to him. So seven of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel, and the Lord rejected all of them; there was some unfitness at the core, at the heart, which was not apparent to the outward observer, who like Samuel, would have concluded otherwise. R. 4210

As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust.

– Psalm 103:13-14 –

Our heavenly Father manifests his confidence in us—in the loyalty of our hearts toward him and in the sincerity of our consecration to him—even though he recognizes our inherent weaknesses and our inability to carry out fully our own determinations. But, notwithstanding this, so great is his confidence in our sincerity and integrity of heart, that, on our profession of faith and consecration, he fully accepts us as his sons and heirs, supplementing our weaknesses and shortcomings with the all-sufficient merit of our Redeemer, in whom we humbly trust. And not only so, but as sons, honored and beloved, he makes known to us, also, his secret counsels, which others cannot know (Matt. 13:11), and invites us to confide in him as children, and to speak to him freely of all that concerns us, in full assurance of his loving interest, even in our smallest affairs. (Psa. 103:13,14.) And then he commits a portion of his great work to us. He gives us certain talents, certain portions of his goods, and tells us to invest them for him according to our best judgment as to the profitableness of the results, not dictating all the minutiae of the management as to hireling servants, but merely submitting to us the general principles which should govern us. R. 3161

Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

– Psalm 119:97 –

It is good to meditate upon, to ponder, the Word of the Lord; for only in so doing can we receive the nourishment it is designed to give. The Psalmist beautifully represents the proper attitude of all those who truly love the Lord, and who therefore delight in his Word and plan: “His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night;” “I will meditate of all thy work, and talk of thy doings;” “I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word;” “Thy testimonies are my delight and my counselors;” “I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands;” “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day; ...therefore I hate every false way....Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever;” “My meditation of them shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.”

—Psalm 1:2; 77:12; 119:15,16,24; 143:5; 119:97,104,111; 104:34.

Hear the Psalmist: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Other influences may lead to temporary and partial changes of course and action, but nothing else equals God’s revealed Truth in producing a change—change of being, character, soul.... People may be converted from savagery to civilization by a general knowledge; or from intemperance to sobriety by a study of the advantages of the latter over the former; or from dishonesty to honesty by learning that “Honesty is the best policy.” But none of these are soul conversions. Only God’s truth can produce soul conversion, as also our Lord indicates in his prayer, “Sanctify them through thy truth—thy word is truth.” R. 1390

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**His delight is in the law of the LORD, and in
His law he meditates day and night.**
Psalm 1:2
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The word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

– Hebrews 4:12 –

It is a great mistake to affirm that the Bible is the product of the Church; and those who make this claim do not know where to look for the Church. The Scriptures declare that Jesus Christ was the head and forerunner of the Church; and if he was the forerunner it is plain that none of the members of the Church preceded him, and, therefore, that the Old Testament Scriptures—which Paul says “were written aforetime (before Christ’s advent) for our instruction that we through patience and the consolation of the Scriptures might possess the hope” (of the gospel —Rom. 15:4)—were not the product of the Church. And if, as we have shown, the writings of the Apostles were divinely inspired, then the New Testament Scriptures are not the product of the Church. But consecrated human agencies were used in both cases as God’s honored instruments. The word of the Lord through the Apostles is not the product of the Church, but of divine revelation. And never since those inspired apostles fell asleep has the church been able to add one iota to the heavenly wisdom revealed through them; and to whatever extent she has wandered from their teachings, she has manifested her folly by vain philosophies which expose her ignorance and egotism.

The Old Testament Scriptures were all carefully and religiously preserved by the Jews down to the inauguration of the Christian dispensation, and then their testimony was carefully interwoven by Christ and his inspired apostles with the further developments of divine truth due in the new dispensation of the Gospel age. And they are freely quoted and referred to by them as of divine authority, while the New Testament writings are presented as supplemental to them and of equal authority and divine inspiration; and all bear the one harmonious testimony. The various books being thus linked together, so that if one were lost others would indicate the loss, and if a false one were supplied it would lack such indorsements and its inharmony would be manifest, it is easily seen that no human authority was necessary to make up the canon of Scripture. It is divinely indicated.

R. 1584

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 : This weapon is formed both for offensive and defensive warfare. It is sharp, and while one edge :
 : is presented toward the enemy, there is another toward him who wields it. Christ has given it to :
 : the church to be used in his service: woe to him who handles it unskillfully. R. 394 :
 :

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

– Psalm 119:105 –

While seeking to follow the various specific commands of Scripture, let us seek more and more to understand and come in sympathy with the **principles which underlie** the Divine Law. These will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord’s Word. Indeed, as we come to understand and sympathize with the principles of Divine Law, to that extent we are getting the spirit of the Divine Word. Note the testimony of the Psalmist on this point, “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, **through thy commandments**, hast made me wiser than mine enemies, **for they are ever with me**. I have more understanding than all my teachers, **for thy testimonies are my meditation**. I understand more than the ancients, **because I keep thy precepts**. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, **that I might keep thy Word**. I have not departed from thy judgments, **for thou hast taught me**. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! **Through thy precepts** I get understanding; **therefore, I hate every false way**. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” —Psa. 119:97-105. R. 4803

THE WORD OF GOD

*Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!
True wisdom its pages unfold;
And though we may read them a thousand times o'er,
They never, no never, grow old!
Each line hath a pleasure, each promise a pearl,
That all if they will may secure;
And we know that when time and the world pass away,
God's Word shall forever endure.*

*Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!
The lamp that our Father above
So kindly hath lighted to teach us the way
That leads to the arms of His love!
Its warnings, its counsels, are faithful and just;
Its judgments are perfect and pure;
And we know that when time and the world pass away,
God's Word shall forever endure.*

*Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!
Our only salvation is there;
It carries conviction down deep in the heart,
And shows us ourselves as we are.
It tells of a Savior, and points to the cross,
Where pardon we now may secure;
And we know that when time and the world pass away
God's Word shall forever endure.*

Mrs. Herrick Johnson

**Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.
 – Psalm 119:11 –**

[This verse] reminds us that not only the Word of the Lord is necessary as a guide to a knowledge of him, but that it is valuable to us and necessary, after we have found the Lord and become members of his family, begotten of the holy Spirit. Moreover it is necessary that we do more than know about the Scriptures and have an appreciation of their teachings. We must get their Truths into our hearts. There are certain points which underlie the Divine Law and all of its regulations bearing upon us, and these points cannot be comprehended at once. Day by day as we persevere in the study of the Truth, as we meditate upon God's Law by day and by night, we come to clearer views of these great principles of Truth—Justice, Love and Wisdom—which underlie all of the Divine Government. In proportion as we attain this attitude of heart and mind we know the Lord not only in the sense of appreciating his glorious character, but in the sense that we are enabled to put those points into operation in our daily lives—in our deeds, our words, our thoughts.

Let us then not only search the Scriptures daily and obtain intellectual appreciation of the Divine character, but let us meditate upon these eternal verities in our hearts. Let us familiarize ourselves with these points of Divine Government. Let us come more and more into sympathy with them—come into fullest harmony with our Creator and his requirements! R. 4409

The Christian who abandons the daily reading of the Word of God and meditation upon its precepts is not a growing Christian. The precepts and promises of God are very rich; but they have no sweetness to the soul that does not keep them ever fresh before the mind and delight himself in them, and shape all his course in life in strict adherence to the principles therein set forth. Let us say with the Psalmist: "With my whole heart have I sought thee [Lord], O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." —Psa. 119:10,11. R. 1850

**With my whole heart I have sought You.
 Oh let me not wander from Your commandments!
 Psalm 119:10**

The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

– John 4:23 –

The Father seeketh such to worship Him as will do so in spirit and in truth, and who have perfect confidence in Him as the One who is all-wise and all-loving to direct and guide their affairs. Those who do not learn this lesson of trust, will not be fit for the responsibilities to be put upon the glorified Church. Let us learn this lesson and be very positive in our endeavors to be in harmony with God. R. 5183

**Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes.
I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate
Your ways. I will delight myself in Your statutes.
I will not forget Your word. Deal bountifully with
Your servant, that I may live and keep Your word.
Psalm 119:12,15-17**

So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

– Psalm 90:12 –

We know that our days are numbered as respects the present life. We know that we need not expect eternal life under present conditions, and thus far the world and the Christian are on a common level; but here they part, the one saying to himself, "Life is short, and I must grasp and use it for myself, the best I can." The other, with a higher wisdom, that cometh from above, realizes his own inability and insufficiency, heeds the message from the Lord respecting an eternal life beyond the tomb—the resurrection life, and goes to the Lord, petitioning for wisdom respecting the life that now is, as well as that which is to come.

In answer to his petitions he is taught of God in the experience of life to more and more appreciate the eternal, the everlasting life, and to spend time and energy in building up such a character as would be pleasing to his Creator, and bring the reward of "life everlasting." The Christian, in numbering his days, does not do so with a doleful or disconsolate sentiment, although he does so with sobriety. He counts the days as they go as so many blessings, so many privileges, so many opportunities to "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," to render assistance to others in the pilgrim journey, and to develop in himself more and more of the character pleasing in the sight of God, —to become more and more a copy of God's dear Son. As he numbers the days gliding swiftly by, and perceives how he is using them in harmony with the divine instructions, he ultimately comes to that condition of heart in which he is longing for the Kingdom and the full attainment of all the glories into which he hopes to be ushered, as a sharer in the first (chief) resurrection. And from this standpoint he numbers the days as they go by joyfully, and is glad when the days of the years of his present pilgrimage end; because his hope in the Lord, and in the gracious features of his plan, is growing daily stronger, clearer and brighter. R. 2896

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the LORD upholds him with His hand.

– Psalm 37:23-24 –

Our text presupposes that in the class described the human will has been transformed; —that the divine will has been accepted as instead of the human; and that the child of God is seeking to walk in the ways of righteousness, in which he has already started; and the proper thought to be gathered is that thus seeking to walk in the Lord's ways, God will not permit his imperfections of judgment to work him any injury, but will supervise his affairs; will overrule so that every step he may take, although it be taken of his own will, his own volition—his consecrated will, however—shall be overruled for his good; for his development as a new creature in Christ. If he shall err in judgment, and bring upon himself the consequences of his error, the Lord's wisdom and power are such that he can fulfill all the provisions of this promise, and make even his blunders and weaknesses to so react as to strengthen his character and establish him in righteousness, developing in him by these and other experiences the fruits and graces of the spirit, which will eventually fit and prepare him for joint-heirship in the Kingdom.

I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word.

Psalm 119:101

We must not overlook the latter part of our text—the assurance that though the child of God may stumble at times in the way, these will never mean to him an utter fall, because his hand is still held by the Lord! What a comforting thought is here! How well calculated it is to deliver the Lord's people from utter despondency in respect to themselves and each other! The all-important thoughts to be kept in mind are, Am I still the Lord's? Am I still trusting in the precious blood? Am I still consecrated to the Lord and his righteous way? If these can be answered in the affirmative we can still realize that we are God's children, and that our hands are still in his; that the spirit of begetting and adoption, which began in us the new life, has not perished; and that it is God's will that we should recover ourselves as quickly as possible from any stumbling, and looking well at the difficulties and trials which led us into it, we should fortify our characters against those difficulties as respects the future, and thus go on really stronger, because of our difficulties, and yet all the while realizing that our recovery from the difficulty was not of our own strength, but because of our trust in the arm of the Lord, to which we are still holding. R. 3156

After we have attained this position, and after the promise of our text, and all like promises, are ours, it requires time and a continual application of faith, in order to rightly appreciate God's promises, and to appropriate them to ourselves; and this is Scripturally called "growing in grace and knowledge." We grow in knowledge as we take note of the promises of God, and by faith apply them to ourselves, and seek to discern in our lives the fulfillment of those promises; we grow in grace simultaneously. R. 3156

But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well." So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me."

1 Samuel 16:14-17

**Then one of the servants answered and said,
"Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is
skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in
speech, and a handsome person, and the LORD is with him."**

1 Samuel 16:18

Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." And Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent them by his son David to Saul. So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armorbearer. Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight."

1 Samuel 16:19-22



**And so it was, whenever the
spirit from God was upon Saul,
that David would take a harp
and play it with his hand.
Then Saul would become
refreshed and well,
and the distressing spirit
would depart from him.**

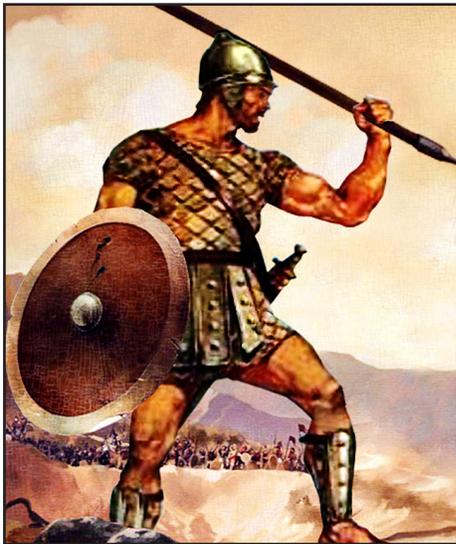
1 Samuel 16:23

David And Goliath

Not long after David's anointing he became the hero of a most remarkable battle. R. 4216

Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Sochoh, which belongs to Judah. They encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.

1 Samuel 17:1-4,8



And the Philistine said,
 "I defy the armies of Israel this day.
 Give me a man, that
 we may fight together."
 And the Philistine drew near
 and presented himself
 forty days, morning and evening.
 1 Samuel 17:10, 16

And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines, and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. Then David said to Saul,

"Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant
 will go and fight with this Philistine."

1 Samuel 17:22-24,32

And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.” But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth. And when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it.”

1 Samuel 17:33-35

Your servant has killed both lion and bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.

– 1 Samuel 17:36 –

Young David was brought before [Saul]; but, anxious as he was for a champion, the king realized that the sinewy youth before him would be no match for the giant strength of Goliath, one blow from whose spear would destroy him. Then the stripling pleaded his cause. He declared that, as keeper of his father’s sheep, he had time and again delivered them from the mouth and the paw of the lion and the bear. He had the courage, and above all he had the faith in God. As God had blessed him in his daily duties of the past, He would give him strength for victory in the duty of the hour, the meeting of the defiance of the giant and his insult to Jehovah.

The king was impressed. He would lend David his armor—the best in Israel. But after trying it, young David declined it with thanks. He was not accustomed to such armor and could be himself better without it. He took with him merely his shepherd’s staff, to which he was accustomed, and his sling. Passing over toward the side of the Philistines for the combat, he chose five smooth pebbles from the brook. This slight armament, with God’s blessing, was more than sufficient; for he needed to use only one of the pebbles.

Having faith, we need no carnal weapons, and no armor of human invention is of any service to us; but trained and practical faith can work wonders as great as did David’s sling and stone. The sling and stone were not an untried weapon with David. He was in constant practice with them, and thus he had gained skill and confidence in their use. So the Christian must practice dependence upon God continually in all the small affairs of life, and then when the giant trials come his practised faith will be abundantly able to meet and overcome them. And the more severe the trial, the more glorious the victory of faith and the greater the strength of character derived from its exercise. Doubtless it was the previous struggle with the lion and the bear, and the victory God gave him then, that gave David such boldness in defying the power of Goliath. So every battle we fight and every victory we win through faith in God develops strength for future conflicts and makes the more sure our final overcoming. R. 5662 and R. 1902

Moreover David said, “The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”

1 Samuel 17:37

*Then he took his staff
in his hand, and he
chose for himself
five smooth stones
from the brook,
and put them in
a shepherd's bag,
in a pouch which
he had, and his sling
was in his hand.
And he drew near
to the Philistine.
1 Samuel 17:40*



Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”
1 Samuel 17:45

Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear, for the battle is the LORD’s, and He will give you into our hands.

– 1 Samuel 17:47 –

The quality which God esteemed in David was his faith—the same quality that he esteemed in Abraham and in all the faithful of the past. Of all who had “this testimony that they pleased God,” it is written that by faith they did thus and so, “and it was counted unto them for righteousness.”
—Gal 3:6.

David’s faith in the Lord being great, he was surprised to learn when he came to the army that the Philistine had been boasting himself for forty days against Israel and Israel’s God, and that no one of his nation had possessed sufficient faith in God to accept the challenge. He at once proposed that he would accept it himself and asked to be taken to the king that he might be thus commissioned. Those who mentioned him to the king spoke of him as a “mighty, valiant man,” yet when Saul looked upon him he perceived that he was but a youth and was physically no match for the giant. However, he was the only champion who had arisen, and he was full of confidence in his own success as an instrument in the Lord’s hands for delivering Israel from the boastful heathen.

David’s retort shows clearly that he appreciated the situation in all its bearings. He was aware that his opponent was armed with sword and spear and javelin, but, as he states the matter, he was approaching the conflict strong in the strength that God supplies—strong in his faith in the Lord as the decider of battles, as the one who would be able to give him the victory and deliver his people from all their enemies. David noted, and counted well upon the fact, that the issue was not between the two armies, not between two men, but between the God of Israel and the false gods of the Philistines. R. 3230

In the LORD I put my trust.

– Psalm 11:1 –

David, whose name signifies beloved, in many respects typified the Christ, Head and Body. His experiences with Goliath illustrate well first of all our Lord's conflict with the Adversary during the forty-days' temptation in the wilderness. Our Lord's victory over Satan on that occasion, his loyalty to the Father and the work entrusted to him, his own self-sacrifice, meant the victory for all the world of mankind desirous of being in harmony with God and his arrangement. Did he not declare to us, "Fear not, I have overcome the world"? In overcoming Satan, the prince of this world, he was gaining at the same time a victory over all the hosts of evil and servants of sin. He stood faithful to God and to his covenant relationship and responsibility and hurled at the Adversary the pebble of truth—"It is written." As Goliath fell before David, so Satan was vanquished by our Lord, who declares, "I beheld Satan fall from heaven," and declared also as a result of his victory, "All power is given me in heaven and in earth," and sent forth his disciples in his name to similarly battle in his strength and to come off conqueror and to ultimately share with him in his Kingdom, which is to "bless all the families of the earth." R. 4216



The story of the conflict is quickly told. The Philistine was indignant that he should be asked to fight with a boy unarmored, and he cursed David in the name of his gods, saying, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and unto the beasts of the field." David's reply was characteristic—full of that faith in God which marks his entire history from first to last, and on account of which the Lord speaks of him as a man after his own heart. He said to Goliath, "Thou comest to me with sword and spear and with javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand. Hastening forward David threw his first stone, which struck the giant in the forehead and caused him to fall senseless. Directly David finished the conflict with Goliath's own sword, beheading him while the Israelites, their faith reviving, attacked the Philistines, whose courage fled.

It is supposed that Goliath wore a helmet with moveable front common in those days, and that he laughed at the youth who was coming against him, and in so doing threw back his head, allowing the vizor of his helmet to open, exposing his forehead. Others suppose that he reached for his javelin, which he carried in a sheath between his shoulders, and in reaching back for the javelin the helmet opened at the opportune moment and admitted David's stone. However the matter happened we cannot doubt that David was quite correct in his understanding of the matter; that divine providence supervised the entire transaction and brought the victory. Nor was such marksmanship with the sling an unusual thing in those times, for we read how on another occasion 700 men of the tribe of Benjamin threw stones "to a hair's breadth." —Judges 20:16. R. 4216

I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.

– Psalm 18:3 –

David's conquest [of Goliath] in some respects illustrates battles which all of the Lord's people must engage in. Goliath and the hosts supporting him may well illustrate to our minds various foes of God and truth and righteousness which challenge us and all of the Lord's people.

1 The hosts of doubt and skepticism are today led about by the great giant of **unbelief**, whose size, armor, sword and spear are over all the hosts of nominal Christendom—all except the David class—the body of Christ.

2 Goliath may properly represent **pride**, backed by a host of worldliness. One of the severe ordeals of the New Creature is the conquering of the love of the **spirit of worldliness** under the leadership of pride. Worldly pride challenges faith in God and obedience to him, and only those who are of good courage and full of confidence in the Lord can overcome this giant.

3 Another giant, which will sometimes challenge the people of God, is **fear**, distrust. Mighty, imposing and terrifying indeed is the influence of fear, except upon those who have learned to know the Lord through previous experiences, and to trust him even where they cannot trace him.

4 Another giant which assaults the Lord's people, but which in the present time can be overcome only by the David class, the body of Christ, is the giant of **sectarian influence**. How strong, how majestic, how well-armed, how influential is this great giant, whose powers are exercised in a large measure in intimidating the Lord's true children, so that all their lifetime they are subject to bondage and fail to attain the liberty with which Christ makes free indeed!

Let us all remember the meekness and humility of David, note that his conduct was utterly devoid of boastfulness, and that we are to copy this. Like him our confidence is to be in the Lord, and not in ourselves. R. 3230

Following Jesus' death, a new Divine order of things was ushered in. Those who have faith in God still have battles to be won, but not with carnal weapons. Their victories, nevertheless, are based upon the same principle which operated favorably with David. Faith in God is lying at the basis—the realization that the cause in which they fight is one approved of God. A courage proper to their faith—a faith gradually developed in previous victories over lesser foes, as in David's case—helps to give courage and strength for battling with the most terrifying giants we may encounter.

Remembering this, each Christian should be daily on the alert to overcome the little weaknesses, the little frailties—to become conquerors in the little battles with selfishness, anger, malice, envy, evil-speaking. Victories over these, and experiences gained with God's help in overcoming these, give preparation step by step for the greatest trials and the grandest victories. R. 5662

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

– Ephesians 6:10-11 –

It is written of the Lord's faithful disciples, who shall constitute the Church of glory, that they must walk in his steps as he set the example. This means to them, as to him, a warfare against sin, its great representative and leader Satan, and all the hosts of deceived humanity who are on his side. Does not the Apostle intimate this when he says, We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in influential positions? (Eph. 6:12.) Our enemy is a giant in whose presence we are feeble indeed. The Apostle calls him a wily foe and our Lord taught us to pray the Father, "Abandon us not in temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Very evidently, then, we need divine assistance in our unequal contest, as did David in his.

The natural thought in connection with such a contest is to put on armor similar to that of our opponent, as Saul offered his armor to David. It is for each of the Lord's people, however, to learn that victory cannot be won along worldly lines. We cannot fight evil with evil, wrong with wrong, boasting with boasting and slander with slander, hatred with hatred, etc. If we undertake so to do, we shall surely lose in the battle. Our course, like that of David, must be full reliance upon the Lord and the use of the sling and pebble of truth. If we cannot conquer along these lines we cannot conquer at all. Who is sufficient for these things? —for such an unequal contest with the prince of darkness and all the hosts of sin? Surely the one who would have confidence in himself would be unwise; hence, as the Apostle says, we place our confidence in God; if we are loyal to him victory will be ours, if we are careless or unfaithful we shall not be of the David class—not be members of the glorious Body of Christ, in which event we shall never reign with him, even as David, who received the anointing, would never have reached the throne, if he had fought the giant with Saul's armor. R. 4215

**Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" So David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore.
1 Samuel 17:58; 18:2**

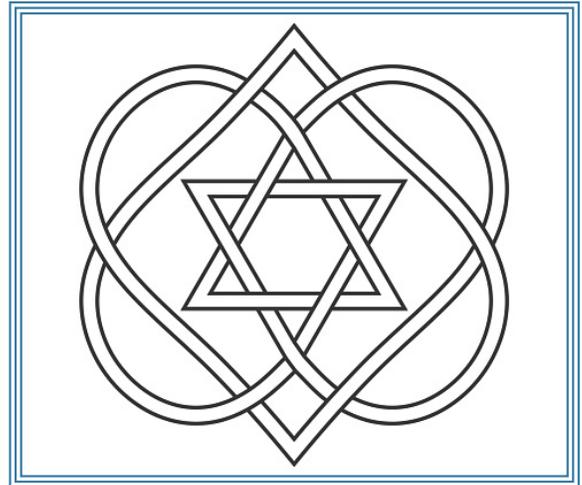
David And Jonathan

Honor your father and mother.

– Exodus 20:12 –

Jonathan, the eldest son of King Saul, was the natural heir to his throne, and doubtless would have succeeded his father had Saul not incurred the divine displeasure and so forfeited that privilege for his posterity and cut short his own career. (1 Sam. 13:13.) Jonathan was a devoted son to his father and a devoted and energetic servant to God and to his people. The deep attachment of father and son is manifest from several facts: Jonathan could undertake his dangerous expedition against the Philistines only by keeping his project a secret from his father. (1 Sam. 14:1.) The effect of Saul's strange vow was emphasized by his affection for his son. (1 Sam. 14:39-44.) That dearest object he declared he would sacrifice, if need be, in fulfillment of his vow. But the people rescued him, declaring the Lord to be on the side of Jonathan. There was very marked and intimate confidence between the father and son. (1 Sam. 20:2.) "Behold my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will show it me." And Jonathan had great influence with his father (1 Sam. 19:6), and was very active in cooperation with him in the defense of the Lord's people against their foes and oppressors.

Jonathan was the natural heir to the throne of Israel, and David had been anointed to take his place; though Jonathan was of the royal family and a man of some thirty odd years, while David was but a shepherd youth, probably about twenty-three years of age. Each in simplicity of heart accepted the Lord's appointments as wisest and best, and determined nobly to do his part toward the Lord and toward his people and toward each other. And so Jonathan, cooperating with his father in the duties of his office to Israel so long as the Lord sustained him in power, nobly used the privileges of his position for the protection and preservation of the one whom he knew to be appointed to reign in his stead. R. 1908



Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

1 Samuel 18:1

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

– 1 John 3:18 –

Jonathan's friendship, love, was not of the effervescent kind. It was the genuine article. He did not love merely in word, but in deed and in truth—not merely when his father favored his friend and when the public acclaimed him and when he would thus have favor with others; but he loved him just the same when the king became the enemy of his friend and sought his life. Indeed, it may be said that no friendship could be surely counted upon until after it has been tried. The friendship which will not endure trial, testing, the friendship which will make no sacrifices is not the kind to be modeled after.

Jonathan had love of the kind the Lord admonishes His followers to have—the love which in honor prefers one another. While other loves have been great, this one doubtless stands preeminent above earthly love, especially because it was founded on a religious basis. It was because David loved the Lord, and sought to be guided by His will as that will was manifest at that time, that he would wait—that he conducted himself with wisdom, as the record declares. And it was because Jonathan discerned this spirit of wisdom, because he realized David was guided by the spirit of righteousness, that he loved David. R. 5664

There are many influences operating toward a spirit of selfishness, avarice, jealousy, while the influences making for true friendship, true love, all the best qualities of heart and head, are from the Lord. R. 5664

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

– John 15:12 –

We must love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength before we shall be prepared to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to wish for him the same riches of grace that we desire for ourselves under the Lord's providences. Still more is it necessary to have this supreme love for God before we could in any measure approximate the degree of love which the Lord set before his followers as a new commandment, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you." Jonathan's love [for David] approximated this Christian love, this self-sacrificing love which so loved his neighbor as to delight to see that neighbor have the Lord's blessing upon him, even while this meant his own loss of honor, prestige and kingly power. Oh, that such love as this might more and more prevail in the hearts of the New Creation! R. 4223

The friendship of David and Jonathan seems also to be suggestive of that beautiful accord which shall exist between the glorified Church and the earthly princes who shall be next to them in the Kingdom of God. There will not be a note of discord or rivalry or jealousy between them; for each will be delighted to fill his honored place in the wonderful plan of God, and will love the other as his own soul. Though the Gospel Church will receive the first place of favor offered in the Abrahamic covenant, and the ancient worthies will find themselves next in honor, they will rejoice to have it so, because divine wisdom and love have so planned it. R. 1908

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

– John 3:16 –

Love begets love; and so the Scriptures tell us that it was not that we first loved God, but that he first loved us and manifested his love for us in the gift of his Son. So it was the love of Jesus that attracted us and drew forth our love in response. And day by day, as we come to appreciate more and more the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the love of God and of Christ, which passes all human understanding, the more our love toward them will increase and abound. And as it increases we ourselves become more Godlike and correspondingly also from us proceeds a love for others who love us not; and our love for them will excite the love of some in return, and lead them to a greater appreciation of this principle which stands in opposition to the spirit of the world, the love of the world, the selfishness of the world. Let us then seek to cultivate this godlike quality. Let us notice not only that the Scriptures declare love to be the principal thing in the world, but that it is the very essence of the divine character, the very essence of the divine law which is fulfilled in this one word,

Love.

Well has the wise man said that a friend loveth at all times. He who merely loves at a time when he thinks it will be to his own advantage to love, knows not love. He who loves, and is a brother in prosperity merely, and whose love and friendship wither under the heat of persecution and adversity, has never known love in its true sense, but merely a certain brand of selfishness—the love of the world. As God commended his love toward us and showed us that not through selfishness, but generosity, at a great cost to himself, he provided us release from our prison, and gave us privileges of sonship, so true love will be willing to sacrifice. Let us judge then of our love for others, for the Lord, for the brethren, for our families, for our neighbors, for our enemies even, by our willingness to sacrifice in their interest and for their highest welfare. R. 4224

Saul's Jealousy of David

Jealousy is as cruel as the grave. Its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame.

– Song of Solomon 8:6 –

Wars with the Philistines continuing, David was made a regular soldier, with a command over a regiment and closely in touch with King Saul himself. Victory after victory came wherever David was engaged, and King Saul saw the admiration of the people turned from himself to David. The sentiment reached a climax when, returning from one of the victories, the women and girls of a village came forth singing:

“Saul hath slain his thousands,
But David his tens of thousands!”

The flame of jealousy took full possession of the king, and thenceforth his one purpose seems to have been to destroy David. It was a secret withheld from him that David was already anointed by Samuel to be his successor.

Jealousy is the bitter fruit of selfishness gone to seed. It unbalances reason, extinguishes happiness. It subjects its possessor to horrible melancholy, so that when it is in control, he is really crazy. Not only is this illustrated in King Saul's case, but it is more or less illustrated in the experiences of every human being. Who does not by experience know what jealousy is? and the more he knows of it the worse.... It is the most terrible, and at the same time the most foolish manifestation of selfishness. Everyone recognizing it in himself should be alarmed—should throttle it promptly, seeking victory through vigilance, and if a Christian, through prayer. R. 5662

It would have required a man of very large calibre in Saul's place not to be offended at this, not to feel jealous of such honors given to the young hero of the hour, implying that he had entirely eclipsed the king. But whatever might have been the natural sentiment of King Saul or others there can be no doubt as to what would have been the proper one. The king should have rejoiced and taken pleasure in honoring the young patriot, whose chivalry had been so blessed to the whole nation. To have done this would have been to evince the spirit of a sound mind, and it would have redounded to the honor of Saul himself. But it does not surprise us that it had an opposite effect upon him, knowing as we do the general spirit of the world in respect to such matters—the spirit of selfishness and pride. Saul was filled with anger and envy and eyed David jealously henceforth. He recognized in him a rival; he also perceived that David was a true servant of the Lord, and that the Lord's blessing was upon him. R. 4218

.....
: And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. :
:

1 Samuel 18:9
.....

And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times, but there was a spear in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

1 Samuel 18:10-11

Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul. And David behaved wisely in all his ways and the LORD was with him.

– 1 Samuel 18:12,14 –

This lesson affords us a contrast between a spirit or disposition in harmony with the Lord and a spirit or disposition out of harmony with him and his arrangements. The first is exhibited in David, the shepherd boy, secretly anointed to the office of king and later brought into prominence through his victory over Goliath.... So far as Saul is concerned the record is that an evil or malevolent spirit possessed him. On the contrary the Spirit of the Lord is said to have been with David from the time of his anointing. We are not to confuse in our minds those blessings of the Lord's Spirit in ancient times with the still more blessed experiences of God's people throughout the Gospel Age under the anointing of the holy Spirit, the begetting of the holy Spirit, the sealing of the holy Spirit as sons. Doubtless there would be much in common in the experiences of those who received the Lord's Spirit at that time and those who receive it now; but most certainly that which we now enjoy as the "house of sons" is far beyond anything that was possible for the "house of servants" to experience.

To whatever extent the holy Spirit was bestowed upon the "house of servants" it would necessarily be a spirit of moderation, of fellowship with God, of desire to do his will and of peace with him; and to this extent it would be the spirit of a sound mind, relieving its possessor of much of the nervous fret and strain, excitability and languor which might be his own naturally under trials and disappointments. Of Saul, it is said that an evil spirit entered into him, but this does not necessarily mean that he became obsessed of a demon, but rather that an evil mind, a perverse mind or disposition, an unhappy or melancholy mind took the place of the restful and peaceful and trustful mind which he previously had enjoyed.

It is undoubtedly true that persons whose minds are in sympathetic accord with righteousness and truth, are proportionately surrounded by a protective influence which shields them from the intrusion of the evil spirits. This is the intimation of the Scriptures, which declare that the holy angels are ministering spirits for those who shall be heirs of salvation, and "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." (Heb. 1:14; Psa. 34:7) R. 4218

Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand, and he went out and came in before the people. Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him.

1 Samuel 18:13,15

**But all Israel and Judah loved David,
because he went out and came in before them.**

1 Samuel 18:16

He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings you shall take refuge.

– Psalm 91:4 –

We might exercise a particularity of inspection of our text, and say that the word feathers might carry a little further thought than the word wings. “He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.” The soft, downy feathers under the mother-hen’s wings serve to keep the little chicks warm and to shield and hide them from enemies that would attack them. Not only the strong sheltering wings, but also the feathers of the hen-mother’s breast are used to protect her young. We have seen alarm on the part of a mother-hen at the approach of danger, and heard her cluck to her little ones. Then they would run to her, nestle under her wings, and seem perfectly satisfied and free from fear in their place of safety. Presently you would see the little heads or eyes peeping out; but the chicks felt perfectly secure. And so with us. Our Heavenly Father’s love and care and protection are His wings and His feathers, shielding us from all harm, keeping us warm and safe. So close to his heart does Jehovah gather his loyal and faithful children that they feel the warmth of his love, and the responsive language of their hearts is, “I will abide in thy tabernacle”—under thy protection—“forever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings; for thou hast been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy. R. 5437 and R. 3331

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

– Psalm 46:1 –

Saul, although appreciative of David’s prowess, was, nevertheless, jealous of him because of the prominence to which his noble course brought him in the eyes of the people. This jealousy was accentuated as he heard the praises of David sung in grander terms than his own were lauded. Jealousy is always an evil quality—no part of the Lord’s Spirit, the holy Spirit, but a strong ingredient in the spirit of evil. Hatred, envy, malice, strife, works of the flesh and devil, are all closely related to jealousy, and often spring from it. Saul should have resisted the envious suggestions which came to his mind: he should have allowed his mind to rise above all personalities and to rejoice most sincerely, most heartily, in the praises of his young general.

The more wisely David conducted himself, the more envious did King Saul become. The more the Lord blessed and prospered David in his humility of life and wisdom, of course the more opposition did he have from the king. And so it will surely be with us. In proportion as we have the spirit of a sound mind and are zealous for the Lord and for the brethren, laying down our lives in the service of the truth, the more hatred and fear we may engender in the hearts of those who are out of heart-harmony with the Lord. But as we read of David that all Israel and Judah loved him, so we may be sure as respects the true people of God; for they are more and more loved and respected—those who have the Lord’s Spirit, those who are of the David class. By and by when Satan shall have been bound, and when the Lord shall have established his Kingdom under the whole heaven, when all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears unstopped, then all the people, all who are in accord with the Lord, shall recognize the faithfulness of the David class, the Christ, and shall glorify God on their behalf.

Jealousy is one of the great foes that confront every Christian. It should be slain on sight as an enemy of God and man and of every good principle; and to the extent that its presence had defiled the heart even for a moment, a cleansing of the spirit of holiness and love should be invoked. [This verse] should be borne in mind as a comforting and sustaining power to the Lord’s faithful.

R. 3232 and R. 4219

Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David, and Saul became David's enemy continually. Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was much set by.

1 Samuel 18:28-30

Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David, but Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted greatly in David. So Jonathan told David, saying, "My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret place and hide."

1 Samuel 19:1-2

Now the distressing spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing music with his hand. Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence, and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night.

1 Samuel 19:9-10

Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death." So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you."

1 Samuel 20:3-4

"For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die." And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully. And so it was, in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad was with him.

1 Samuel 20:31-35

**Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
For my soul trusts in You, and in the shadow of Your wings I will
make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by.**

Psalm 57:1

**Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.
– Proverbs 4:23 –**

The lesson to the New Creation is that we should be specially on guard against jealousy, envy, hatred and strife. We cannot doubt that much of the final testing of the “very Elect” will be along these lines. “Who shall be able to stand?” is a question, therefore, that appeals to all those who have taken their stand for the Lord, for righteousness, for truth—their stand for love of God and of the brethren. If, indeed, we have consecrated our lives, to lay down our lives in the service of the Lord and his truth and in the service of the brethren, what should it not mean to us as respects the manifestation of that love and faithfulness! Any root of bitterness, any word of bitterness, any thought of jealousy entering into our hearts might mean the defilement of not only the brother or sister against whom these are directed, but would surely mean the poisoning of our own hearts, the destruction therein of the spirit of love, the Spirit of the Lord; and possibly this evil spirit, far from the Lord, proceeding from us, might contaminate many members of the Body of Christ for their defilement. How much on guard, therefore, each of us ought to be; how we should analyze our thoughts, our motives, our intentions to see that they all square perfectly with the law of love to the extent that our Lord indicated, saying, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you;” to the extent of being willing to die for each other’s interests and welfare and honor!

On the contrary the Spirit of the Lord in David kept him sweet, kind, generous toward his enemies. He indeed fled from the king’s presence when in a fit of anger Saul threw the javelin, and we may be sure that it was nothing less than faith in the Lord and in his divine providence that enabled David to continue to serve the king as his musician, and by the sweet music of his heart and of his voice, to cheer Saul and drive away his melancholy. Such should be our attitude toward those who oppose us. The natural disposition of an evil course toward us would be to arouse an antagonistic spirit in return, render evil for evil, railing for railing, accusation for accusation. The result of such a course would be our own injury as well as the possibility of further injuring our opponents. David’s course was the proper one; he waited upon the Lord, he was submissive to what the Lord’s providence permitted. In his estimation and ours nothing could befall him that would be outside the divine knowledge and the divine power to prevent. Hence these trying experiences meant for David a great development of character, a strengthening of his heart in harmony with the divine will. R. 4219

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another. Love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous, not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:8-9

David Flees From Saul

As soon as the lad had gone David arose from a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another and they wept together, but David more so. Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘May the LORD be between you and me and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’”

– 1 Samuel 20:40-41 –

When David was taking leave of Jonathan to fly for his life from the face of Saul, again they covenanted perpetual friendship.

Only once again they met, a year or two later. It was under very similar circumstances, in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul was still hunting for his rival to slay him, and again Jonathan, learning of his situation, sought him out. “And Jonathan went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not; for the hand of Saul, my father, shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also my father knoweth. And [again] they two made a covenant before the Lord.” —1 Sam. 23:16,17.

In this touching narrative there are valuable lessons which we cannot afford to overlook.

- 1** It shows that true and enduring friendship is possible, though it be of rare occurrence.
- 2** It suggests that true and lasting friendship can exist only between noble and unselfish souls, whose wills are fully submitted to the will of God, and who are actuated by the fixed principles of truth and righteousness.
- 3** It suggests that if such friendship existed under the dim light of the Jewish law, it ought to be of much more frequent occurrence under the light of the gospel. True, there may not always be just such circumstances to make it manifest, but there are many similar circumstances. There are always temptations to rivalry, to the ignoring of the will and appointments of God and the substituting of one's own will and way.

When tempted thus, let us call to mind the noble examples of Jonathan and Samuel—Jonathan strengthened the hand of David in God, and saying, “Fear not, ...thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee;” and Samuel saying of Saul, his rival, “See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people!” So let us “in honor prefer one another,” and ever rejoice to see the Lord's will and the Lord's way prosper. R. 1907

Rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

– 1 Peter 4:13 –

Spiritual Israelites who have already received the adoption and anointing of the Lord to future service as kings and priests, who shall reign on the earth with our blessed Lord and Head, to bless all the families of the earth, can easily trace valuable lessons in the trying experiences of David. The Prince of this world is our enemy, not because we have done evil, but because he realizes that he has but a short time, and because he has a spirit that is opposed to the Lord's Spirit in us. We too, at times, may wonder why the Lord—having anointed us and assured us of the glory, honor and immortality in the Kingdom—permits us to have such trying experiences and such severe conflicts with the world, the flesh and the devil. The reason becomes evident as we learn the way of the Lord more particularly—as we learn that the present “afflictions which are but for a moment [comparatively] are working out for us [fitting us for] a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” R. 3238

But though persecuted for righteousness' sake, the Lord's people are not forsaken. The world and those possessing the world's spirit may harass and buffet them, but the Lord does not forsake them. When persecutions come to us, however, we are to inquire, “Are these oppositions and persecutions coming to me on account of my loyalty to the Lord, or is it that there is something in my disposition which causes them?” If the latter is the case, we should diligently endeavor to rectify our fault. If, on the other hand, we find by careful scrutiny of ourselves and our conduct that we have been doing our best, our very best, and that the persecutions are coming to us on this account, then we are to rejoice in the persecution. R. 5671

Wait on the LORD, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the LORD!

– Psalm 27:14 –

For a time David and his company had the cave of Adullam as a stronghold. It is greatly to his credit that he refused to plunge his nation into civil war, as he would have been abundantly able to do. Evidently the majority of the people would have sided with him from the first, and his victory over King Saul might have been easily accomplished. And how easily he might have deluded himself into thinking that such would be God's will! He remembered that the Lord, through the Prophet Samuel, had anointed him to be the king; but he remembered also that it was not for him to take possession, but to abide God's time, when Divine Power would overthrow Saul's kingdom and give the control to himself as Saul's successor as king.

How blessed it would be if all of God's people would thus remember to wait upon the Lord! “Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until that Day when I rise up to the prey.” The Lord's times and seasons are best for us, and any attempt on our part to push ourselves in advance of the Lord's will would be sure to react unfavorably. It was because David was thus full of faith in God and possessed of the spirit of obedience to Him that he was called a man after God's own heart—not that he was perfect—not that he always did the Lord's will, but that the Lord's will was his real heart's desire; and whenever through weakness of the flesh he took a different course, he was prompt to repent on seeing the mistake, to implore Divine forgiveness and to change his course. R. 5672

.....
• For I hear the slander of many. Fear is on every side. While they take counsel
• together against me, they scheme to take away my life. But as for me, I
• trust in You, O LORD. I say, “You are my God.” My times are in Your hand.
• Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.
• Make Your face shine upon Your servant. Save me for Your mercies’ sake.
.....
Psalm 31:13-16

Be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart all you who hope in the LORD.

– Psalm 31:24 –

The Scriptures everywhere encourage the Lord’s people to be full of faith, hope, confidence, trust. As we look out into the world we see particular reasons why this should be so. The majority of the world are full of fear, apprehension, distrust, worry. For this reason they fail to get the best out of the opportunities they have. They know of pitfalls of sin and trouble in different directions, and therefore they have reason to be distrustful, to be fearful. But the Lord’s people have come into special relationship with Him and He with them. He has assured them that He will have a supervision of their affairs, as would not have been their experience had they not come into relationship with Him. They are, therefore, to hope in the Lord, to trust in Him. They are to heed the things which He has said, and to take courage in the thought that their affairs are under His supervision. R. 5329

The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

– Psalm 34:7 –

[This verse] is a symbolical statement illustrative of the Divine guardianship of all those who are truly his. The thought is the continual supervision of our affairs by the Lord. Whether we think of the angel of the Lord as one of the heavenly host specially appointed on our behalf, or whether we think of him from the standpoint of the various powers of nature, the levers of which are all in the Divine care, it matters not. We have the assurance that the Father himself loves us and that all the heavenly powers are pledged to those whom he has accepted in Christ Jesus, and these unitedly guarantee blessings to all those who abide in God’s love. This means to abide in faith in the Redeemer. It means to abide loyal to our consecration, to do the Father’s will to the extent of our ability. That will is declared to be that we shall love the Lord supremely, our neighbor as ourselves, and all the members of the household of faith, as Christ loved us. R. 4348

I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

– Matthew 18:10 –

The Master's words seem to imply at least one or more angels having charge over the consecrated ones, the very elect. He uses a still different figure of speech in illustrating the matter, as though he would assure us that these messengers would not be delayed in caring for our interests, would not be hindered by more important heavenly business, but would at once have direct access to the divine presence and attention, so that our interests would have all needed consideration. Gathering together these various pictures, we have as a whole before our minds something like this: Our great all-wise, all-powerful heavenly Father has numberless messengers at his command, and has deputized and appointed many of these to care for the interests of his cause on earth—especially to watch over and minister unto the very elect. Nothing can by any means, therefore, harm these, except as the heavenly Father sees that the earthly injury or disadvantage would prove profitable either to the individual new creature or to the Lord's general cause. This is in full accord with his general assurance that all things shall work together for good to them that love him.

The Apostle assures us that the angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto and to serve those who shall be heirs of salvation, the saved ones of this Gospel Age—not only the overcomers of the little flock, but also the overcomers of the great multitude. All of these, because believers in Christ, because at heart faithful, because fully consecrated to the Lord and begotten of his Spirit, are the special and happy objects of his grace, ministered to and served by the invisible messengers. R. 3441

**Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?
Hebrews 1:14**

Such a use of the heavenly messengers by no means invalidates the thought that the Lord's earthly children are frequently used of him as ministers, servants, the one to the other. Indeed we may be assured that the invisible messengers or servants, generally if not always, are required to act through human instrumentalities—preferably through the very elect.
R. 3441

You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.

– Hebrews 12:22-23 –

More properly we understand this to signify that we **have approached**—this is that to which we are coming—it is in sight. Some have already reached it. Our Lord has reached the goal. And some others of the First-borns have also reached the goal; and some of us have not yet reached it. But this is what we are approaching. The Apostle seems to be here setting before us the glories of the future. Not only shall we see our Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Lord, and be ushered into the Assembly of the Church of the First-borns, but we shall be ushered into the presence of an innumerable company of angels. These are the angels who encamp around about those that fear the Lord and deliver them. (Psa. 34:7.) They are sent to be ministers for those who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14.) They have been with us here overseeing our interests; and it will be part of our joy on the spirit plane to make their acquaintance. If the Apostle had neglected to mention these, we would think it strange; for he is enumerating the things to which we are approaching. R. 4823

PSALM 17

A Prayer of David. Hear a just cause, O LORD! Attend to my cry! Give ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips.

2 Let my vindication come from Your presence. Let Your eyes look on the things that are upright.

3 You have tested my heart. You have visited me in the night. You have tried me and have found nothing. I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer.

5 Uphold my steps in Your paths, that my footsteps may not slip.

6 I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God. Incline Your ear to me, and hear my speech.

7 Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand, O You who save those who trust in You from those who rise up against them.

8 Keep me as the apple of Your eye. Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

9 from the wicked who oppress me, from my deadly enemies who surround me.

10 They have closed up their fat hearts. With their mouths they speak proudly.

11 They have now surrounded us in our steps. They have set their eyes, crouching down to the earth,

12 as a lion is eager to tear his prey, and like a young lion lurking in secret places.

13 Arise, O LORD, confront him, cast him down. Deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword!

14 With Your hand from men, O LORD, from men of the world who have their portion in this life, and whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure. They are satisfied with children, and leave the rest of their possession for their babes.

15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. So when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.

1 Samuel 22:1-2

The erratic course of King Saul under the control of an evil spirit doubtless led him to deal unjustly with other men, as he did with David, —with some for one cause, with some for another. Such people as incurred Saul's enmity, and those that were forced to become fugitives and to be ranked with outlaws, sought out David and put themselves under his superior control. These numbered at one time 400 and later on 600. (1 Samuel 22:2; 25:13; 27:2.) These men, hindered from engaging in the ordinary pursuits of life by reason of the king's erratic course, moved about from place to place, and, since they must eat, their presence was doubtless an affliction upon the farmers wherever they went. Their foragings may have been carried on in harmony with the Jewish law, which provided that any hungry persons might enter any farm, orchard or vineyard and eat to his satisfaction without molestation.

Doubtless it was because the people of the village of Ziph desired to curry the king's favor, and also because they feared the foragings of so many men, that they sent word to King Saul that David and his company could be found in their vicinity. The king hurriedly gathered a troop of 3,000 and went to the place, probably anxious to capture David and his followers. The latter, however, were not so easily caught; indeed they were much better used to scouting than the regular army would be. They readily ascertained all about the king and his army, while the king knew little or nothing of them. R. 3239

David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest.

1 Samuel 23:14-15

Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

1 Samuel 23:16-18

We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed. We are perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed---always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

– 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 –

This expression shows that while the Apostle and his companions did not suffer despair, did not feel forsaken, they sometimes felt a heaviness of spirit. This heaviness of spirit, or feeling of loneliness and depression, is natural at times to all mankind under the adverse conditions prevailing in the world. The weight of this casting down may be accentuated to some extent by the condition of the physical health. Those who are weak or in pain physically are apt to feel any mental pressure or trouble. This is all to be fought against in the Christian; for we know that our afflictions and disabilities are something outside and not of the Lord, except in the sense that He permits them for our development, for our future work in the Kingdom. We are therefore to be of good courage. If the Lord permits us to have trouble, we are to exercise fortitude, to patiently endure, and not to allow it to destroy our faith or our happiness or our loyalty of spirit to Him to whom we have vowed allegiance. R. 5671

Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.

– Psalm 56:3 –

The seven years from the time David fled from the wrath of Saul until Saul died must have seemed to David a peculiarly long period of trial of faith and patience. His own course had been a noble and true one. He had served his king and his nation most loyally, yet he suffered as a reward. He was for a time

My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High.

Psalm 56:2

an exile in a foreign land, and his father's family was obliged to remove to Moab for protection. It must have seemed peculiar to David that the Lord should permit him, anointed to succeed King Saul, to be thus delayed from coming into his kingdom, and instead to be hunted and persecuted as an outlaw. This, however, was a valuable test of his faith, and doubtless helped to strengthen its roots, and thus to make his character stronger and his trust in the Lord firmer. But besides this, we may readily see that those seven years were valuable to David as a preparation for his kingly office. They made him intimately acquainted with the people and their usual manner of life and general sentiments--acquainted also with the neighboring peoples. Above all, he became intimately acquainted with the Lord, and, we may be sure, learned to trust his providences even where he could not trace them. Several of the Psalms were either written during this period and describe David's experiences on the spot, or written subsequently describing the lessons learned from those experiences. Amongst these Psalms may be mentioned numbers 34, 52, 56, 57, 63. R. 3238

In God I have put my trust. I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me?

Psalm 56:11

For the LORD God is a sun and shield.

– Psalm 84:11 –

[This verse] is a great encouragement to the David class, the beloved class, the anointed ones, the members of Christ. To these the Lord God is both a sun and shield; he not only enlightens these but he will not suffer them to be injured by the blessings which he bestows upon them. He will shield them from all enemies and everything that would tend to injure them in any manner; all things shall work together for good to those that love him, to the called ones according to his purpose. (Rom 8:28.) With such blessed assurances, then, we may look forward into the future with rejoicing and with confidence, trusting to have a share in the glorious rewards God has promised to the faithful.

As each step of opposition on the part of Saul worked out a blessing for David, giving him wider experiences and fitting and preparing him for his future usefulness as the king, so all of the trials and difficulties and the disappointments that the Lord will now permit to come upon us from the world, the flesh and the Adversary—all of these will prove but preparations for his glorious Kingdom privileges, if faithfully used. R. 4218

In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust. I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

– Psalm 56:4 –

It is to inspire such a faith as this that the Lord has offered us, in addition to all his precious promises, so many encouragements to simple, childlike trust in him, and that he has bidden us turn a deaf ear to the reproaches of men, saying—“Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord, thy Maker, that has stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand. R. 1787

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God.

– Psalm 42:5 –

He would not have one of his children live in an atmosphere of tormenting fear, but would have them happy and always rejoicing in the glorious liberty of the sons of God, free from all fear and corroding care by simply trusting in him, ever remembering the blessed promise: “The Lord Jehovah is a sun and shield [to shine upon our pathway and into our hearts and to protect us from all the fiery darts of the wicked]; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” —Psa. 42:5; Psa. 84:11.

Should the child of God, the heir of glory, the inheritor of all the exceeding great and precious promises, and the present companion of Divinity itself, which condescends to our low estate, ever feel desolate or forsaken or alone? or fear that his love will ever forsake or leave him to be tossed helplessly upon the billows of misfortune at the mercy of the prince of this world who now worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience? Ah, no! Greater is he that is for us than all they that can be against us. We are not alone in the world; for we have the blessed promise, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” (Heb. 13:5.) Nor is the smallest interest of ours overlooked.

—Matt. 10:29-31. R. 1905

**My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.
– Psalm 57:7 –**

If you have thus far stood firmly in the faith of God's way we are persuaded better things of you; and if, with the Psalmist, you can say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed"; if your heart is established in love and reverence and faith in the sure Word of God, then you may also say, "For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." (Psa.18:28.) Yea, has it not been even so? Surely hitherto the Lord hath led us. The language of the prophet applies to all those humble and faithful ones whom the Lord has been leading—"For by thee I have run through a troop [of opposing enemies]; and by my God have I leaped over a wall" [of bondage, into the glorious liberty of a son of God].—Psa.18:29.

Beloved, have you been thus overcoming? have you been following the Lord's leading? have you found, and are you still abiding in the sweet rest of faith in his plan, in his way, and not your own? "As for God, his way is perfect": it is just and merciful and benevolent and wise and practicable, and sure of a glorious termination. R. 3337

I was mute with silence. I held my peace even from good and my sorrow was stirred up.

– Psalm 39:2 –

How necessary to the stability of Christian character is such a resolution, and the self control which develops under a firm adherence to it. In an unfriendly world we can expect to receive only the reproaches of our Master; for the servant is not above his Lord. The world, the flesh and the devil oppose our way: there are fightings within and fears without, and many are the arrows and fiery darts aimed at the righteous. But what is the safe attitude of the soul under afflictions and severe testings? Is it not in silence before God, waiting and watching first to see his leading, his will, in every matter before presuming to touch things that often involve so much? So the Psalmist suggests, saying, "I was dumb with silence: I held my peace, even from good [even from doing or saying what seemed good in my own sight]; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, and in my self-communing there burnt a fire [description of a fiery trial]. Then spake I with my tongue"—not to the revilers, nor to others, but to the Lord. R. 1937

.....
: Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth.
: Keep watch over the door of my lips.
: Psalm 141:3
:

I said, "I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue. I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me."

– Psalm 39:1 –

Our general **thoughts** have much to do with our **language**, our general conversation. Whoever, therefore, possesses a proper control of his **heart**, will govern himself in every sense of the word. If our ways please the Lord, if our ways are ways of righteousness, then out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak to the edification of the hearer. The ways being right, the utterances will be right. People generally love themselves and avoid saying anything bitter, unkind, about themselves. But the man who hates his neighbors will have very little difficulty in saying something bitter or unkind of them.

As the bit in the horse's mouth will control his strength; and as the small rudder of a vessel will direct its course; so the tongue, and the pen, its representative, may influence large numbers of people for good or ill. How important, therefore, is the tongue! And how much more frequently do we find it employed as an agency for evil than for good; to pull down rather than to build up the faith; to implant seeds of discord and discontent rather than those which will produce righteousness and peace! While this is specially true in the worldly, it is also true among God's people; and each should remember that to some extent he is a teacher, and day by day is either forwarding or hindering the cause of truth, righteousness and peace.

In view of the fact that we **now** stand before the bar of Judgment, which, if we are truly the Lord's people, we will endeavor more and more fully to realize, "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (2 Pet. 3:11.) Godlikeness certainly cannot include any harmful gossip, any unclean or unholy conversation, any disloyal or rebellious words. Let us remember daily to settle our accounts with the Lord, to make sure that no record of idle words not repented of, and, consequently, unforgiven, stands against us. "Let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ."

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, **think on these things.**" (Phil. 1:27; 4:8.) Thus out of the good treasure of the heart we shall speak the words of truth and soberness, and honor our Lord by a godly walk and conversation, subduing the tendencies of our fallen nature, and "having our conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." —1 Pet. 2:12.

If daily we render up our accounts to God and seek his grace for greater **overcoming power** with each succeeding day, we shall be acquitted in judgment and stand approved before God, through Christ, having the testimony of his Holy Spirit with our spirits that we are pleasing and acceptable to him. So, dear brethren, let us "take heed to our ways, that we sin not with our tongues." (Psa. 39:1.) There is nothing that is of so powerful an influence as the tongue. The influence of a good word, a good thought, may become world-wide; an evil thought, an evil word, may also extend its influence to the end of the world. R. 4804

David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come. So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him. Then David answered, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother of Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with you." So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth, and I will not have to strike him a second time!" 1 Samuel 26:4-8

But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?"

– 1 Samuel 26:9 –

The story shows how David with one trusty companion went into Saul's camp. King Saul and the whole army were sleeping without tents, clothed in their outer robes, as is frequently the custom in Palestine even yet. The king lay not in a "trench" but in a space or corral formed by the army wagons; and at his head, to distinguish him from the rest of the army, his spear was erected near his head-rest, as is still the custom among the chiefs of the Bedouins of that country. Secure in the thought that David and his handful of followers would be afraid of the king and his army and would not think of coming nigh them, no provision had been made for pickets or watchmen, so that David and his companion readily found the king, and could have murdered him in his sleep and escaped without detection had they chosen so to do. It was not that David was so obtuse that he could not see the advantage that would come to him that he refrained from killing the king, but because of his respect for God and his loyalty to him. David recognized fully that God was the King of Israel, and that God had set Saul in the position he occupied and anointed him as king; and that it was the duty of the people to honor the king as God's representative. (Kings among the Gentiles are not thus divinely set.) He did not have so weak a conscience as would have permitted him to reason that as God had anointed him to be Saul's successor he had now providentially put Saul's life in his power. On the contrary he reasoned properly that God was still King and that he had all the power necessary to dethrone Saul and to bring him to the throne in his own way; and that the Almighty needed not the assistance of murder on his part for the accomplishment of his plan.

**Do not say, "I will recompense evil."
Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.
Proverbs 20:22**

To make the test still stronger David's companion suggested all this, and proposed to carry it out; so that the entire matter might have been done without David saying a word or lifting a finger. To a weaker mind this would have been an extremely strong temptation—he would have argued with himself that the crime would not be his, —that by merely keeping silent and refusing to interfere the whole matter might be accomplished by another. But David knew that his companion would not act without his consent, either formal or implied. He recognized that the responsibility still would be his, whoever might be the tool in the murder. He decided that he would not meet Saul's envy, malice, hatred and murderous spirit with the same spirit, —returning evil for evil, —but, instead, he would requite his evil and murderous intentions with mercy. This was not merely a matter of policy, but evidently David never had in his heart any murderous spirit towards Saul, for this was now the second time he had him in his power and might have destroyed him. R. 3239

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.

– Luke 6:27 –

We are not to suppose that David loved Saul with an affectionate love any more than he would have loved any other person of such a character. He loved him in the sense referred to in [this verse]—with the kind of love it is proper to feel toward our enemies; —the love of sympathy and compassion which, however it might disapprove the character, etc., of the enemy, would neither do him injury nor encourage others to do so, but would spare his life and be ready in any manner to do him a kindness.

There is a good lesson here for all spiritual Israelites. We are to recognize the Lord's appointments and permissions, not in respect only to earthly governments, but also, and particularly, in respect to those whom God has set in the Church. Even though such should become enemies of righteousness, it is not for us to accomplish their destruction. The Lord, who called us to the Kingdom and who has promised to give it to us in his own due time, declares it his will that in the present time we should live peaceably, and to exercise patience, moderation and kindness even toward our enemies —toward those who would destroy us or who are pursuing us with the intention of assassinating our characters, or what not. We are not to render evil for evil, nor railing for railing, nor slander for slander; but contrariwise, are to speak as kindly of our enemies as we can, and to think as generously of them as possible—in no sense of the word either physically or with our tongues or otherwise may we retaliate or manifest their spirit, but return good for evil, mercy and compassion for malice and injury.

R. 3239



**Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.
To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from
him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either.**

Luke 6:28-29

Bless those who persecute you. Bless and do not curse. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

– Romans 12:14,17-18 –

There is a general tendency on the part of well-intentioned people to recognize a line of justice and a desire to vindicate justice and to punish evil doers. The Apostle points out that this is not the rule governing the Lord's family. It is not improper for the world to have laws and regulations for criminals, in the interest of society; and the Apostle is not discussing those, nor finding fault with them. He is treating rather of the minor affairs of life in which various evils may be inflicted and resented without coming directly under the control of civil laws. The policy of the Christian is to be not along the lines of slothfulness, animosities, revenges and perpetual conflicts, but to the contrary of all this; because of his greater knowledge of how sin came into the world, and how all mankind are fallen mentally, morally and physically, and how God has sympathy with the poor groaning creation and has provided a ransom for all, and that in due time a restitution for all shall be possible. And he is to have a heart so full of sympathy with this plan, that he will be generous, and God-like, toward the sin-blinded ones—anxious chiefly for the opening of the eyes of their understandings, and for an opportunity of blessing and helping them, rather than entertaining feelings of revenge.

R. 2214

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

– Romans 12:19-21 –

We do not need to feel that justice needs to be vindicated at our hands. God will take care of the vindication of his own justice. If it were left in our hands to mete out justice to those who mistreat us and say all manner of evil against us falsely for Christ's sake, we would doubtless make many mistakes. We should therefore be glad that the matter is not in our hands at present, and that divine wisdom and justice will repay to evil doers with greater mercy than we would probably be able to exercise. Our feelings, therefore, should be largely those of sympathy and pity for wrong doers, remembering that surely either in the present life or in that which is to come a man shall reap according to his present sowing.

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

Proverbs 25:21-22

For these reasons and in order to cultivate in us more of the divine mind, we are instructed to be kind to our enemies and not to see them want for necessities of life. Such treatment will be more likely than any other to do them good, and to win them as friends. We are not, however, to treat them kindly in order to see how badly we can make them feel under it. We are to treat them kindly because love is the principle of our nature, the "new commandment" of our Lord and Master, the holy spirit which is more and more actuating us. We are to treat them thus, regardless of whether we ever melt them by our kindness in the present life or not. R. 2214

For the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed.

– 1 Samuel 26:23 –

Not only would [David] not kill Saul, but he would not sanction another's doing it, not even by a half-hearted protest. On the contrary he would act as Saul's protector, so that the author of the bold scheme might have no opportunity for its execution. David went with him to carry out a different project; namely to bring away from the camp something that would prove to the king that he had been entirely within David's power, and that at heart David had no desire for Saul's injury, but the contrary.

It was the king himself who recognized David's voice and also the facts related—that his spear and cruse were gone. These David offered to return through a messenger, explaining that he had taken them merely to prove that he had no ill will to the king, no wish to do him injury. King Saul was honest enough to admit that he was in the wrong, and said, "I have sinned. Return, my son, David; for I will no more do thee harm because my life was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold, I have played the fool and have erred exceedingly."

David's reply to the king is very noteworthy, and shows us that the center of the man's character and the guidance of his conduct was his reverence for the Lord, his faith. He said, "The Lord shall render to every man [according to] his righteousness and his faithfulness....It was the Lord that delivered thee into mine hand today and I did not put forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. And behold, as thy life was precious today in mine eyes, so let my life be precious in the eyes of the Lord and let him deliver me out of all tribulation." (Vs. 23,24.) How wonderful this expression! In it there is no appeal to Saul for mercy, no expression of dependence upon him, but an appeal to the Lord, an expression of absolute confidence in the willingness and ability of the Lord to deliver him. David's course and language show [also] that he understood that portion of the Lord's prayer which says, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"—have mercy upon us as we have mercy upon others. This is the essence of David's statement, As I have shown mercy to you, King Saul, so may the Lord show mercy to me. R. 4225

Indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation.

– 1 Samuel 26:24 –

David's answer to Saul, under all the circumstances, was a model of truthfulness and forbearance. He neither affirmed nor denied Saul's guilt, nor did he solicit the king's favor and mercy. On the other hand he declared his confidence in God—that he would deal with every man according to his righteousness and mercy—and showed that it was his respect for God and his standards that spared the king's life. He declared that as he had shown mercy toward the king he was trusting in the Lord to show mercy toward him, and that in the Lord—not in the king—he trusted for compassion and help, to deliver him from all tribulations. R. 3239

Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great. They did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire, and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters.

1 Samuel 30:1-6

But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

1 Samuel 30:6

So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all."

1 Samuel 30:8

So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them. David recovered all.

1 Samuel 30:18-19

Persecuted and hunted by King Saul, no place was safe for David. The Philistines, desiring him for a friend rather than a foe, gave to David and his followers the city of Ziklag. While residing there, David's conquests were over the Amalekites, and never against the Israelites. He could not willingly battle against the Lord's people, though he felt free to fight against those whom the Lord declared were to be destroyed because their wickedness was come to the full, to the limit of Divine permission. To all who are thus in the conflict, nobly contending—by their words, their actions and their general conduct—for truth and righteousness, against all who oppose themselves, **if the battle is the Lord's, it is sure to be victorious. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."**

R. 5673 and R. 2015

In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavillion. In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me. He shall set me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me. Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle. I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD!

Psalm 27:5-6

Delight yourself also in the LORD and He shall give you the desires of your heart.

– Psalm 37:4 –

After we have made sure that our requests are in accord with the promises, those things which lie very close to our hearts become our continual prayer, associating in our minds with all of life's duties and interests, the heart gravitating continually toward the thing we have desired of the Lord, and on suitable opportunities repeating to Him the request. This is the kind of prayer which the Lord commended, saying, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." (Luke 18:1.) The Lord's people ought to continue asking for the right things with some degree of persistency, and should not grow weary, hopeless, faithless, faint in their hearts.

We are to think of our Heavenly Father as rich and benevolent, kind and generous, yet wise as well as loving. We are to suppose that He will have pleasure in giving us the desires of our hearts if those desires are in harmony with His plan, which He has already framed on such lines as to include not only our very highest and best interests, but the highest and best interests of all His creatures. Then, whatever comes, His well-informed children can have all the desires of their hearts, because their hearts are in full accord with the Lord; and they desire nothing of the Lord except the good things of His purpose and promise. R. 4983

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

– Psalm 118:1 –

Thankfulness would seem to be one of the least costly of the graces: it implies the reception of favors, and is merely a proper acknowledgment of them. No one can be a true Christian and be unthankful. With the Apostle he will soliloquize, "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1Cor. 4:7), and the first response of his heart must be gratitude, thankfulness. It is this thankfulness which leads on to service, and to sacrifice in the Lord's cause as a manifestation of gratitude. R. 2459

Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples!

– Psalm 105:1 –

While sojourning with his followers at the cave of Adullam, David, in a fit of homesickness, referred to the fine well water of his Bethlehem home, intimating how much he would relish it if he could have it here. Thereupon three of his faithful followers, one of them his nephew, undertook the perilous journey, unknown to David. It was perilous for two reasons: first, they were outlaws from King Saul; second, Bethlehem was in the hands of the Philistines at the time; but notwithstanding these difficulties these brave men manifested their love and loyalty to their leader, and brought a water-skin from the favored well.

When they arrived and presented it to David, he showed a wonderful loyalty of heart. Not only did he appreciate the great devotion that they had shown, the risk that they had run and the water that they had brought, but he declared it was too precious and gotten at too great a cost to be lightly used. He poured it forth upon the earth in oblation, a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord for the blessings they were enjoying and for the comfort and support of such loyal associates. Surely the greatness of David and his devotion to the Lord and his faith were well manifested again in this transaction! R. 5672

Saul's Misery And Decline

Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name.

– Psalm 29:2 –

Many of those who have risen to prominence in the world have left no footprints that we can see; but when the Lord sets great examples before us, he shows us the footprints, and how some lead downward and others upward. Saul was of the former class, David of the latter. The important point to be noticed by us all is how much these footprints diverge, that we may avoid the one and profit by the other. The secret of David's success was not the mere fixity of his purpose, but additionally the fact that his purpose was kept fully in accord with the divine will. Even in telling to King Saul the story of his conflict with the lion and the bear, he gave glory to God as having delivered them into his hands. And so throughout his entire career. We notice this same desire, to give God the glory of his successes, and to realize that whatever failures there were in his life were either his own weaknesses or divine blessings in disguise. Thus we see David's whole existence exemplifying the words of holy writ— "In all thy ways acknowledge him," "and he shall give thee the desire of thine heart." R. 4255

He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

– James 1:8 –

Saul's career began under most favorable conditions and terminated most ignominiously in suicide. A man of manifest ability, as a general and a ruler he lacked in one thing, which made his career as a whole a failure. As we have seen, he was not irreverent, nor profane and vicious in the ordinary sense of those terms. In many respects he showed a deep reverence for the Almighty and a considerable desire to do his will. His failure, on the whole, was the result of a double mind. The Apostle remarks that "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Our Lord states that we "cannot serve God and Mammon." King Saul was desirous of serving God, but was also desirous of serving self and Mammon. His proper course would have been full consecration, full submission of his will to the divine will. This is the principal difference between his course and that of his successor, David. Outwardly, perhaps, Saul was as noble in character as his successor; but the latter, putting God first and submitting his own will to the divine will, had the advantage, so that whatever natural blunders he made, whatever natural defects he shared in common with the remainder of the human family, these were offset by that heart loyalty to God which never permitted him to stray far, and which, after every transgression caused him to weep bitterly and to seek divine forgiveness and therefore a closer walk with God. Thus David was a man after God's own heart, not because of his perfection of the flesh, but because of his perfection of intention and heart desire. R. 4233

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

– 1 Peter 1:13 –

Saul lamented his loss of divine favor, declared by the Prophet Samuel; but apparently the matter did not strike him so seriously until he began to notice that the divine blessing was with the youthful David. Jealousy, one of the most intense foes of human happiness, entered his mind and almost bereft him of reason. The more faithfully David served him, and the better the results obtained, the more did Saul recognize that this marked David as his successor in the Kingdom under the Lord's providence. This, as we have seen, led to the hate which sought to assassinate him and which later on led to Saul's hunting him as a brigand, with his troops. Various matters associated with the narrative clearly imply that the evil spirit which entered into Saul in connection with his envy of David was a spirit of an unsound mind, an evil or injurious spirit or disposition.

There is a great lesson in this matter, not only for the worldly class represented by Saul, but a lesson also for ourselves of the New Creation. In our journey through life, almost daily we come to places and circumstances which, wrongly received, may change our entire course from fellowship and relationship to God to sin and opposition to him. What Christian has not realized certain crises in his life in which two voices seemed to speak to him; the one favoring humility and obedience to God at any cost; the other urging self-will backed by pride? If we are advanced Christians, who through numerous victories have gained a position where such besetments are rare, we still need to be on guard and to remember that we have a very wily Adversary, that we have the treasure of the new mind in an earthen vessel, and that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection. These recollections should make us very humble, and lead us to cling closely to the Lord, and to fear and abhor any attitude of conduct and even of thought that would in any measure seem to antagonize the divine will. Even if the Lord's favor seemed to be passing from us to another in certain respects, we should follow the course of Jonathan and know for a certainty that it would be folly to battle with God, for no blessing could possibly lie in that direction. R. 4233

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

1 Peter 5:8

Saul's insane jealousy undoubtedly weakened him personally and also the resources of the people, so that the Philistines considered it an opportune time for an invasion of the land of Israel. The battle was not fought on the borders, and the invaders were not met promptly, but obtained a considerable foothold before the battle began. R. 4234

For you have rejected the word of the LORD and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.

– 1 Samuel 15:26 –

The miserable last years of Saul, haunted and hunted as by a demon by his own indulged and swollen rebellion and unsleeping suspicion, are an example of the sorrows that ever dog sin. Saul's difficulty, which led to all this disaster, was his selfishness—and he was not unusually selfish either. The great majority of mankind are equally selfish—self-willed; and the great majority, like him, make a failure of whatever possibilities were before them at the first. As David's career illustrates the wisdom and advantage of an early consecration to the will of the Lord, and the blessing which must surely attend such a course—even though those blessings be accompanied with trials and difficulties—so Saul's course in a general way illustrates the error of those who measurably ignore the Lord and attempt to direct their own paths.

It may be argued that King David also erred and did contrary to the Lord's will on several occasions, but we are to notice the wide difference between these two characters, in that David's heart was apparently always loyal to the Lord, and that when overtaken in a fault his sorrow therefore was sincere and led to greater carefulness in the future. With Saul, on the contrary, the difficulty seems to have been with the heart—that at heart he was not submissive to the Lord's will but was guided by his own will, and merely repented and apologized through fear of consequences and not from sorrow at having deviated from the Lord's way.

The truly consecrated may stumble, may err, but at heart they are ever loyal to the Lord and wish to serve and please him. These are spiritual Israelites indeed, and the blessing of the Lord is upon them. The other class professes to be the Lord's people, but at heart are far from him, and merely draw nigh with their lips and outward ceremonies. R. 3240

[Saul] had sufficient knowledge of God to have faith in him, but equally well for years he knew that he had been cut off from special divine favor, and that he had been vainly striving against God in his opposition to David. But with all this, in his vexation of heart he desired some superhuman counsel. Not only had he been seeking to take David's life, but he had slain the priest for giving David the shewbread, and in general had done everything he could to cut himself off from God's favor, even though he realized his need of it. R. 4234

Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor." So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night. And he said, "Please conduct a seance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you."

1 Samuel 28:3-8

Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

– 1 Samuel 28:11 –

The fallen angels, demons, even back in Saul's time, sought to personate the dead, to hold communion with the living by representing themselves as their deceased friends. The Lord distinctly forbade such communications with demons; and the command throughout Saul's dominion had been that witches and those having familiar spirits, mediumship, should be put to death, with a view to driving them out of the land of Israel and thus to put away temptation from the Israelites. But now in his extremity doubtless, King Saul, disguising himself, sought the witch, that through her he might have communion with Samuel, the prophet. Evidently he had come under the delusion which was very rapidly making headway throughout the world, namely, that the dead are not dead, but merely disembodied. On this supposition he placated the witch and made his request for an interview with the Prophet Samuel. The manifestation that took place may be accounted for in two ways:

1 An evil spirit may have personated Samuel and foretold the results of the battle on the morrow. Doubtless it would have been easy for any one of mental acumen to forecast the predicted results. Besides we know not what facilities for information on such matters the demons may possess. Many of the things which today they tell through mediums are remarkable for their accuracy.

2 It is not said that Saul saw anything nor that he heard anything. His communications were through the witch; she saw, she heard, she told. Saul perceived from what the witch said that it was Samuel, recognizing the prophet from the description of his mantle, etc., which she gave him. But his boldness in still attempting to ascertain his future is remarkable. One would think that, with his knowledge of God and with his realization that already he was under divine disfavor, he should have feared God's further displeasure in doing that which was forbidden. There is a lesson, too, for the Lord's people here. What the Lord is not pleased to give us through proper channels we should realize we would be better without. It is in vain that any might endeavor to circumvent the Lord, to get ahead of him in any manner. Our Lord's words, "Agree with thine Adversary quickly while thou art in the way with him," would certainly apply in such a case as Saul's, when God had become his adversary. His proper course would have been to throw himself completely upon the Lord's mercy, assured that he is able to make all things work together for good. This should be our course. Faithfulness to the divine will is the only secure and happy course for us. R. 4234

The living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.

– Ecclesiastes 9:5,10 –

Happy would it be for people if they realized what the Bible so clearly teaches; namely, that the dead are dead and can give no information of any kind, that they have neither joy nor suffering, but are simply in a state of suspended animation, awaiting the Dawn of the better Day in which Immanuel, Messiah, will bring the knowledge of the glory of God to all as the result of His Ransom-Sacrifice at Calvary. The teaching that the dead are more alive than they were when they were alive is not only senseless, but contradictory to the Lord's Word, and has become the foundation of all the various grievous errors which have distressed the reasoning faculties of Christian people. None would pray for the dead, or say masses for them for their release from Purgatory, if they knew that their dead friends were merely sleeping until the resurrection morning. But, worst of all, this theory that the dead are alive has become the foundation of serious blasphemies against God, in which all denominations are more or less joined as represented by their creeds. These blasphemies consist in declarations respecting God's character and Plan which would be a disgrace to any devil, and are far from the character and attributes of the God of all grace, the Father of all mercies, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift. —James 1:17. R. 5674

Everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

– John 3:20-21 –

Saul and David were both men of strong character, but the former neglected the divine word and counsel and undertook the management of his own affairs, while the latter accepted the Lord and his leadings and by faith sought to follow him. The results showed in both cases: Saul came to an ignominious end. David was prospered and exhibited a wisdom and strength of character quite beyond his times.

Our Lord referred to such a condition of things in the end of the Jewish age, which was certainly a type of the end of this age. He said of the religious people of that time: "The darkness hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest its deeds be reprov'd; but he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." Thus, as a separation was made between Saul and David, and between those who loved the darkness and those who loved the light at the Lord's first advent, so a separation is rapidly going on today between those who love the light, the truth, and who are guided by the holy Spirit, and those who are of a different mind or disposition. R. 3231

Of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

– Mark 13:32 –

David wisely estimated that the people of his own tribe knew him well and understood why he was persecuted by King Saul. David was not without honor in his own country and not without confidence in his own tribe. But with all this he had special confidence in the divine wisdom and the divine power. He recognized that the Lord was directing him and that the anointing oil had already been poured upon him and that it was only a question of time when the Lord would point out the next step. Nevertheless he recognized it to be his duty to wait on the Lord and not attempt to grasp and take hastily the things which were his by promise. He had waited for more than ten years. He could afford still to wait patiently on the Lord.

How important a lesson for the antitypical David—the Beloved—the Christ! The Apostle testifies this respecting our Lord Jesus, that he thought the Kingdom not a thing to be grasped or usurped. He waited the Father's time. He meanwhile humbled himself in harmony with the Father's will and gave evidence that he delighted to do that will at any cost. This faithful and patient waiting was pleasing to God in the One who was to be heir of all things and highly exalted. Similarly we, his followers and members, are to remember the Prophet David's words, "Wait, I say, on the Lord." R. 4235

Prepare to meet your God!

– Amos 4:12 –

The battle raged, and the army of the Israelites was worsted, and Saul and his three sons were slain, besides many of his troops. Our lesson tells of the suicide of Saul. He preferred to die by his own hand rather than to come under the control of his enemies alive. Poor man! The poet describes the anguish of his last hour, saying,

**And the falchion at thy side
To thy heart thy hand did guide;
Crownless, horseless, headless, fall
Son and Sire, the house of Saul!**

"Prepare to meet thy God," is appropriate to everybody in every time. But the right way to prepare to meet God and to hear his decision respecting the character is not, as usually supposed, to begin to get pious when we feel the approach of sickness or death or in the presence of calamity. From the moment we become believers in Christ and turn from sin and seek forgiveness and thus become eligible to God's favor, we are urged to present our bodies living sacrifices to him and thus to receive of him an adoption of his spirit to fellowship. This in turn proves to be but the entrance way to the school of Christ, where they are to be taught as sons of God, to be prepared for the glorious work in association with their Redeemer in his glorious Kingdom. As they grow in grace and knowledge, they grow in appreciation of divine favor. As the poet has said,

**Oh, let no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes.**

Such as are in this attitude of heart are prepared to meet their God at any time. Indeed their meeting with him has already begun, and anything that will serve in any degree to hinder its pleasurable continuance will be a disaster indeed. R. 4234

Therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. Then David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?" And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite."

2 Samuel 1:11-13

So David said to him, "How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?"

– 2 Samuel 1:14 –

A young Amalekite, thinking to curry favor with David, and knowing something of how he had been persecuted by Saul, brought him the news of the death of Saul and gave him Saul's crown and the bracelet that was on Saul's arm, telling that he had dispatched King Saul at the latter's request—probably, however, manufacturing this part of the story to bring honor to himself. At all events, David received the matter in a totally different way from what was expected, saying to him, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" David then commanded him to be put to death. But for Saul and Jonathan he mourned until evening.

David in every instance [spoke] of King Saul in considerate language, not merely because it would be wrong to speak evil of any man, but also because, as king, Saul had been God's representative, "The Lord's anointed," as David himself styled it. When David heard of the results of the battle, his sympathy for Saul and for Jonathan was expressed in a beautiful poem, which is remarkable for the fact that it contains not a single suggestion of how Saul had persecuted him or sought his life. It compliments Saul for what good he had accomplished. It tells of the tender love of Jonathan, surpassing that of women. This ode is recorded in 2 Samuel 1:17-27. The Dead March from Saul* is an attempt on the part of the musician to put the sentiment of David's Song of the Bow for Jonathan and Saul into the music of our day; and thus it has become identified with the funeral services of the great, today. R. 5674 and R. 4234

*Referring to Handel's *Funeral March from Saul*

**Blessed be the LORD, because He has heard the voice of
my supplications! The LORD is my strength and my shield.
My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart
greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him.
Psalm 28:6-7**

Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, and he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow. Indeed it is written in the Book of Jasher:

2 Samuel 1:17-18

The Song of the Bow

19 The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen!

20 Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon--lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21 O mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain upon you, nor fields of offerings. For the shield of the mighty is cast away there! The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, and the sword of Saul did not return empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

24 O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

25 How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan was slain in your high places.

26 I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan! You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women.

27 How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

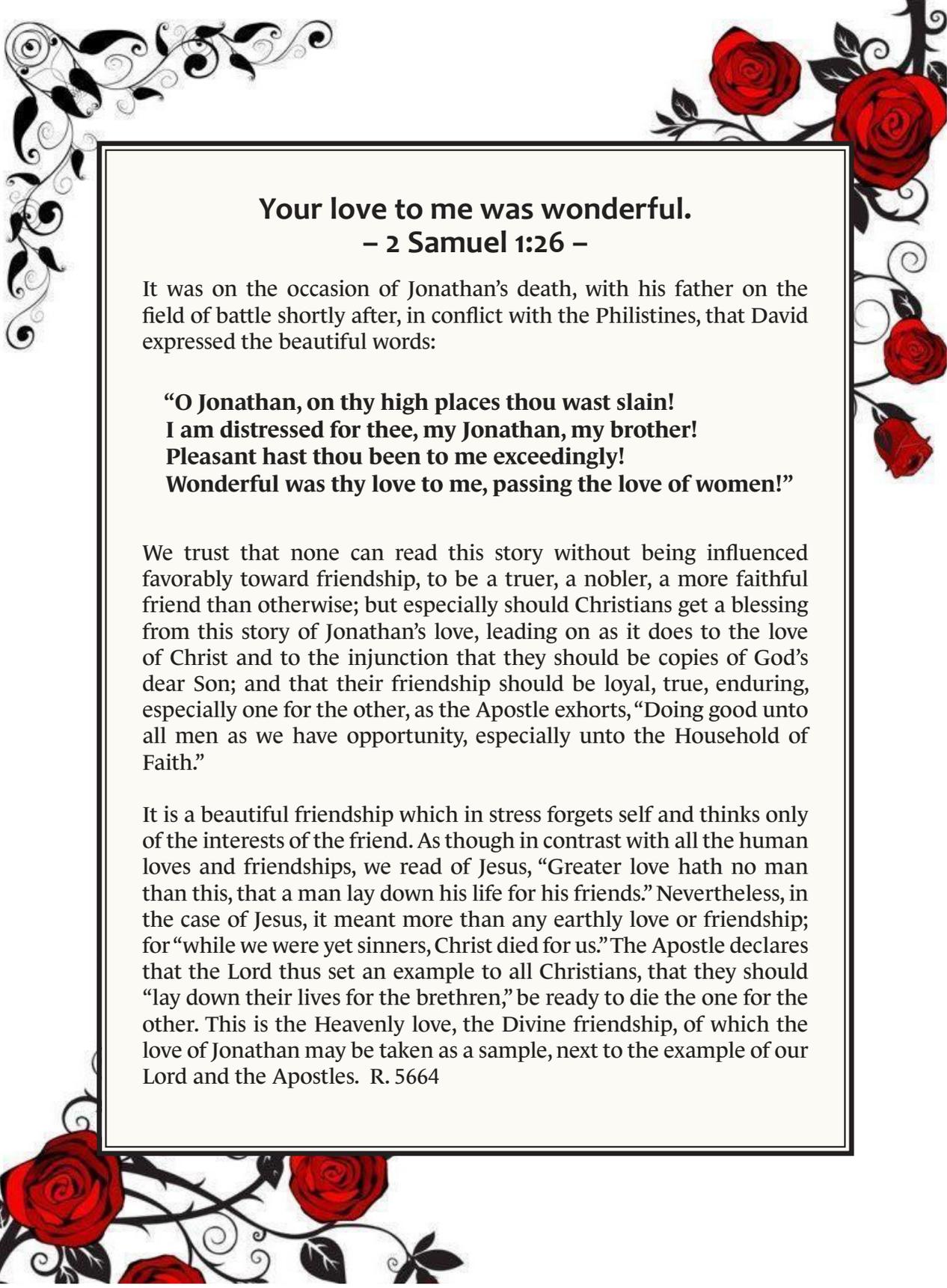
2 Samuel 1:19-27

**Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.
– Ephesians 5:2 –**

David, the younger man of the two, as we have seen, possessed by nature a deep, generous character, capable of intense love, but apparently time was required for its development. And as we perceive Jonathan's love for him, the brighter and more intense at first, we find that David's love was drawn forth, that he loved in return, just as God's love was first toward us and subsequently our love drew out toward him increasingly.

In the Scriptures sharp contrasts are drawn; and while this love of Jonathan, and the love of the Father and of the Son are set forth as worthy of emulation, another kind of character is also pictured, as when our Lord is represented in the Psalms as saying respecting Judas, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." (Psa. 41:9.) Let us see to it that this spirit of love, our spirit of friendship, proceeds, from the fountain of love itself; for God is love. Let us also have in mind the Apostle's declaration that there are only two great sources: a sweet fountain cannot send forth bitter waters, nor a bitter fountain send forth sweet waters. (James 3:11.) Let us, therefore, settle it in our hearts that any spirit of treachery toward a friend, toward a brother, is not in any sense of the word connected with the spirit of love, but in opposition to it. Let us remember that a sweet fountain, a pure fountain, a love-fountain, cannot send forth bitter waters of hate, of malice, of envy, of strife. We must recognize such a stream of evil as coming from a different quarter, a different fountain, from the enemy of God and man. These qualities are therefore set forth in the Scriptures as works of the flesh and of the devil. Let us remember, too, that a radical change from an attitude of love and friendship to an attitude of bitterness and enmity is not an instantaneous but a gradual work. In the case of Judas we see a gradual deflection, which at first merely murmured because others had honors bestowed from the Lord; yet that spirit of murmuring increased, until within a week it took delight in betraying the Friend of all friends, who was even then laying down life on his behalf. Let us remember that by nature we have seeds of evil, of selfishness, received from the Adversary through heredity, through the fall; and that we need continually to be on guard to uproot all such roots of evil, and need continually to be cultivating the tender plant of love, that its fragrance may fill our entire lives and prepare us for association with him who is love and with him who is the friend above all others. R. 4224





**Your love to me was wonderful.
– 2 Samuel 1:26 –**

It was on the occasion of Jonathan's death, with his father on the field of battle shortly after, in conflict with the Philistines, that David expressed the beautiful words:

**“O Jonathan, on thy high places thou wast slain!
I am distressed for thee, my Jonathan, my brother!
Pleasant hast thou been to me exceedingly!
Wonderful was thy love to me, passing the love of women!”**

We trust that none can read this story without being influenced favorably toward friendship, to be a truer, a nobler, a more faithful friend than otherwise; but especially should Christians get a blessing from this story of Jonathan's love, leading on as it does to the love of Christ and to the injunction that they should be copies of God's dear Son; and that their friendship should be loyal, true, enduring, especially one for the other, as the Apostle exhorts, “Doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the Household of Faith.”

It is a beautiful friendship which in stress forgets self and thinks only of the interests of the friend. As though in contrast with all the human loves and friendships, we read of Jesus, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Nevertheless, in the case of Jesus, it meant more than any earthly love or friendship; for “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” The Apostle declares that the Lord thus set an example to all Christians, that they should “lay down their lives for the brethren,” be ready to die the one for the other. This is the Heavenly love, the Divine friendship, of which the love of Jonathan may be taken as a sample, next to the example of our Lord and the Apostles. R. 5664

DAVID'S SECOND ANOINTING



*Then the men of Judah came, and there
they anointed David king over the house of Judah.
2 Samuel 2:4*

David Anointed Over Judah

As for me, I trust in You, O LORD. I say, "You are my God."

– Psalm 31:14 –

David, as the captain of his band of six hundred men, had been making his home at Ziklag, southwest of Judah. When David heard of the death of Saul, instead of determining what he should do according to his own judgment, he inquired of the Lord. It seems remarkable to us that a young man, driven from home, an exile, hunted as a bandit, and cut off from all the refining influences of life, should retain his reverence for the Lord to such a degree. Alas! how many Christians with every condition favorable, with Bibles in their hands and Bible study helps, etc., manifest a much less loyal disposition! How frequently the Lord and his will are forgotten, while self decides and directs. Indeed it may be considered an evidence of a quite thorough submission to the Lord and development in grace to find a Christian earnestly seeking to know the will of the Lord in all the important undertakings of his life. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." R. 4235

David was in his 30th year at the time of King Saul's death. During the ten preceding years he had led a varied life. Banished from Saul's court through envy, hunted by the king as a wild beast, David's experiences were far from what have been considered ideal. Chased as a brigand and looked upon with distrust on the part of the majority of the people, who would know little about him except that while once high in the king's favor and having been the king's general, he was now in disfavor, it would be difficult for some to consider him otherwise than with mere envy. Others again, failing to consider that God appointed the rulers of Israel, might think David a usurper, seeking to profit himself at his master's expense. As a matter of fact we find that even in the demoralized condition of things which followed the death of Saul and his three sons in the disastrous battle, still the eleven tribes promptly rallied to the support of Saul's fourth son, Ishbosheth, and never seemed to think a moment of David. R. 4234

**Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on
your own understanding. In all your ways
acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**

Proverbs 3:5-6

Show me Your ways, O LORD. Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation. On You I wait all the day.

– Psalm 25:4-5 –

David waited upon the Lord those many years, fully confident that in the end he should be the king of Israel, but not hastening the event in any way, simply standing ready for the responsibilities and the power of the office where the Lord should put him. What a wonderful example we have in David's course!

He realized that the time had probably come for himself and his companions to move from the Philistines' country, and he inquired of the Lord by the priest and the ephod. The answer was that he should go into Judea. Next he made inquiry, Into which city? and the answer was, Hebron. Thither David and his companions removed with their families; and the tribe of Judah, his own tribe, promptly recognized him as their king. It was over seven years after this, however, before he became the king of all Israel. R. 5674



And David brought up the men who were with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

2 Samuel 2:3-4

In David's course in all this and in the course of divine providence with him there is a wholesome lesson for the anointed people of God of this age—the gospel Church. Having been called and anointed of God to be kings and priests unto him, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ of his Kingdom and glory, it is our part to wait patiently the Lord's time for that exaltation; and in the meantime, like David, to patiently endure all the discipline which God in his providence sees to be necessary to fit us for the position of authority and power we are to hold in the future, and to exercise with loving consideration for the blessing of all the families of the earth. R. 1996

David's Kindness

Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, "The men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who buried Saul." So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and said to them, "You are blessed of the LORD, for you have shown this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him. And now may the LORD show kindness and truth to you. I also will repay you this kindness, because you have done this thing. Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened, and be valiant, for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

2 Samuel 2:4-7

On coming to the throne David's course was marked with the same wisdom and magnanimity that had characterized him previously. Among other wise measures the honor he paid to the memory of his deceased rival and enemy is very notable, and without a precedent on the pages of history. David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead to express his appreciation of their kindness in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the ignominy to which the Philistines had exposed them, and giving them a decent burial. This the men of Jabesh had done in remembrance of a kind service Saul had once done for them. (1 Sam. 11:1-11.) And David said to them, "Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now the Lord show kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing." R. 1996

Love suffers long and is kind. Love does not envy. Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil.

– 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 –

It may be contested by some that David's course was a case of policy and that he was too wise to antagonize the men of Jabesh in giving Saul and his sons decent burial. Even if this were the case it would reflect credit on David instead of discredit. It would show that he had the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of a sound mind. But we think it unnecessary to attack the motive of any person who wishes to do a kind act. Instead of attributing the motive to evil, we should "think no evil." The same principle is applicable to the Lord's people. They should not attribute wrong motives to business men who contribute money for benevolences, etc. It may, indeed, be true of some (perhaps of many) that the thought of gain associates with the gift, but it by no means follows that the act is destitute of generous motives and wholly sordid. We are the happier when we endeavor to think kindly in all the actions of life. A blind brother recently remarked, "I have no doubt that my blindness saves me from many disadvantages. When I meet people I endeavor to think of them as looking happy and generous and good; whereas if I had my sight I might consider it impossible to think of them as favorably and generously as I want to." R. 4235

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and
of angels, but have not love, I have become
sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
And though I have the gift of prophecy, and
understand all mysteries and all knowledge,
and though I have all faith,
so that I could remove mountains,
but have not love, I am nothing.
And though I bestow all my goods to feed the
poor, and though I give my body to be burned,
but have not love, it profits me nothing.
Love suffers long and is kind. Love does not envy.
Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up,
does not behave rudely, does not seek its own,
is not provoked, thinks no evil,
does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in
the truth, bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never fails.
1 Corinthians 13:1-8*

Israel and Judah At War

While David was thus the acknowledged king of Judah, the other tribes of Israel, ignoring the divine anointing of David, made Ish-bosheth, the surviving son of Saul, their king. In this David set up no opposition claims, and his course with reference to the rival kingdom was merely defensive, not aggressive. However, in various battles and skirmishes his forces were victorious; and his strength and influence grew while those of his opponent declined. Would that the same spirit of forbearance and disinclination to assume authority were general among both political and religious leaders. The usual course is for leaders rather to force themselves upon the people—to seek the office, instead of allowing the office to seek the man. R. 1996

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

– James 3:10 –

Quite probably King David expected after his recognition by the tribe of Judah that very speedily other tribes would rally to his banner. Nevertheless we are not informed respecting any move he made to accomplish this. He was waiting on the Lord. Surely it was a long wait, too. Abner, as the general of King Ishbosheth of the eleven tribes of Israel, waged war against the enemies of Israel and to some extent gained victories. King David had plenty of opportunity of wondering whether or not the Lord intended to carry out the program instituted in his coronation. With the prestige of victories over outside enemies, King Ishbosheth turned attention to the tribe of Judah, claiming it was in rebellion against the lawful head. The result was a civil war, instead of an entrance upon a reign of prosperity. Brothers fought against brothers—one party of God's favored people against another. And this continued for two years, gradually, however, bringing successes to David and his army. Thus we read, "David waxed stronger and stronger and the house of Saul weaker and weaker."

In considering the period of civil war and how one section of the Lord's people sought to injure others, we are reminded of Spiritual Israel and the fact that brethren in it sometimes become so estranged and so out of the leading of God's providence that they also become antagonists to each other. Alas, that this should be so! —that the love of God should at any time fail to constrain us so that we would not only turn from his love and fellowship, but that the sword should be used to smite down brethren! Get the picture impressed in our minds and sealed in our hearts of coming days with Spiritual Israel, when brother shall be against brother, which the Lord will permit just prior to the establishment of the Kingdom. Let us resolve that however others may fight, the weapons of our warfare shall not be carnal and that our battling shall not be against those who are the Lord's by covenant, but against the great Adversary. Carnal weapons are not merely guns and swords—but more injurious and death-dealing is the tongue when used to slander and wound. God forbid that our tongues, wherewith we praise God, should work injury to any man, but particularly to any of the household of faith. R. 4234

Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.
2 Samuel 2:10-11

Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.

– Psalm 37:5 –

The advanced Christian is to be so fully in accord with the Father and the Son and the divine program, The Plan of the Ages, that his entire life will be a prayer and a song in respect to every affair of life. He will have in his mind primarily, What is the will of God in this matter? “whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do let us do all to the glory of God.” The heart that is thus continually in all of life's affairs looking for divine direction is thus continuously in a prayer attitude, and no other condition is proper to the Christian— “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths;” “Delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” —Prov. 3:6; Psa. 37:4.

But while thus in the prayer attitude continuously we must not neglect the privilege of a more formal approach to the throne of grace—on bended knee, privately and alone. Whoever does not embrace this privilege misses a portion of the great blessing which the Lord has arranged for his benefit and assistance in walking in the narrow way. Our Master spent seasons in prayer alone, and surely all of his disciples may well follow his example in this as well as in other matters to advantage. As our Lord sometimes prayed in the presence of his disciples, as is evidenced by their recording his words, so all of his followers are to realize that they have a special privilege of fellowship in prayer, praying to one another, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and in petitions to the throne of grace. —Eph. 5:19; I Cor. 14:14-17. R. 3806

And they helped David against the bands of raiders, for they were all mighty men of valor, and they were captains in the army. For at that time they came to David day by day to help him, until it was a great army, like the army of God, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD.
1 Chronicles 12:21-23

Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

2 Samuel 3:1

Meantime, however, Abner gathered an army against David's servants, and a fierce battle ensued, in which David's forces were the victors; the others lost the fight. R. 5674

Then Abner became very angry at the words of Ishbosheth, and said, "Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David, and you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman?"

2 Samuel 3:8

"May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as the LORD has sworn to him---to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba."

2 Samuel 3:9-10

And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him. Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, "Whose is the land?" saying also, "Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel to you."

2 Samuel 3:11-12

Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, "In time past you were seeking for David to be king over you. Now then, do it! For the LORD has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant David, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.'" And Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin. Then Abner also went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and the whole house of Benjamin.

2 Samuel 3:17-19

So Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him.

2 Samuel 3:20

And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul your enemy, who sought your life, and the LORD has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants." But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity, when someone told me, saying, 'Look, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag---the one who thought I would give him a reward for his news. How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?"

2 Samuel 4:8-11

Others, misunderstanding King David, slew King Ishbosheth and brought his head to David as an evidence of his death, expecting doubtless that they would be rewarded. On the contrary, they also were condemned. They had slain the king. They were esteemed worthy of the same punishment, and were themselves slain. Thus did the people see exemplified in David's course principles of righteousness quite uncommon in his day, and we might say, uncommon still. All these things served to endear to the people the king, who, they perceived, was not merely self-seeking, narrow, but was broad-minded and even generous toward his opponents, his enemies. He seems to have had a great appreciation of justice and also a breadth of sympathy for his enemies. R. 5674

He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

– Psalm 37:6-7 –

How precious is the promise to those who thus learn to trust in the Lord and go on doing good, no matter how obstinate or fierce may be the persecution it may excite, and who delight in the Lord and confidently commit their way to his loving wisdom. Surely they shall have the desires of their heart, and no good thing will he withhold from them. Their fervent prayers avail much, and in his own good time their righteousness, however misrepresented and evil spoken of now, shall be brought forth as the light—clear, cloudless and widely manifest; and their judgment, the justice and righteousness of their hearts, as the noonday. And even while we remain here as aliens and foreigners in the enemy's land, verily we shall be fed, both with the temporal bread and with the bread of heaven for our spiritual sustenance. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." But the Psalmist adds one more important word of counsel to the Lord's beloved children. It is this—"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Do not make the mistake of expecting him to give you the desires of your heart at the very instant of your request; to make your path peaceful, easy and pleasant as soon as you commit your way to him; and at once to bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. He has not promised to do that. **Time** is necessary for the working out of his kind providences in our individual affairs; for God works on philosophical principles and for lasting and blessed results. So —

*If not today, be thou content, poor heart!
God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.*

R. 1840

**You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness.
– Psalm 5:4 –**

Our Lord Jesus manifested his great sympathy for the Father in the misrepresentation of his character which he has so patiently endured for ages. It was the one effort of his life to glorify the Father and to rectify among men the false impressions of his glorious character—to show to men his goodness, benevolence, love and grace, and to lead them to love the merciful God who so loved them, even while they were yet sinners, as to seek them out and to plan for their eternal salvation.

Yes, there has been great commotion in the disrupted family of God—commotion in which the Lord declares he has had no pleasure (Psa. 5:4); but, nevertheless, “the peace of God” has never been disturbed. In the full consciousness of his own moral perfection, his unerring wisdom, his mighty power, and with the fullest appreciation of justice and the keenest and most ardent love of the beauty of holiness, patiently and peacefully, and even joyfully in the midst of tribulation, he has endured the contradiction of sinners against himself for six thousand years. But during the seventh millennium, according to the divine purpose, it will be the joyful privilege of our Lord Jesus to fully manifest to all creatures in heaven and in earth the Father’s glorious character. Then will the Father rejoice in the grandeur of his finished work and in the everlasting peace and happiness of his family in heaven and in earth, “reunited under one head.” (Eph. 1:10 —Diaglott.) This blessed consummation will not be realized, however, until the incorrigible fallen sons of God, disowned and disinherited because they loved unrighteousness and would not be reclaimed, shall have been cut off. This will be the last unpleasant duty of the Creator and Father of all, who positively declares that it is a sad duty, yet nevertheless a duty which he will have the fortitude to perform in the interests of universal righteousness and peace. Hear him: —

**Say to them: ‘As I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!’
Ezekiel 33:11**

The sympathetic love of Jehovah toward all his fallen, disobedient creatures was manifested in the gift of his Son to be our redemption price—even while we were yet sinners. For the same reason, as a part of the same will of Jehovah concerning men, he has arranged to establish his Kingdom on earth, and that his King and representative shall reign to bless men, to bring them to a knowledge of his goodness, his perfection, his hatred of sin and his desire toward all that they might be saved from death and come fully back into harmony with him, and of his provision through Christ for them all to do so.

Yet God is not pleased to accept men without testing and proving them as to whether, after full knowledge, ability and choice, they will sincerely love the right and hate the wrong. Therefore he has been pleased to appoint a day [the Millennial Day] in the which he will judge the world in righteousness. R. 1833 and R. 1782

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• **Evildoers shall be cut off. But** •
• **those who wait on the LORD,** •
• **they shall inherit the earth.** •
• **Psalm 37:9** •
.....

The Judge of all is to be the Christ—Jesus and his Church; and the work shall be so thoroughly done that no lover of righteousness shall be sentenced to the Second Death, and no lover of evil shall escape that sentence. —Acts 3:23.

We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

– Romans 8:28 –

Ultimately King Ishbosheth and his general Abner were both foully murdered and we carefully note that David had no complicity in the matter, and that so far as the sons of Saul were concerned, David's oath of friendship with Jonathan was quite sufficient protection to them. However, the death of these men opened the way for the people of Israel to consider matters further and, as they considered, they perceived that God's favor was with David; that he was a man after God's own heart, and that as a ruler he was doing valiant service to the people who had accepted him as their king. The saner thinking amongst the tribes of Israel brought them to the conclusion mentioned in this lesson—

“Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel.” Finally they had come to hearken to the voice of the Lord. No doubt the Lord could have brought to pass such a condition of things before. There was no divine purpose in the way. And so it is with all of our affairs, if we only knew it. God, who knows the end from the beginning, is wisely guiding for the good of his people and particularly of those who are individually his of the anointed class. R. 4235

Those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

– Isaiah 40:31 –

This waiting, under severe trial or affliction, will indeed be a blessing in disguise, if the soul be rightly exercised unto patience, endurance, faith, hope, meekness, long-suffering, kindness and true Christian fortitude. And it will be in the darkness of these waiting seasons that the blessed stars of hope will shine the brightest, and the bright Morning Star, the harbinger of day, will shed his beams into the deepest recesses of our hearts. “They that wait upon the Lord,” says the Prophet (Isa. 40:31),

“shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”

*Who need faint while such a river
Ever flows our thirst to assuage?
Grace, which, like the Lord, the giver,
Never fails from age to age.*

Blessed promises! and, to the praise of his abounding grace, his saints of the past and present all bear ample testimony of their fulfillment. R. 1840

DAVID'S THIRD ANOINTING



*And they anointed David king over Israel.
2 Samuel 5:3*

David Anointed Over All Israel

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in, and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.' " Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD.

2 Samuel 5:1-3



And they anointed David king over Israel.

– 2 Samuel 5:3 –

King David was thirty-seven years old when finally the eleven tribes sent a delegation to confer with him, indicating that they would appreciate having him as the king over all Israel. This was seven years and a half after the death of King Saul, and probably about seventeen years after David had been anointed first by Samuel. Faith and patience mark every step of those years and show us King David's character as we could not otherwise have known it. Its grandeur was chiefly shown in that it manifested a devotion to God and a submission to the Divine will.

The king's acceptance as king of all the tribes of Israel marked the third time that the holy anointing oil was put upon his head.

Meantime King David had grown stronger and stronger in conquering his enemies—the enemies of the Lord—those whom God declared should be destroyed. We remind our readers afresh that the Lord declared that the iniquity of the Amorites had come to the full, and thus indicated it to be His will that they should be destroyed from the earth. Whether destroyed in battle or by pestilence or famine, mattered nothing to them, as the Divine sentence of death must be carried out. R. 5674

The peculiar experiences of David's early life had much to do toward preparing him for his life work as king over Israel. His encounter with the lion and the bear when a shepherd boy, his later conflict with the giant Goliath, his experience at court with Saul, his acquaintance and friendship with Jonathan and others, his flight from the pursuit of Saul, all served to develop and prepare the chosen man for the office he was to fill after the death of Saul. In this school of experience he learned the valuable lessons of courage, fortitude, reliance upon God, how to act wisely under peculiar difficulties and under severe temptations and trials. He also became acquainted with the circumstances and conditions of court life; and his subsequent seven years in exile among other nations acquainted him with their characteristics, and were doubtless of service to him later in knowing how to deal with them. In his exile there gathered around him a company of discontented people, mostly victims of Saul's oppression. Among these were a number of prominent men of the nation, and these were of service to him later. R. 1996

**David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.
– 2 Samuel 5:10 –**

Now that the Lord's time had come to establish the throne of David, not only over Judah, but over all Israel, David was not only the Lord's choice, but he was also the people's choice, and by their representatives they came to him with arguments in favor of his immediate acceptance of the office over the whole nation. His seven years reign in Hebron had manifested his wisdom and ability; he was just the man they needed to order the affairs of the whole nation, and he was also bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, and his courage, fidelity and great ability had been proven even in the days of Saul. So David made a league with them. This league was probably some kind of a charter defining the rights and limitations of the king. And the people on their part pledged their allegiance and support. The government of Israel was not an absolute, despotic government, but a limited authority.

**The path of the just is like the shining sun,
that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.
Proverbs 4:18**

David chose Jerusalem for his new capitol of the now united kingdom, because, while within the boundaries of his own tribe, Judah, it was near the border, and central as a capitol for all Israel. It was a fortress also which had withstood the Israelites from the days of Joshua, and was considered by its possessors impregnable. R. 2001

**Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous things.
– Psalm 98:1 –**



With the inauguration of King David came the usual mirth and songs and exhibitions of joy. Indeed nearly every nation has its national anthem in which it memorializes the king and the kingdom. And is it not so with our Lord's Kingdom, which is shortly to be introduced with most wonderful demonstrations? Is not the glorious temple of God—the Church—the living stones of which are now being shaped, hewn and polished, hailing the great Capstone? The Head of the Church is Christ. Already we hail and crown him Lord of all in our hearts and look forward with joyful anticipation to the time when “every knee shall bow” to the Lord.

Meantime we who hope to be members of the Bride class and “joint-heirs with him” are here expected to learn to sing the song of Moses the servant and the song of the Lamb, for “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor and glory, and blessing.” “And they sang a new song before the throne: and no man could learn that song,” except the anointed. And the Lord will be with him in Mount Zion, the Kingdom. Realizing that this song is the tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, we are correspondingly interested to know to what extent we have learned—to what extent we can sing it now. We find indeed that it is a life study to learn this lesson. We rejoice in the privilege to bear witness of our God to all those who have ears to hear, even though doing so brings reproaches, frowns, opposition. Our patience and our faith are to continue, and we are to wait for the Kingdom in its beauty and the glorious “change” in ourselves to tell to others more effectively than ever the blessed tidings. R. 4236

In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

– 2 Samuel 5:5 –

Earth's king for the Millennial Age will be a spiritual ruler, invisible to the natural eye of men—visible only to the eye of their understanding as they shall become able to recognize him. David's throne or dominion over Israel was a type of Christ's subjugation of the world and his dominion over it. We have seen that the dominion of earth was given to Adam, who was robbed of it by the present usurper—Satan. While it was yet in Satan's control, God separated one small nation from others. Of Israel he made many types. Their Levites typified the justified; their priests typified the little flock or royal priesthood; and Israel itself is often used to represent the world of mankind.

God established his kingdom in the hand of David, first over Judah (type of all fleshly Israel), and secondly over Israel as a whole (type of the whole world); for thus shall it be in the establishment of the real kingdom of God which David's shadowed forth. It will be over Judah first (over Israel according to the flesh), and afterward the whole world shall receive and own him Lord of all. R. 452

A Word on Patriotism

This worldly, selfish patriotism, which conserves merely the home interests, and ignores or plays havoc with the rest of humanity, is not the patriotism that should actuate the Christian. The patriotism of the Christian should embrace the interests of all humanity. And since none of the kingdoms of this world are founded in perfect righteousness, nor are able nor willing to devote all their energies toward the elevation and blessing of mankind in general, and since they are all to a considerable extent under the dominion of the prince of this world, our sentiments of patriotism must be reserved for that one and only righteous government which is worthy of our devotion; viz., for the Kingdom of God, which in due time shall bless all the families of the earth. True, that Kingdom is not yet established, except in the hearts of God's people. Over them Jehovah's Anointed is now the reigning King, and by and by his dominion will extend over all the earth. To this worthy King they owe all their allegiance; to the lofty principles of his government and to all the interests of his Kingdom they should be devoted with a holy zeal and patriotism, which know no limit except their ability to serve it.

The complete separation of the Lord's people from the world, although repeatedly emphasized by the Lord and the apostles, is very generally overlooked by professed Christians, who seem to think they should still be part and parcel of the world and sharers in its aims, ambitions and self-imposed responsibilities—political, social and military. Of his people Jesus said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16.) We are to be in it, not as citizens, but as aliens, —but law-abiding aliens, rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's; owing no man anything but to love one another; rendering to all their dues, —tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor, and being subject always to the higher powers. —Rom. 13:1,7,8.

If we were now under a theocracy, a divine kingdom such as was established in Israel, and of which David was appointed king, then as Christians we should have the most patriotic feelings toward it. But we should remember that God abolished his typical earthly throne and declared that it should no more exist until Christ should come and set up his Kingdom, the antitype of the throne and kingdom of David. And to as many as believe this testimony and consecrate themselves fully to the cause of the new King, whose dominion begins in their hearts long before its establishment in the earth, will be granted the privilege of heirship with him when, in due time, his kingdom is established. R. 2001

David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

– 2 Samuel 5:12 –

King David made a covenant or league with the people of Israel. By this is signified that he agreed to serve as king with a limited monarchy, under a constitution. He made a covenant, a constitution, which was explicit as to what constituted the rights of the people and a delineation of what were the rights of the king. This institution in Israel indicates that they were the most advanced people in the world, for, so far as we can learn from history, the kings of that time were despots, who governed according to their own ideas, trampling upon the rights and liberties of the people. The interesting ceremonies connected with the exaltation of David as king over all Israel and the joy amongst the people in connection with David is amply recorded in 1 Chron. 12:23-40.

David's experiences in waiting for the kingdom and the lessons learned and the character developed and the preparation, which made him wise and moderate, all serve to illustrate a great lesson to the Gospel Church. We also are called to sit upon the throne of the Lord—to rule in his name. We also have been anointed to the office by the holy Spirit, which the Apostle declares is a foretaste of the glory and joys into which we shall enter when the crowning days shall have come. If discipline, self control, faith, moderation and hope were all requisite to make David a king over the Lord's people and to properly represent him in government, how much more severe lessons should be for us, who are called to so much higher a station—to the throne of earth as God's representatives and to the Royal Priesthood, ruling, judging and trying mankind, to the intent that as many as possible of them may be rescued from their degraded condition and be brought into full harmony with God! Surely we may say as David did, that our trials and testings are much less than we expected them to be.

R. 4236

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

– Psalm 133:1 –

[This text] is an excellent one, and applied to this lesson we see it illustrated in David's course. Although he was a man of war, courageous and aggressive toward the enemies of the Lord and of Israel, David was most emphatically a man of peace toward his brethren of all the tribes—careful to treat them as brethren, and to do all in his power to maintain unity and brotherly love and friendship. Although misunderstood and persecuted by them for a time, he finally was appreciated and proclaimed king of all Israel, with the result that all the brethren, thus united by his wise counsel and conduct, did dwell together in unity, and Israel had peace and prosperity, whereas by a different course on David's part a fierce and long-lasting civil war might readily have been enkindled.

We are reminded, too, of the fact that it was the Lord's own brethren who persecuted him, but that, as the Apostle explains, "in ignorance they did it." We rejoice to know that when the Lord shall have fully established his Kingdom, all who are the Lord's people, all desirous of being on the side of righteousness, will hail him gladly as their King; and that the unity and peace and blessing of that glorious Millennial age will far exceed anything that our minds can grasp or our tongues express. Like our Lord, let us seek to be peacemakers, and to dwell together with all the brethren in the unity of the Spirit, in the bonds of peace. R. 3245

The LORD is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?

– Psalm 27:1 –

While it is true that David's reign was largely a succession of wars, with only occasional intermissions of peace, it should be noticed that these wars were not aggressive wars, or wars for conquest, but that they were always defensive. While David's policy toward the surrounding nations was wise and kind, they were not so disposed toward Israel. They were jealous of Israel's growing power and prosperity, and thus prompted, they made the attacks, which David must of necessity repel as a loyal and patriotic servant of the Lord's people. The disposition of those nations was to exterminate or drive out the Lord's chosen people, and therefore the only righteous course for David to pursue was to fight.

To all who are thus in the conflict, nobly contending—by their words, their actions and their general conduct—for truth and righteousness, against all who oppose themselves, we would say in the words of Joab to the hosts of Israel, “Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.” (2 Sam. 10:12.) If the battle is the Lord's, it is sure to be victorious. “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.”

[This verse] suggests the proper frame of mind for all the Lord's people who are now fighting the good fight of faith. Though the situation may look dark and dangerous, and though foes may multiply and perplexities increase, it bids them fear not— “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” David said, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” —Psa. 27:1-14. R. 2015

His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

– Psalm 91:4 –

“His truth shall be thy shield and buckler”—thy protection. Yes, his Truth—that grand system of truth comprised in the divine Plan of the Ages—is an ample shield and buckler to all who in simplicity of heart receive it and prove faithful to it. It is the armor of God which the Apostle urges all the faithful to put on—to appropriate, to meditate upon and to store up the Truth in mind and heart—that they may be able, by its use, to withstand error and evil in every form presented to them in this evil day. R. 3331



The LORD will give strength to His people. The LORD will bless His people with peace.

– Psalm 29:11 –

While it is written, “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God,” it is also written, “Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.” The suggestion is plainly that there is such a thing as an ignoble peace—a peace which comes from indifference to the principles of righteousness and truth, a peace dearly bought and ignobly maintained. But, on the other hand, it should be remembered that no battle is a righteous battle except when the Lord gives strength and teaches our hands to war and our fingers to fight, when the battle is the Lord’s battle, for the maintenance of his honor, the establishment of the principles of his righteousness and the protection of his cause and his people.

Under the typical Jewish dispensation this was done, properly, with carnal weapons; but under the dispensation of the spirit of God we are instructed that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but [nevertheless, they are] mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.” (2 Cor.10:4.) And happy is the man who can always realize that the Lord’s strength and skill are given to him while, with heroic Christian fortitude as a good soldier of the cross, he goes forth to fight the good fight of faith against the powers of darkness strongly entrenched on every side. Thus, indeed, he may win the reward promised to the overcoming soldiers of the cross (Rev. 2:7; Rev. 2:11; Rev. 2:17; Rev. 2:26; Rev. 2:28; 3:5,12,21), and also the blessing that is sure to the peacemaker; for the glorious peace that is won by the good fight of faith is a blessed peace, a peace resting on the sure foundations of the eternal principles of right. But beware, O Christian, that you never go to the battle without the assurance that the battle is the Lord’s. Like David’s, let your inquiry be, Lord, shall I go up to the battle? (1 Sam. 23:2; 1 Sam. 23:4; 30:7,8; 2 Sam. 5:18-19; 2 Sam. 5:22-23), and then, like him, wait for the answer in the assurance that the battle is the Lord’s. R. 2015

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 •••••
 • **When all the kings who were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were** •
 • **defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them.** •
 • **2 Samuel 10:19** •
 •••••

The covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance.”

– Psalm 105:9-11 –

While the wars of David were not undertaken for conquest or plunder, but in defense of God’s people, they nevertheless resulted in the enlargement of their territory, so that now, for the first time, was fulfilled the promise made to Abraham (Gen.15:18), that his seed should possess the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates. The spoils taken from their enemies were also very great. There were shields of gold and vessels of silver, gold and copper. These were dedicated to the Lord, and reserved for the temple that Solomon was to build. R. 2015

The Ark of The Covenant

Then David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is of the LORD our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere who are left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites who are in their cities and their common-lands, that they may gather together to us, "and let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul." Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

1 Chronicles 13:1-4



The ark of God was the symbol of the divine presence in Israel, and as such it was the most sacred thing about the typical tabernacle. It was made by divine direction, as was everything belonging to the tabernacle; and its place was in the holy of holies, where only the high priest (who represented Jesus, the great high priest) was permitted to enter; and that only once a year, on the day of atonement. As the symbol of the divine presence, like the divine presence itself, it was guarded from irreverent handling, and also from the common view. Only the priests, who typically represented the body of Christ, the saints of this age, were permitted to see or to touch it. The Levites, who represented all justified believers of this age, were appointed solemnly and reverently to bear the ark when the Tabernacle was removed from place to place, but it must be first carefully covered by the priests; for even the Levites might not look upon it nor touch it. —Num. 4:15-20. R. 2002

When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These are the things in the tabernacle of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry. Theirs was the service of the holy things, which they carried on their shoulders.

Numbers 4:15; 7:9

Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the LORD on all kinds of instruments of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

– 2 Samuel 6:5 –

When David was finally established upon the throne of all Israel he purposed to bring the ark up to Jerusalem, and to lead the people as a nation back to the hearty and reverent worship of God, the restoration of the sacred ark of the covenant being necessarily the first step to that end. He gathered together thirty thousand representative men of the nation thus to make the restoration a national act, and in so doing to call the whole people to a revival in the worship of God.

The method chosen for the conveyance of the ark to Jerusalem was not, however, according to the law which prescribed that it should be reverently borne by the Levites, but patterning after the example of the Philistines in returning it to Kirjath-jearim they set it upon a new cart drawn (probably) by oxen. While God tolerated the ignorance and inability of the Philistines, who were not his people, to comply with the requirements of his law in this matter he did not so regard the forgetfulness or carelessness of Israel, but gave them a severe reminder of his displeasure. In the midst of the general joy and rejoicing with music of many voices and all kinds of instruments the sudden jostling of the cart seemed to endanger the position of the ark so that Uzzah put forth his hand to steady it, when instantly he was stricken down dead.

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 .
 . **And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his** .
 . **hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled.** .
 . **Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God** .
 . **struck him there for his error, and he died there by the ark of God.** .
 . **2 Samuel 6:6-7** .

This was a severe and a most necessary rebuke. It halted the procession, and was understood by the king and all the people as a rebuke to the whole nation in that they had ignored the commandment of the Lord and had failed to properly reverence the symbol of his presence. And the fear of the Lord fell upon the king and all the people; the music and the festivities were hushed; the multitudes dispersed and thoughtfully returned to their homes: and the king, fearing to continue his purpose of taking the ark to Jerusalem, turned aside and bore it to the house of Obed-edom, a Levite, who doubtless reverently received it; for we read that in consequence "the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that he had." —1 Chron. 13:13,14. R. 2002

Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding and I shall keep Your law. Indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

– Psalm 119:33-34 –

While Israel was thus taught the reverence of the Lord, the lesson applies with equal force to the Church of the Gospel age. It is not our part to change one iota of the ordinances of God. We may not turn the ordinance of the baptism of believers into the sprinkling of infants, nor change the simplicity of the Lord's supper, or the time of its observance as indicated by its superseding the celebration of the typical passover. Nor have we a right to abate the just requirements of his holy law, nor to render null and void the authority of his precepts and instructions in order to please the worldly-minded. The law and the testimonies of God must be received into good and honest hearts without regard to human philosophies and idle speculations. The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and blessed is the man that trusteth in him, and to whom a "Thus saith the Lord" is the end of all controversy on every subject.

The lesson of obedience is one which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus. It is necessary, too, that we have the spirit of obedience and not obey merely the letter. Whoever has the true spirit of obedience will not only obey the expressed commands of the Lord, given in His Word, but will seek to know the Divine will in everything. He will seek to note the providences of his life, that he may be guided in the way the Lord would have him go. Let all, then, who would be wholly acceptable to our Father in Heaven be very diligent to build character in harmony with His Law, having justice in thought, in word and in deed at the foundation, justice in our relationship to God, to the brethren and to all, and then building thereupon all the various qualities of love, that thus we may grow up into Christ our living Head in all things. R. 2002 and R. 5431

**With my whole heart I have
sought You. Oh let me not wander
from Your commandments!**

Psalm 119:10

And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

– 1 Chronicles 15:15 –

When King David was ready for the bringing up of the Ark the second time, some three months after the first attempt, which failed, he had studied the matter more carefully; and this time there was no new cart, but the Divinely directed method—the Levites, bearing the Ark upon their shoulders. It is not for us to be ingenious and inventive in respect to Divine methods and services, but rather to be students of the Divine will, searching the Scriptures that we may know the will of God and do it. The lesson, which King David learned, is one which all of God's people may well take to heart.

The Record tells that, besides the thousands of warriors who acted as a guard and gave dignity to the procession, and the multitudes of people who met the Ark at various villages on the way, there were trumpeters, rattlers, and players on stringed instruments, who made joyful manifestations of appreciation of the great event of God's return to the nation as represented in the Ark's return. Another arrangement was that of having the Levites chant, one to the other, the different portions of a certain Psalm, which King David had composed for this very occasion. —Psa. 24:1-10. R. 5680

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.

– 1 Samuel 15:22 –

The carrying of the Ark upon the shoulders of the four Levites might not have been as majestic a procedure as the one attempted with the cart; it would nevertheless have been more pleasing to the Lord, because it was according to his directions. Let us apply this lesson carefully, and see to it that we not only desire to do the Lord's will, but that we so desire to do it in his way that we will give close attention thereto, hearkening to the statements of his Word, or, as the prophet expresses it, let us be amongst those who tremble at his Word—who are extremely careful to note and particularly follow the Word of the Lord in every matter.

To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Proverbs 21:3

Hearing of the blessing of the Lord upon the home of Obed-edom, King David took fresh courage, and realized that these different experiences of Uzzah and Obed-edom taught the lesson that those who reverently and carefully sought to know and to do the will of the Lord would have a blessing in proportion to their nearness to him, while the careless and the irreverent only need be in fear. Again the king assembled the representatives of the nation from all quarters, the chief men of the tribe and the chief representatives of the army, etc., and apparently this day of the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem was the most joyful and the most notable day in David's entire experience. See an account of this in 1 Chron. 15:1-29 & 16. On this occasion care was taken to follow the divine direction, and the Ark was borne on the shoulders of the Levites, frequent stoppages being made, during which sacrifices were offered to the Lord.



On the whole we discern that the Lord's dealing in this matter taught David and all Israel a great lesson, and was very advantageous to the nation as a whole. Thus it is with all the corrections in righteousness, which the Lord may at any time give to those who are truly his; rightly received they will bring forth peaceable fruits of righteousness, reverence and obedience. R. 3252

And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams. David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master with the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps. 1 Chronicles 15:26-28

They have seen Your procession, O God, the procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary. O God, You are more awesome than Your holy places. The God of Israel is He who gives strength and power to His people. Blessed be God!

Psalm 68:24,35

DAVID'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING

(Psalms 96:1-13; 105:1-15; 106:1, 47, 48)

7 On that day David first delivered this psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the LORD: 8 Oh, give thanks to the LORD! Call upon His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples! 9 Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him. Talk of all His wondrous works! 10 Glory in His holy name. Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! 11 Seek the LORD and His strength. Seek His face evermore! 12 Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth, 13 O seed of Israel His servant, You children of Jacob, His chosen ones! 14 He is the LORD our God! His judgments are in all the earth. 15 Remember His covenant forever, the word which He commanded, for a thousand generations, 16 the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac, 17 and confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel for an everlasting covenant, 18 saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the allotment of your inheritance," 19 when you were few in number, indeed very few, and strangers in it. 20 When they went from one nation to another, and from one kingdom to another people, 21 He permitted no man to do them wrong. Yes, He rebuked kings for their sakes, 22 saying, "Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm." 23 Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. 24 Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. 25 For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised. He is also to be feared above all gods. 26 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. 27 Honor and majesty are before Him. Strength and gladness are in His place. 28 Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, give to the LORD glory and strength. 29 Give to the LORD the glory due His name. Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! 30 Tremble before Him, all the earth. The world also is firmly established. It shall not be moved. 31 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." 32 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness. Let the field rejoice, and all that is in it. 33 Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the LORD, for He is coming to judge the earth. 34 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 35 And say, "Save us, O God of our salvation. Gather us together, and deliver us from the Gentiles, to give thanks to Your holy name, to triumph in Your praise." 36 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting! And all the people said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

1 Chronicles 16:7-36

God's Covenant With David

Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains."

2 Samuel 7:1-2

David was now fairly settled and prosperous in his kingdom, and the nation was enjoying a season of rest and peace; the people were united, the Ark was in Jerusalem and the religious zeal of the nation was revived. For all these blessings David was grateful; and, desiring to give some tangible expression of his gratitude, he thought of the Ark of God, the symbol of the divine presence, dwelling in a movable tent or tabernacle while he himself dwelt in a house of cedar; and he therefore conceived the thought of utilizing the present seemingly favorable opportunity for erecting a house for the Lord where the symbol of his presence might abide continually.

God showed David that his time for the erection of the more permanent residence had not yet come, and that he had given no command to that effect yet, nor inquired, "Why build ye not me a house of cedar?" etc. (2 Sam. 7:7.) It was further shown that this work of preparation would require the entire period of David's reign; but the assurance was given to David that his purpose was appreciated and that, though God's time had not yet come, nor would it come in David's time, yet his son and successor should build the house and should enjoy a peaceful and prosperous reign, while David was permitted to prepare the way for it, both by gathering and preparing the materials for its construction, and also by subduing their enemies and ordering the affairs of the kingdom. This was the work to which David was appointed. R. 2010

Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel,
have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel,
whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying,
'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'

2 Samuel 7:7

One thing I have desired of the LORD that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.

– Psalm 27:4 –

The inspired Psalmist in loftiest strains of devotion and fervor puts into the hearts and minds of God's consecrated people sentiments of faith and trust and love and adoration to God, who is worthy of all praise. While many of these sentiments were based upon his own checkered experience, they were uttered under divine inspiration for the instruction and edification specially of the true spiritual Israel of God.

Thus the Lord himself would indicate to us the sentiments of fervent devotion to him that should fill our hearts; and in this view of the matter we see how closely he would draw us to himself in love and faith and childlike confidence. While reason and common sense have their rightful place and are indispensable to a religious life, the soul that never mounts upon the wings of holy and fervent emotion, that is never stirred to its depths by a sense of the divine goodness and beneficence, has never yet experienced the blessedness of the relation of sonship. A true son of a beloved and approving father naturally experiences the fervor of tender emotion. Especially is this so of a true son of God who recognizes in his heavenly Father the perfection of every grace, the crowning glory of all excellence, and who lives in close communion and fellowship with him and has the constant witness in himself of his love and approval.

How full of the melody of fervent emotion, of grateful praise, and of loving confidence are the inspired psalms! They bid our hearts rejoice and our tongues be glad, and they show us how, by meditating on his word and obeying his precepts, to "Rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything give thanks."

Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name!
Psalm 97:12

Such fellowship with God in adversity and in prosperity naturally tends more and more to center the heart's affections and desires in God, until the one thing supremely desired and sought after is that expressed by the Psalmist—to continually dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. R. 1914

To dwell continually in the house of the Lord

signifies to be continually counted worthy and to be recognized of God as a member of his Church, “whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Heb. 3:6.) These, who hold fast their faith, and by faith overcome the allurements and temptations of the world, dying daily unto its spirit, hopes and ambitions, and living more and more unto God—these shall indeed dwell in the house of the Lord, in his holy, spiritual temple, his Church, forever. Now they dwell in the holy place of consecration and adoption; and the Lord says, “I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels;” and by and by he will present them to himself “a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing;” and worthy, as kings and priests unto God, to pass beyond the veil into the Most Holy—into the glorious spiritual condition and into the immediate presence of God.

To behold the beauty of the Lord

is to behold the beauty of holiness, to have this image of his glory ever before the mind's eye as our inspiration, our light, our guide, our pattern and our chief joy. Here indeed is the Christian's secret of a happy life—happy in the midst of whatever may come to him of affliction or pain or loss or perplexity or whatever experiences come through the checkered scenes of this present life. To behold the beauty of the Lord really is only possible to those who dwell in his house; for only to such does he reveal himself “the fairest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely.” Such only know how to appreciate the beauty of his holiness; such only can delight themselves in the Lord and in the continual meditation of his law, and in conforming their lives to it.

To inquire in his temple

signifies that those who are truly of the Lord's house are inquirers, students of his holy law and testimony, and that their delight is in so doing. The language of their hearts is, “Oh, how love I thy law; it is my meditation all the day.” “I have meat to eat that ye [who are of the world] know not of;” for “It is my delight to do thy will, O God.”

This one desire is the sum and substance of the Christian's ambition as more and more he becomes dead to the world and alive toward God. Let us more and more seek after it and conform to it; for in so doing Christian courage, boldness, fortitude and zeal will be greatly multiplied. These all are not only born of faith, but they increase and grow strong by a living faith developed and strengthened by the lessons of experience. R. 1915

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

– Isaiah 55:9 –

We are not to conclude that, because our plans and projects are reverential and designed to be for the glory of God, therefore they must have the divine approval. With spiritual Israel, as with David, it is frequently true that “My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts [plans] as your thoughts [plans]; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, saith the Lord.” Those who are of David’s disposition— “after God’s own heart” —will not only consult with those whose judgment they would consider helpful, as David consulted with Nathan, but if subsequently the Lord rejects their best judgment, and does not cooperate in the execution of their plans, will do as David did in this instance: they will uncomplainingly acquiesce in the Lord’s plans, and cooperate therewith, and thus further attest that they are of the kind the Lord loves to honor and call Beloved. To these also the Lord will grant other special blessings and favors, as he did to David.

In connection with this refusal of David’s proposition [to build a temple], the Lord gave him very gracious encouragement, reminding him that every step of his onward way had been guided from on high, and that it was because he had faithfully looked to the Lord as his guide and counselor that he had now reached the degree of development and relationship to the Lord and to the Kingdom occupied. So the Lord encourages all who are of this David class in spiritual Israel today. All who are looking to the Lord, and hearkening to his Word, are reminded that the Lord is attending to his own work in his own way, and that it is a far superior way to anything which we could devise. R. 3258

Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more, nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.” ’

2 Samuel 7:8-11

**Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.
– Psalm 69:9 –**

These words must have seemed extremely poetical, hyperbolic, to those of David's time. David indeed had a zeal for the House of God—for the Tabernacle first, and subsequently for the Temple, which he desired to build, but which the Lord would not permit him to build. David had a real zeal for that House.

We get the key to this prophecy from its application in the New Testament to our Lord. When Jesus had made a scourge of small cords, He drove the money-changers out of the Temple. Then His disciples remembered and probably quoted the passage: "The zeal of Thine House hath eaten Me up." (John 2:17.) The Lord's House in that case was the Temple; and our Lord's zeal in cleansing the Temple of all merchandise would be considered by some as very appropriate, and by others as very extreme.

**And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."
John 2:16-17**

But the still deeper meaning is indicated by the declaration that the Church is His House—the House of God. The Apostles, speaking of the Church, say that we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 6:19.) Again, it is said that we are builded together as living stones. (1 Pet. 2:4,5.) So we see that the real House of God for which Jesus had zeal was the House of Sons. The Jews had been a House of Servants under Moses; but Christ was a Son over His own House—the House of Sons—"whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end;" for "Faithful is He that calleth you."—Heb. 3:5-6; 1 Thes. 5:24.

Having this view of the House before our minds, we can see in what way Jesus' zeal for the House of God consumed Him—burned Him up. We use the word burn, consume, in the same way that we use the word rust, in the case of iron. And so zeal is that which is warm, aglow, hot. With this view of the Master and His House before our minds—the House that He was interested in—we perceive that His zeal, His energy for them, prompted Him, led Him, to lay down His life—for as many as would become God's House, God's sons, God's people. This zeal for the Lord's House, for the Lord's people, consumed His time and strength in helping them. During this Gospel Age the Lord invites the Church to be similarly consumed with Him. R. 5250

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 • For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.
 • Hebrews 3:4-6
 •

“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”

2 Samuel 7:12-16

He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

– 2 Samuel 7:13 –

David himself prophetically grasps the truth of this promise, saying, “Jehovah hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from him; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.” (Psa. 132:11.) The Apostle Peter, moved by the holy spirit on Pentecost, refers to this same promise, and definitely applies it to our Lord Jesus. —Acts 2:30. In the prophecy our Lord is not spoken of as the root out of David, but as the root out of Jesse, David’s father; because David himself is a type of Christ, his name signifying **beloved**. Hence also the fact that in many prophecies our Lord’s Millennial reign is spoken of as the reign of David, the reign of the Beloved. R. 2372

**The LORD has sworn in truth to David. He will not turn from it:
“I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body.”**

Psalm 132:11

I have made a covenant with My chosen. I have sworn to My servant David: Your seed I will establish forever, and build up your throne to all generations. My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness, I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me.

– Psalm 89:3-4,34-36 –

David is introduced here as a typical character representing Christ—primarily our Lord Jesus, but subsequently the Christ complete—Head and body. In the meekness of his youth, his loyalty to God, his faithfulness, zeal, courage and wise discretion, David's character was a very beautiful type of the beloved One, to whom God referred when he said, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him."

Our Lord Jesus is **the** mighty One upon whom the help of the world is laid. He is the great deliverer, but it has pleased God also to associate with him in this great work the Church of the Gospel age, the elect "little flock," whose names are written in heaven. These, all chosen out of the people, constitute that one body, which, with Christ Jesus their Head, shall bless all the families of the earth. These all possess the characteristics enumerated above, which are preeminently the characteristics of their Head. All, therefore, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, whose souls thirst after God as the hart for the water-brook, and who, having found him, have consecrated themselves to him and received the anointing of the holy spirit, witnessing with their spirits that they are the sons of God, and who as anointed sons can discover in themselves the worthy traits of true sons, enumerated above,—loyalty, faithfulness, zeal, energy, courage, discretion, etc., —these constitute the class with whom the Lord has made an everlasting covenant and to whom belong "the sure mercies of David." R. 1936

I am the root and offspring of David.

– Revelation 22:16 –

The Messiah was to be the seed of David, according to the Prophets, and the genealogical records as given by Matthew and Luke, prove that Jesus was the Son of David, with whom Jehovah made an everlasting covenant, saying, "His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me," Psa. 89:36. The genealogical records prove him to be the Son of David. The prophets foretold that the Messiah who should sit on David's throne, and order his kingdom, was to be the Son of Jesse and David. Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Psa. 132:11. The apostles believed that Jesus was the Messiah and the son of David. Peter, in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, tells the Jews that Jesus, according to the flesh, was from the loins of David; and Paul says that he was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh," Act 2:30; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8. And the glorified Jesus himself declares: "I am the root and offspring of David." R. 944

Give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision.

– 1 Chronicles 29:19 –

David when anointed...was a bud of promise, a noble youth—meek, modest, gentle, faithful, courageous in the line of duty, and brave to face danger and to endure hardness in any good work, especially wherever the interests of God's cause or God's people were at stake. Seeing in him this sterling stamp of character God called him to higher service. So he has been calling and anointing with his holy spirit a similar class all through the Gospel age. They are the Lord's anointed kings; but their kingdom, like that of David, is not established: they are surrounded by enemies on every side as was David, and the whole time of their life in the flesh is a continual warfare as was his. Like David, too, they have had it in their hearts to build the temple of God in the present age, that all the world might come and worship. But this privilege is not granted to the church in the flesh, even as the building of the typical temple was denied to David, but was reserved for Solomon, to whom the Lord gave a rest, peace and prosperity, which made it an apt symbol of the reign of the glorified church. —1 Chron. 22:7-9. R. 1901

It required the two reigns of David and Solomon to represent the great work of the Lord's Anointed. David's reign represented the work of the church in the flesh, while Solomon's reign represented the work of the church glorified and at rest from all her enemies. R. 1901

Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

– Ephesians 2:20-21 –

While David was not permitted to build the temple of God, he was permitted to gather together and prepare the materials for the building. So the church in the flesh makes ready the materials for the temple of God which in the dawn of the Millennium will come together noiselessly as did Solomon's temple, without the sound of a hammer. David's warfare, then, was a type of the warfare of the whole church, Head and body, while in the flesh, against the principalities and powers of darkness on every side that oppose her to the very end of her earthly course, so that, though she is anointed for the kingly office, she is never established in power, peace and security to the day of her death. Her work on this side the veil is to war a good warfare, and to industriously gather the materials and prepare the living stones for the glorious temple which shall by and by call all the world to worship.

Beyond the veil of the flesh this same anointed company (all the faithful overcomers of this age) will enter into the glorious reign prefigured by the reign of Solomon— "They shall rest from their labors, and their works follow with them." (Rev. 14:13.) And the temple of God shall rise and shine in its beauty, and in it shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, which blessing was typified by the abundant blessing, peace and prosperity of Israel during the reign of Solomon. R. 1901

**Incline your ear, and come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live, and
I will make an everlasting covenant with you—
The sure mercies of David.
– Isaiah 55:3 –**

The New Covenant, the everlasting Covenant, the sure mercies of David [the beloved], is to be proffered to all. That New Covenant, as the Apostle points out, is the divine agreement to be merciful—to forgive, to cancel sins that are past— “I will put my law in their minds and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people.... I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.” (Heb. 8:8-13; Jer. 31:29-34.) “The sure mercies of David” are the mercies guaranteed to Israel and the world through his greater Son, our Lord. The real David (the real Beloved) shall be the divine channel for the outpouring of the blessings and mercies of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Of this antitypical David it is written, “Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.” This is the great Prophet, the great Priest, the great King, typified by Moses and Melchizedek and the kings of the line of David. R. 3597

**This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.
Jeremiah 31:33-34**

The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

– Psalm 110:1 –

Paul says, Jesus died that **he might be** Lord; Peter, that he was exalted by the right hand of God who hath **made him** Lord. He became David's offspring in Bethlehem; he became David's Lord and the root from which David must receive life at his resurrection, and **by virtue** of his death. As the Apostle says again, “Jesus Christ our Lord...was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power [might and authority]...by the resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. 1:4.) The might, authority, or power, was gained by his sacrifice; it was recognized of God, and declared to men, by his resurrection. He had delegated power and prospective authority before, but not until after his sacrifice declared acceptable to God by the fact of his resurrection did he say, “All power **is given** unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. 28:18.) Having bought all, he now has power and authority over all. Wherefore it is written, “He is Lord of **all**...”

Now, looking at the words of Jesus, we can see how he was David's Son, and yet is to be David's Lord or Father. And noting the prophecy referred to by Jesus in this connection, and also referred to by the Apostles (Matt. 22:4; Heb.1:13), viz., “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” we see that this refers the Lordship of Jesus to a time **after** his sufferings and trials were ended. After he had been accounted worthy of exaltation, then he was exalted, and before that time he could only be called David's Lord prophetically. Jehovah would not, could not, justly give him the dominion and subdue it under him until it had been released from the curse, bought with a price: And that just price he paid, and is therefore now rightfully LORD, by Jehovah's appointment. R. 809

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!

– 1 John 3:1–

In his dealings with mankind God is manifesting to all his creatures, angels as well as men, the various attributes of his character—Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power. In his condemnation of Adam's sin, God brought forcibly to the notice of all the attribute of Justice, the basic principle of his character; as it is written, “Justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne.” (Psa. 89:14; 97:2.) This feature of his character (**viz.**, Justice) God continued to make prominently manifest for more than four thousand years; until Christ came and suffered and died, the just for the unjust, by which act the beautiful, divine quality, Love, was made manifest; as it is written, “In this was **manifested the love of God** toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 4:9-10.) “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.” —Rom. 5:8. R. 2120

David Finds Mephibosheth

Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" And there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba. So when they had called him to David, the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" He said, "At your service!"

2 Samuel 9:1-2

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: Then the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, :
: to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the :
: king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is lame in his feet." :
: 2 Samuel 9:3 :
.....

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.

– Romans 12:10 –

When the days of his prosperity came at length, years after Jonathan had gone to his rest, David, remembering his covenant, began to inquire if there were yet any left of the house of Saul to whom he might show the kindness of God. He found but one, the only surviving son of his friend Jonathan, and upon him he lavished the affection and kindness which it would have been his pleasure to bestow upon Jonathan himself, had he survived. Gratefully he remembered the love of his friend, and lovingly he endeavored to requite it to the extent of his ability.

[This text] needs no comment except the exhortation that we should each more and more endeavor to put it in practice, and to see that with each passing year we are able to note some degree of advancement in this element of godlikeness, not overlooking that sure proof of brotherly love mentioned in the last clause— "in honor preferring one another;" remembering also the similar counsel of the same apostle on another occasion— "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." (Phil. 2:3.) If we merely say that we love one another and yet pursue a steady course of self-seeking, wherein is the love manifest? Let us not love in word only, but in deed and in truth. —1 John 3:18. R. 2010

So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar." Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

2 Samuel 9:4-5

Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?" And he answered, "Here is your servant!" So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather, and you shall eat bread at my table continually." 2 Samuel 9:6-7

Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness. He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man deals graciously and lends. He will guide his affairs with discretion. He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. His horn will be exalted with honor.

– Psalm 112:4-5,9 –

David's justice and generosity are both manifested in the course he pursued. Instead of coveting Saul's possessions and using his power to attach these to his own, he deliberately settled the matter that the profits of Saul's estate should all go to his son, who at the same time would be continually partaker of the King's bounty at his table. Comparatively few would have been so just and so generous. The incident gives David's character a fresh luster and helps us to understand why he was so beloved of the Lord. He was not content with merely wishing to do right, willing to do right, he went forward and dealt justice. He put his bright thoughts and generous impulses into practice, and made "footprints on the sands of time" which have helped to mark the proper pathway for the millions who have since examined these in the holy records.

The entire operation shows us the fearlessness of the King and confidence that the kingdom should not be taken away from his posterity; and it shows us also the confidence which all the members must have felt towards him and respect to his judgment as to the affairs of the home and his headship in his home. This headship we cannot suppose was used in an austere and arbitrary manner, but with loving kindnesses and generosity and in the interest of his entire household. R. 4269

The Lord gives us a deep insight into David's character, and shows us one of the abilities he possessed which constituted him "A man after God's own heart." Entirely overlooking and forgetting the evils which he experienced from King Saul during the years in which the latter sought his life, King David remembered with appreciation the conduct of Saul's son, Jonathan; how the latter had befriended him, and how he had made a covenant that in turn he would show kindnesses to Jonathan's family. R. 4268

The eating of food together as friends implies a pledge of friendship and fidelity; and to eat continually at the table signifies membership in the family. We are not to consider this a light matter, for David had two wives and their children were hopeful of being his successors to the kingdom and this bringing a stranger into the family might properly be considered as a menace to their interests, especially as that stranger already, according to the usages of nations, had a prior claim to the throne, superior even to that of the King. R. 4268

Then he bowed himself, and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?" And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in the harvest, that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

2 Samuel 9:8-10

**"As for Mephibosheth," said the king,
"he shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons."**

2 Samuel 9:11

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

– Philippians 2:3-5 –

Look wherever we will in [David's] checkered career, we see courage and determination exercised along right lines, proper lines. He was not a wild animal hunter, but to protect the flock he slew the lion and the bear. He was not a [boxer], nor a gladiator; yet at the proper moment he was ready to risk his life for the defense of his people.

He appreciated highly the honor that had been conferred upon him in his anointing for the kingship, yet he held this with modesty—never boasted of it and never rashly attempted to hasten the divine program. He endured patiently the opposition of the king, yet treated the members of the royal family with profoundest respect; and finally, instead of thrusting himself on the nation as king and demanding his acceptance, he still waited patiently [for] the Lord's time.

These qualities cannot be expected to come to us instantaneously. Rather they are the gradual growth and development of the new mind, but the principle must be in the heart before development can be made along these lines—the principle of loyalty and determination. The little word "will" has its very important place, then, in the Christian's character. He must be a willer, and the will must be rightly directed into full harmony with that of God. R. 4255

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

– Romans 15:1 –

In 1 Corinthians 12 [St. Paul] teaches, that “Those members in the Body of Christ which are most ungainly,” upon them we should bestow more efforts and energy for their assistance, especially covering their blemishes, especially assisting them. Along this line the Apostle elsewhere says that we ought to follow the example of Jesus in laying down our lives for the brethren— “We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” —Romans 15:1.

Too often the Lord’s people forget this injunction and are disposed to lay down their lives for themselves, for their own comfort, or to lay down their lives, their time, their energy, in fellowshiping with those of the brethren most congenial to them in cultivation or in advancement. Is not this pleasing ourselves in ignoring to serve those members of the Body who need our assistance most—the more ignoble?

It is only the humble-minded, taught in the school of Christ, who are able and willing to accept the ignoble ones who rally to the Lord’s standard and who may be accepted. To love the ignoble signifies that we must view them from the divine standpoint and love them as God loves them—not because of their ignoble and mean qualities, but in spite of these; because of their heart’s desires towards God and righteousness. As we come to love and appreciate all those who stand for and strive for those principles, we take our position with God and view the situation from the divine standpoint, having compassion upon those who are weak and out of the way and doing all we can to assist them, if they are of those who love righteousness and hate iniquity and are striving in harmony with their ideals. R. 4269

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

– Ephesians 4:32 –

David’s searching for the opportunities to do good reminds us that such should be our attitude; that we should not merely wait until circumstances force upon our attention the troubles of others and their need of assistance. Well do the Scriptures say, “Blessed is he that considereth the poor.” This is a God-like quality, and whoever practices it is to that extent godly. The Apostle says of God, that he looked down and beheld the “groaning of the prisoners” in their condition of sin, degradation, dying. He looked further to note that there were no other means of assistance, that they were wholly dependent upon him; then his own arm brought salvation. The arm of the Lord Jesus was revealed for man’s uplift from the condition of death back to harmony with God. Our Lord suggested, “Be ye kind even as your father in heaven; for he is kind unto the unthankful and the evil and the good.” R. 4269

David's Greatest Sin

After a most prosperous career, about thirty years from the time of his anointing and when he was somewhere about fifty years of age, King David fell into most grievous sins. In quick succession he violently broke three of the ten commandments. He coveted Uriah's wife; he committed adultery with her, and he indirectly murdered her husband. R. 4270

It shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.

Deuteronomy 17:18

And it shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

– Deuteronomy 17:19-20 –

Well indeed would it have been for David had he remembered [this] command of the Lord. If in this matter even such a man as David failed, and therefore was overcome by the power of temptation, let every child of God take heed and profit by the lesson of his folly. The Word of God must be the daily companion, instructor and guide to every one who would be kept in the paths of righteousness, be he little or great. It is not enough that we read it, nor even that we study it, for the sake of mere information or for argument: it is given us to ponder and to feed upon, that its principles may be incorporated into our being, moulding our thoughts and guiding all our actions. This is what it is to have the word of the Lord dwelling in us as an energizing and moving power; and if we thus have fellowship with God through his Word and the privilege of prayer, we shall not be beguiled into sin, nor partake of the intoxicating spirit of the world. R. 2016

It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel, and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah.

**But David remained at Jerusalem.
2 Samuel 11:1**

Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Then David sent messengers, and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity. And she returned to her house. And the woman conceived, so she sent and told David, and said, "I am with child." Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David.

2 Samuel 11:2-6

.....
 : But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the :
 : servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. :
 : 2 Samuel 11:9 :

In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die." So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men.

2 Samuel 11:14-16

.....
 : Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. :
 : And some of the people of the servants of David fell. :
 : And Uriah the Hittite died also. :
 : 2 Samuel 11:17 :

This draws our attention to the darkest stain upon the history of the Prophet David—the matter of the murder of Uriah and the taking of his wife. Skeptics are wont to point to that great, double sin and to sneer: "And that was the 'man after God's own heart,' according to the Bible's grand standard of morality." But the fact is, that it was when David was a young shepherd just coming to manhood that he was after God's own heart. And yet in connection with this very matter of David's greatest sin, there is something which shows forth his better character, which was "after God's heart:" and this is brought before us by this lesson. The commendable features are:

1 He did not attempt to justify his course by saying that all the kings around about did such things and worse, and that it was generally conceded by their subjects that a king had a right to do as he pleased.

2 He not only did not deny the wrong, but he did not even try to see what he could say in self-defense; he did not plead his peculiar temptation nor that it was above that of others, from the power he exercised as king; but he confessed fully and heartily in such a manner as convinces all that his heart was really better than his evil conduct had seemed to indicate. We have no right to condone David's crimes, but we have the privilege of noting those other qualities in him, which to some extent were an offset to his weaknesses. R. 1397

Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

– James 1:15 –

Evidently this fall of David into gross sin was not altogether sudden. There had been missteps leading up to it; and the process being gradual and each wrong thing searing the conscience more and more, the climax was reached almost imperceptibly, so that two, even of the basest crimes, were at length committed, apparently without any compunctions of conscience; and the sin was concealed, unrepented of, although it was yielding its bitter fruit of restless remorse (Psa. 32:3-4), until Nathan the prophet was sent to awaken and arouse the man to a deep sense of his guilt and of the necessity of immediate repentance, confession and reformation. David had become so intoxicated with the spirit, which generally attends power, popularity and great success that he evidently did not recognize his gradual moral decline. As a king, his word was supreme among the people; all Israel waited to do his bidding; the greatest men in the nation were at his service; success had everywhere attended his energies on the field of battle; his kingdom was extended and very prosperous; but in the midst of all this success and exaltation lurked temptations subtle and dangerous which should have been guarded against with scrupulous care, and perseveringly resisted.

It would be a great mistake to presume that the blindness and spiritual stupor that result from intoxication with the spirit of the world constitute a proper excuse for the sins committed while in that state. God did not so judge in the case of David. The beginning of any sin is the first yielding to its intoxicating influence; and therefore we are faithfully warned to abstain from the very appearance of evil. (I Thes. 5:22.) David's sin, like that of all other sinners, began in giving heed to the first suggestions of evil, and having done this the subsequent steps were easily taken. R. 2016

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

– Matthew 5:17 –

King David, we are to remember, did not belong to the spiritual house of sons, and hence had a far less clear view of such matters than that which would properly belong to every member of the house of sons, begotten of the spirit and "taught of God." ...We of the spiritual house, under the clearer conceptions of the divine will, are to remember the higher interpretation of adultery and murder set forth in the New Testament: that whoever desires adultery, and is merely restrained from it by outward circumstances or fears, is really an adulterer in his heart (Matt. 5:28); that he that is angry with his brother, he who hates his brother, is a murderer—because the spirit of anger is that which, unrestrained, would lead to murder (Matt. 5:22); and that the person who covets the things of another and is merely restrained from taking them for lack of opportunity or fear of consequence, is at heart a thief. If these principles be applied by the New Creation in the examination of their hearts, it is entirely probable that some of the "house of sons" today may find themselves very near the plane of King David as respects sin, and so viewing matters they will exercise proportionately greater compassion in their judgment of the royal transgressor. Such, too, will find great consolation in the Lord's compassion, provided they are exercised in respect to their offences as David was concerning his. "There is compassion with thee that thou mightest be feared," is the prophet's expression. If God were wanting in compassion, as are many of our fellow creatures, there would be nothing to hope for under such circumstances. It is when we realize that there is forgiveness with the Lord for all who are penitent at heart, and who, therefore, give evidence that their sins are not willful, but rather of the weakness of heredity and under the pressure of blinding temptations, that we are moved to repentance by a hope for better things. R. 3253

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me.

– Psalm 19:12-13 –

All Christians of experience in the good way and in the battle against sin and self have learned that there can be no outward or presumptuous sins that have not first had their beginning in secret faults of the mind. The sinful thought may be one of pride suggesting self-exaltation; it may be one of avarice suggesting unlawful acquisition of wealth; or it may be some other fleshly desire: the mere suggestion of the thought before our minds is not sin; it is merely the operation of our faculties, and of the influences which surround us, inquiring of our wills whether or not we will consent to such thoughts.... but if the thought be entertained it is a secret fault, and the growing tendency would surely be toward the more outward and presumptuous sinful conduct, the tendency of which is always from bad to worse.

[The spirit of the world] is blind to the highest interests and noblest ends of life; it intoxicates the mind and heart and sends the man staggering along the downward way to destruction, wise only in his own conceit. Against the intoxicating spirit of this world it is the duty of the Christian to set a vigilant guard. He has covenanted to live apart from the world with all its ambitions, pride and vainglory, and apart, too, from its selfishness, greed and strife. Let us, therefore, be sober and watch unto prayer; and let the burden of our prayer be, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults [show them to me that I may put them far from me]. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me." "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." —Psa.19:12-14; 139:23,24. We need to know and clearly recognize our errors, if we would indeed be cleansed from every secret fault. R. 2248 and R. 2094

The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

– Psalm 145:18 –

The important lesson is that we shall keep close accounts with God. No child of God should go forth in the morning without an earnest petition to Him for Divine supervision of his affairs and for help to walk in the right path. No child of God should retire at night without a retrospective glance on all the day's pathway, to discern to what extent it has been a profitable one and has brought him a day's march nearer the Heavenly Home. Or, if perchance something has occurred of which he should feel ashamed, it is none too soon to go at once to the Throne of Heavenly Grace to obtain mercy and find fresh help for future times of need. R. 5681

When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

– Psalm 32:3-4 –

[These verses] briefly rehearse the King's unhappy experiences during nearly a year. The King's transgression began in his mind, as do all sins. It is on this account that the Scriptures urge the Lord's people to "Keep their hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life." The King coveted his neighbor's wife, and in the language of our God, "He committed adultery with her in his heart." The first step of sin having been taken the King's conscience was hushed to sleep in some unaccountable manner, while the strength of his vigorous mind was turned aside to the gratification of unholy desires. These accomplished, his case seemed to him hopeless except in one direction. Regret and remorse, already begun in his mind, brought terrors as he realized that under the Jewish Law both parties were to be stoned to death at the instance of the wronged person. Hence his command to his chief general, Joab, that Uriah, the wronged husband, be placed in the front of the battle and then be deserted by the remainder of the corps, that he might be slain by his enemies. Joab understood the situation. Indeed, the whole matter probably leaked out, and poor David was in serious trouble every way. Not only had Uriah been one of his prominent, valued men, but the grandfather of Bathsheba, Ahithophel, was King David's chief counsellor in State. That the incident did lead to an estrangement between this man and his sovereign is quite evident; later on in Absalom's rebellion he joined his cause as against the king. Apparently, too, these various burdens upon David's mind and heart brought upon the king a spell of sickness.

Sin is always a disturbing element under all conditions, and more particularly as the sinner has light and responsibility and therefore condemnation of conscience. Indeed, we may well suppose, as the Psalmist intimated, that the chiefest of his troubles consisted in his separation from the Lord; his realization that the Lord's favor was justly turned from him, and that in a certain sense he was forsaken of the Lord as an intelligent transgressor of his Law. It may, indeed, be generally recognized as a principle of the divine government that anything which separates the Lord and his people brings upon them the deepest melancholy, and incidentally is sure to affect their health. On the contrary, we may well realize it as a fixed principle that "the peace of God" is sure to be favorable to physical health and happiness. Thus continually we find amongst the Lord's people that as they grow strong in the Lord there is very apt to be a measure of physical rejuvenation also. R. 4271

[Psalm 32:3-4] tell us something of the King's experiences under the rod of chastisement, which the pride of the Lord's favor calls elsewhere, "The light of thy countenance." At first the King kept silence. He was ashamed of himself and knew of nothing he could say to the Lord in extenuation of his conduct. But the burden grew heavier and heavier for both mind and body. He seemed to age rapidly that year. His "bones waxed old"; he became enfeebled prematurely. Day and night the Lord's chastening hand was heavy upon him, so that all the freshness, vigor and joy were consumed as by a drouth. What a poetic picture of a child of God under the ban of divine displeasure—mourning after a manner that the world could not understand! The result, however, was joyous, because when the Lord restored to David the light of his face, and again, when David's cup ran over with divine favor and blessing, he was able more than ever to appreciate the value of the Lord's smile. R. 4272

Nathan's Parable Told to David

2 Samuel 12:1-7

*Then the LORD sent Nathan to David.
And he came to him, and said to him:*

“There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished, and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.” So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.” Then Nathan said to David,

“You are the man!”



**Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man!”
– 2 Samuel 12:7 –**

It was at the appropriate time, after David had passed through secret mournings and travailings of the soul, that the Lord sent him a reproof through Nathan the prophet to bring the whole matter clearly before his mind. Nathan, under the figure of a parable, excited the king's sympathies and declaration of a very severe judgment—a death sentence—against the person offending, and then the Prophet brought home to him the lesson saying, “Thou art the man!”

[David] allowed his better nature to reassert itself; and [he] said unto Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said unto David, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die”—although in the judgment of the parable, David had unconsciously condemned himself to death. How gracious is God, how ready to pardon when true repentance is manifest!

David in his contrition meekly accepted both the reproof and the penalties pronounced against him; and realizing that his sin was very grievous, and that his example before the nation was very detrimental to the moral and religious interests of the people, he resolved, and carried out his resolve, to make the example of his deep contrition and repentance as far reaching in its effects for good, as his sin had been for evil.

This was a noble resolution, and in nothing does the nobility of the man shine out more clearly than in his humble and public confession of his sin, his efforts to undo, as far as possible, the wrong he had done, and his meek submission to the penalties which God in his wisdom and mercy saw fit to inflict upon him, that thus his wrath against sin might be manifest to all, and that king and people might so be warned against it. “Better is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.” (Pro. 16:32.) So in overcoming the pride and selfishness that had taken deep root in his heart, David proved himself a greater hero than even in his youthful conflict with the giant of Gath, or in any subsequent encounter.

R. 3253 and R. 2016



**So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.”
2 Samuel 12:13**

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin. You shall not die. However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die." Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill. David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. So the elders of his house arose and went to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!" When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes, and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped.

2 Samuel 12:13-20

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

– Psalm 51:6 –

The 51st Psalm is generally recognized as being the one in which the Psalmist expresses to God his contrition for his sins, and the fact that it is dedicated to the Chief Musician implies that it was the king's intention that it, in common with other of the Psalms, should be chanted in the Tabernacle services, for which he had set apart a large number of singers. We thus perceive that if the sin was flagrant and gross, the atonement which the king endeavored to make was a most public one. Probably many of the nation had felt more or less of the king's condemnation, and its influence must have been very injurious; and now in his public view of it as sin, and his prayer for divine forgiveness, the king would undo so far as possible not only the injury which he had inflicted upon his own conscience, and which as a cloud hung between the Lord and him, but he would undo also the evil influences as respects the conscience of the nation—on the subjects of adultery and murder.

It will be noted that David expected punishment from the Lord for his sins, and was here expressing his confidence that the Lord would send no punishment which would not be reasonable and within the limits of justice. What he was praying for in this Psalm was not a remission of proper punishment, but rather for the cleansing of his heart in the sight of the Lord and for his restoration to the divine favor. As a matter of fact we find that the Lord did send a severe punishment upon the king, and that he restored the sinner to his favor, granting him to experience again the joys of his salvation. According to the sentiments of other kings of his time, evidently acquiesced in by the people of Israel, the king had taken an extremely moderate course in sin, in that he had not directly taken the life of Uriah but merely connived at his death in battle; but the king appreciated the fact that God was looking deeper than this and desired truth—righteousness in the inward parts—in the heart.

R. 3253

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness. According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Psalm 51:1-3

Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

– Psalm 51:9-10 –

Here again we see why David was described as a man after God's own heart. His sins were not pleasing to God—quite the reverse; but the after appreciation of the enormity of the sins and the hearty repentance therefore to the Lord, and the desire to be cleansed from every evil way, were pleasing to the Lord. Here we have an illustration of how all things may work together for good to those who love God. By reason of his heart-loyalty to the Lord, and the principles of righteousness, even these terrible sins resulted in bringing a great blessing to David's own heart—humbling him—giving him an appreciation of his weakness and littleness, and of his need to abide close to the Lord, if he would have the Lord's fellowship and compassion and be safe from the temptations of his own fallen flesh. So, too, with the New Creation. How many of them have realized profitable lessons and blessings out of some of their stumblings—not that the stumblings were good, nor of the Lord, but that the Lord was able to overrule such circumstances for good to those who are of the proper mind—rightly exercised by them to repentance and reformation. R. 3248

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart ---These, O God, You will not despise.

– Psalm 51:17 –

King David expressed his realization that the Lord is pleased rather with a broken and contrite condition of heart than with burnt offerings, which were but types. So, too, we learn that nothing that we can give the Lord, even after our acceptance in Christ, has any value in his sight until first of all we have given him ourselves, —our hearts, our wills.

Let us ever keep in memory that a broken and contrite heart the Lord never despises, will never spurn. Therefore into whatever difficulty any of the Lord's people of the New Creation may stumble, if they find themselves hungering for the Lord's fellowship and forgiveness, if they find their hearts contrite and broken, let them not despair, but remember that God has made a provision through the merit of Christ, which enables him to accept and justify freely from all sin, all that come unto him through Jesus—through faith in his blood. R. 3254

If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

– 1 John 2:1 –

Our Advocate is more than an advocate, more than a representative at the bar of divine justice, interested in our welfare and forgiveness; he is in addition the one who gave himself for us, who at Calvary finished the work of making a propitiation (**satisfaction**) for our sins. This is the reason why we may come “with boldness to the throne of grace,” not only realizing that God is for us, and that our Lord Jesus sympathizes with and is our Advocate, but also and specially realizing the merit of the sacrifice which he has already paid to Justice, and which he has made fully applicable on behalf of all who love and obey him, on application. Those whom the Lord instructs, and who will receive his instruction may be brought off conquerors through him who loved us and bought us with his precious blood—may shout for joy as they realize the abundance of the divine provision “for the propitiation of our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”—1 John 2:2. R. 2236

There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

– Psalm 130:4 –

In considering the story of David and other Bible heroes we are impressed with the candor of the narratives—that the evil things of their conduct are told with the same frankness as their good deeds. This is one of the peculiarities of the Bible and one of the internal evidences of its truthfulness. How easy it would have been to have glossed the history of David so as to have avoided everything that would be to his discredit; and how surely this would have been done, especially in the case of a king, had the preparation of the Bible not been under divine supervision. As some of the Lord's people have realized their own weaknesses in the flesh, having at times come short of their ideals in the battle against sin, they have found encouragement in the experiences of others related in the Scriptures—not to delve further into sin but to realize that “there is forgiveness with the Lord that he might be feared.” As such have noted the failures of David on various occasions and his repentance, contrition and restoration to the Lord's favor, it has given them courage to similarly repent and to similarly trust in God's mercy and in their own forgiveness, and similarly to be encouraged to arise from their dejection and sin and start afresh in the battle for righteousness, truth, purity. R. 3238

The Bible holds up before us the naked facts of its heroes as no other religious book does, and in this particular it commends itself as truthful testimony of the Lord. It tells not only of Samson's strength, but also of his weaknesses. It tells of Rahab's favor and of her previous immorality. It tells of Peter's denying the Lord with cursings, as well as his noble traits and faithfulness to death. It tells us that amongst the early Church was a Judas as well as an Ananias and Sapphira. It tells of Adam's disobedience and condemnation to death, as well as of Christ's obedience and his voluntary sacrifice for the redemption of Adam and incidentally his race. So, then, the mention of David and his experiences in sin, sharply contrasted with the majority of his experiences as a faithful servant of God, is not our keeping, but the Scriptural usage, though it is out of accord with the custom of men and of other religious writings. Instead of upsetting our trust in the Lord and his Word, these facts only strengthen our faith and give us assurance of the truthfulness of the narrative and the good intentions of their writer, and of the wisdom and power of God in respect to the use of all these weak servants in connection with the ministry of the Truth. R. 4270

**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
– Psalm 32:1 –**

In Psalm 51:1-19 David makes public confession of his sin and of God's mercy in forgiveness. In Psalm 32:1-11 he gratefully records the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile—no deceit, no hypocrisy, but all of whose doings are open and transparent, and manifestly wrought in righteousness. Here he declares, "I acknowledge my sin," and he testifies to the Lord's forgiveness (vs. 5); and for this divine forgiveness he exhorts all sinners to pray to God in a time when he may be found (vs. 6); i.e., before their hearts become calloused and set in an evil course.

Then, even in the midst of the troubles consequent upon his sin, which he meekly and patiently bore, David learned by faith to rejoice in the Lord, saying, "Thou art my hiding place: thou wilt preserve me from trouble, thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance;" for he will not suffer any tribulation to overwhelm his trusting saints upon whom he has set the seal of his pardoning love. R. 2016

I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

– Psalm 32:5 –

The King's prayers were heard—God was gracious to him, his transgression was forgiven, his sin was covered, his iniquity was no longer imputed to him, because his heart was repentant—in it there was no guile. His repentance was sincere, full, thorough. The Psalmist exultingly sings of his own restoration to divine favor, and, doubtless under divine guidance, represented his as being a sample or illustration of what God is willing to do for all who similarly have sincere sorrow for sin, true repentance, who confess their faults and make fresh acknowledgment of their faith. It is safe to say that in thousands of God's people, not only in David's own nation but in every nation, kindred, people and tongue familiar with God's Word, the King's experiences and the lessons of this Psalm, showing his reconciliation with God and the exercise of divine favor toward him, have inspired faith and brought peace and rest to those cast down through weaknesses of the flesh—some of them as grievous or more so, if possible, than David's, and some of them for sins less great in the sight of men but realized as being great in the sight of God—sufficient to separate the sinner and his Lord. R. 3260

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● The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. ●
● He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. ●
● He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us ●
● according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, ●
● so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. The mercy of the LORD ●
● is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him. ●
● Psalm 103:8-11,17 ●
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Psalm 32

1 A Psalm of David. A Contemplation. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah

5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found. Surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him.

7 You are my hiding place. You shall preserve me from trouble. You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide you with My eye.

9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked. But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.

11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

**Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word.
– Psalm 119:67 –**

We should beware how at any time we lose sight of the Lord's power on our behalf, no matter how threatening or great or dark the evil which assails us. A proper faith will look up to God, under such circumstances, and relying upon his promises will seek his aid, rather than seek to purchase deliverance from the great adversary, Satan, by any compromises.

As a faithful father will give needed chastisements and corrections to his son, so the Lord deals with those who have been adopted into his family. But with the world in general matters are different; God's special dealings and special corrections are the manifestations of his special care for those whom he is now selecting from amongst mankind for a great future work, for which they need to be prepared, and for which unlimited faith and trust in the Almighty are absolutely essential. As David expressed it, "Before I was afflicted I went astray:" in other words, it was because he went astray, and because he was a consecrated servant of God, therefore, instead of permitting him to go far astray he was corrected in order to bring him back. So with all who have entered into the New Covenant, and accepted the call to joint-heirship with Christ; they are not permitted to go astray and make compromises whose tendency would be to lead them further and further astray from faith and trust in the Lord. Therefore they are chastened, and happy it is for all of Spiritual Israel who permit the divine chastisements to develop more and more of faith and obedience. R. 2381

**I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart.
– Psalm 40:8 –**

This delight in the Lord is a still more advanced step in the Christian life. It is a blessed thing to learn to trust in the Lord; but it is when continued trust and responsive providences have ripened into personal acquaintance and fellowship with God that we learn to delight in him. Yes, it is when heart answers to heart, when pleading prayer brings recognized answers of peace, when the divine care and love are specially seen in the guidance of our way: in a word, when we come to feel that the Father and the Son have so clearly manifested themselves to us that we can recognize their abiding presence with us. Ah! then it is that we begin to delight ourselves in the Lord. Then, however dark may be the way, or however heavy may be the storm that rages about us, the balm of divine consolation is always there, so that the child of God, though often troubled on every side, is not distressed; though perplexed, he is never in despair; though cast down, he is not destroyed; and though persecuted, he is never forsaken.

To delight thus in the Lord is to have the affections centered in him; it is to have the heart in such sympathy with righteousness and truth as to see in God the fountain of all goodness and truth, the one altogether lovely. The Psalmist expresses such an attitude of heart when, personifying our Lord Jesus, he said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." R. 1840

Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”

– John 10:7,11 –

Jehovah is my Shepherd, is the Prophet's sentiment, and our Lord's explanation of the matter further is that the great Shepherd's Son has been given full charge of the sheep. (John 10:1-16.) Not all mankind, however, are sheep, or have the Shepherd's care. In the present time only those who have heard the Shepherd's voice and responded to his call to become his sheep are of his flock, and his word on the subject is that it is a little flock, to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure eventually to give the kingdom in joint-heirship with his Son, their “Chief Shepherd.” Then will come the time referred to by our Lord when “other sheep” will be found. The entire Millennial age, with all the forces and blessings of the heavenly kingdom, will be devoted to the finding of the other sheep. Our Lord's words are,— “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold [not of the little flock of this Gospel age]; them also I must bring [in due time to a knowledge of the Truth and to the full privileges of sheep], and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” (John 10:16.) Eventually all of God's creatures on various planes of being shall be recognized as one family of God, as it is written of our Lord, “In whom the whole family of God both in heaven and in earth are named.” (Eph. 3:15.) And again, “He shall gather together in one all things in Christ both in heaven and on earth.” (Eph. 1:10.) However, though it may be interesting and helpful and profitable to understand something of our great Shepherd's generous plans for the future, our interest centers chiefly in the little flock of the present time, to which alone this lesson refers in many of its particulars. R. 3268

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

– Psalm 100:3 –

The LORD, in calling his people his sheep, chose a very significant emblem of the character he would have manifested in them. The most noticeable characteristics of the sheep are meekness, docility and obedience to the shepherd to whose care they fully entrust themselves. They are very true to the shepherd: they study his voice, watch for the indications of his will, and trustfully obey him. When they hear his voice, quickly, and without the slightest hesitation or faltering, they run to obey it. But the voice of a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.

What a lesson is here for the Lord's “little flock,” over whom he is the good Shepherd. The true sheep will carefully listen for the faintest accents of the voice of the Shepherd—i.e., he will treasure up his words in his heart; he will study his providences; and he will cultivate that communion and personal fellowship with the Lord which are his privilege. Those who thus abide in him can never go astray. “They can never, never lose their way.” R. 3116



Psalm 23

Of all the beautiful symbolic pictures which the Lord gave us through the Prophet David, none seems more forceful than that of [this] Psalm. The eastern shepherd and his love and care for his sheep are given us as an illustration of our heavenly Father's care over us. It is true that our dear Redeemer was sent forth as the Good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and by his death opened the door into the sheepfold of divine love and favor and rest and peace. This was a favorite picture that our Lord Jesus gave us of himself:



“I know my sheep, and am known of mine”; “My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me”; “A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of a stranger.”

Applying the psalm to the little flock, all of its provisions fit most minutely. Because the Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want. Those who are proper sheep will submit their wills to the shepherd's will and trust wholly to his guidance, and so doing are relieved of that anxious craving so common to the children of the world and which is never satisfied, but the more it gets the more it wants. The Lord's sheep appreciate the heavenly things more than the earthly, and their wants in this respect are more than supplied when they accept by faith the divine assurance that “No good thing will He withhold from sheep which stray not from His fold.” They have given up every earthly interest in exchange for the heavenly, and, realizing their own insufficiency and lack of judgment, they are trusting to the Lord to grant them such experiences, leadings, trials, difficulties, blessings, etc., in this present life as will be for their highest good, and as would work out for them a share of the glorious things of the future to which they have been called.

In the precious and true sentiments of this Psalm, David doubtless took great consolation in the midst of his temptations and trials, and of the realization of his own infirmities and shortcomings. As he looked back to his early shepherd life and remembered his own care for the dependent sheep of his flock, the thought of the Lord's similar care over his people came to mind. And, doubtless, with this realization of the Lord's goodness and care, came also a renewed determination on David's part to be henceforth a true sheep, that he might always remain under the shepherd's care. While such was the significance of these words to David, to us the Church, under the care of the Anointed Jesus, our Good Shepherd, they mean more; for, as the Lord's inspired prophet, David puts these words into the mouth of all of the Lord's “little flock” of consecrated followers who obediently hearken to his voice and who in meek humility take comfort both in his chastening rod and in his blessed staff of promise and hope. R. 1396, R. 3268, R. 4278



It is safe to say that no other collection of poems has accomplished as much good as the Book of Psalms. Its sentiments seem to touch the soul at every turn—in joy, in sorrow. Referring to the ‘Twenty-third Psalm’, Beecher wrote, “It is the nightingale among the Psalms. It is small, of a homely feather, singing shyly out of obscurity; but it has filled the air of the whole world with melodious joy;” and Spurgeon said,

“This is the Pearl of Psalms, whose soft and pure radiance delights every eye.” R. 5653

Psalm 23

1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd. I shall not want.

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.

3 He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. – Psalm 23:1 –

David, the Psalmist, wrote prophetically, “Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psa. 23:1-6); for in David’s day the arrangements for the Shepherd and the flock of this lesson had not been completed. True, the heavenly Father had purposed his entire plan as respects humanity’s redemption and return to his care as his flock, but he had not yet sent his only begotten Son, the Good Shepherd, to give his life for the sheep, to call the flock, to open the door and to lead them out and into pasturage and to rest. Nevertheless, in the Lord’s providence the nation of Israel had already been gathered, as those who would be prepared to be the flock of the Good Shepherd when he should come. These were “shut up under the Law” (Gal. 3:23), waiting for the coming of the Good Shepherd to open the door and to call them by name as his own sheep.

**I am the good shepherd, and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.
John 10:14**

It is only when the individual can say in his heart, The Lord is *my* Shepherd that this blessed ministry of the good Shepherd can be realized. It is when we become his sheep that we learn the value of the Shepherd’s care; and the man who has had experience under the care of the good Shepherd can truly say with the Psalmist, “I shall not want.” He shall not want for the temporal necessities of the present life— “Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” (Isa. 33:16; Matt. 6:33-34.) He shall not want for light and be left to walk in the darkness of this world, but unto him shall be given the light of life. (John 8:12.) He shall not want the necessary care and discipline to fit him for the future life; “for



whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” (Heb. 12:6.) He shall not lack the consolations of divine grace in times of trial and affliction; for it is written, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor. 12:9.) He shall not want for fellowship and sympathy; for the Lord himself hath said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5); and again, “Lo, I am with you alway.” —Matt. 28:20.

Surely no **good** thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly—as true sheep. He will protect them in every danger, and guard them with a shepherd’s care. R. 2672 and R. 1745

He makes me to lie down in green pastures. – Psalm 23:2a –

The Psalm assures us that, as the Lord's sheep, we shall be provided with green pastures and the cool, refreshing waters of Truth. Moreover, while thus being spiritually fed and refreshed, we shall have the peace of God, as is implied in the suggestion that the sheep will lie down in the green pastures. Although the experiences of the Lord's sheep include many trials in the parched wilderness of sin, yet he graciously gives them restful experiences in oases of divine favor. These are not always accompanied with immunities from trial, as the world would view the matter, but certainly are seasons of rest and refreshment—to such an extent that the Lord's sheep may truthfully say that they have “the peace of God which passeth all understanding” ruling in their hearts, notwithstanding outward trials, difficulties, perplexities and adversities.

More and more as “New Creatures” we are learning to appreciate the barrenness of worldly hopes and ambitions and knowledge. And more and more we should be giving heed to the leadings of the “Good Shepherd,” who is guiding his flock of “New Creatures” for their spiritual refreshment through the labyrinth of the “present evil world.” Those sheep, which keep nearest to the Shepherd, secure the fattest and richest experiences and refreshments. On the contrary, the sheep which stray looking for pastures green on their own account, or following the voice of false shepherds, are the ones that are likely to become hungry and eat of the poisonous growths and fall into the pitfalls of sin and be devoured by the ravenous beasts of passion and worldliness. Happy is the sheep who learns to know the voice of the true Shepherd, and whose faith is such that he follows closely and not afar off!

To lie down is to be at rest, to be happy. This is the privilege of all the Lord's true sheep. Outwardly they may be distressed and “on the run,” assailed by the world, the flesh and the Adversary, but as “New Creatures” they may be at rest, at peace, because of their nearness to the Lord, the Shepherd, and because of their faith in his overruling providence, which is able to make “all things work together for good.” “Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend (stumble) them.” These let the “peace of God rule in their hearts...and are thankful.” It is to these that our Lord's words apply, “My peace I give unto you....Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

R. 5653, R. 3268 and R. 4278

He leads me beside the still waters. – Psalm 23:2b –

The “still waters” are contrasted with the rushing torrent of the mountain slope—still, not in the sense of stagnancy, but rather smooth flowing. At the latter only could the sheep receive proper refreshment. So applying the thought to the little flock, we find that the great Shepherd leads us away from the strifes of worldly ambition, from greatness and power and riches and honors highly esteemed amongst men, but does not lead us to stagnancy—rather to spiritual ambitions which bring with them a restfulness and refreshment of soul obtainable from no other source. The streams of truth and grace are living, but comparatively quiet, waters. As the Prophet intimates, these are not to be found by the sheep alone; to find them requires the leading of the Spirit. Let us give diligence to his voice, remembering his Word—that his sheep hear his voice and follow him. Let us discriminate, discern his voice, with its truthful accent, so different from the voice of error. Strangers true sheep will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers. R. 3268

He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

– Psalm 23:3 –

The prophet does not refer to a restoration of body or of physical health, but a restoration of soul, being. Some of the Lord's most precious saints have been weary and faint and troubled—even the dear Redeemer fainted under his cross, and was neither kept whole or made whole miraculously on the occasion. The application of the Prophet's words to the Christian experience would make these experiences, called restoring of soul or being, to correspond with our justification to life. All our lives were forfeited under the divine sentence, and by faith a complete restitution or restoration of soul is granted to the believer, that he might have something to offer in sacrifice to the Lord, "holy, acceptable" (Rom. 12:1), and that in this sacrifice service he may walk in the footsteps of the great Shepherd who lay down his life for the sheep. Thus are the true sheep led in right paths, in proper paths, advantageous to their spiritual development, though frequently trying and difficult to them according to the flesh. This favor and blessing and opportunity comes to them not for their own sakes or worthiness but through the Lord's grace—"for his name's sake." R. 3268

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me.

– Psalm 23:4a –

The whole world is walking in the valley of the shadow of death. Mountain tops of life, of affection, were left by the race six thousand years ago, when Father Adam fell from his harmony with God to the plane of sin and death. The valley of sin carries with it the shadow of death, the penalty of sin. In the broad road the whole human family still walks; and even though the Shepherd leads his flock upward, and in the reverse direction from the course of the world, nevertheless, according to the flesh, they are still in the world, in this valley of the shadow of death. However, the true sheep, hearing the voice of the good Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, have learned to be neither careless and indifferent as are some, nor to be in fear and doubt and perplexity as are the majority. These on the contrary fear no evil. They realize indeed that the penalty of sin is upon the race, but they realize also that divine love has provided a redemption.

The sheep of the little flock fear no evil because of the Lord's favor, because he is with them, on their side, and has shown his favor in the redemption price already paid. He is with them, too, in his word of promise—his assurance that death shall not mean extinction of life, but merely, until the resurrection, an undisturbed sleep in Jesus. What wonder that these can walk through the valley of the shadow of death singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord, calling upon their souls with all that is within them to praise and laud and magnify his great and holy name, who loved us and bought us with his precious blood, and has called us to joint-heirship with our dear Redeemer.

The end of this Valley of Shadow is near, not merely in the sense that we shall soon reach the end of life's journey, but especially in the sense that the New Day is about to dawn, of which the Lord, our Shepherd, declared the result: "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His beams" (Mal. 4:2.) The final result will be that there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying; but the whole world will begin to emerge from the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

R. 3268 and R. 5653

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. – Psalm 23:4b –

As the Shepherd's crook was used to assist the sheep out of difficulties, to defend it from its too powerful enemies and to chasten it when inattentive, and as all of these uses of the rod were for the sheep's interest and welfare, so with the Lord's little flock and their Shepherd and his rod of help, defense and chastisement. The true sheep learn to love the providences of the Shepherd and are comforted by them. Knowing the Shepherd's power and his watchful care, they realize that all things are working together for good to them because they are his sheep. Why should they not be comforted, strengthened, encouraged?

The shepherd's rod or club was of hard wood, sometimes open and preferably of the shape of a golf stick, except that it was shorter and much heavier. With it the shepherd was prepared to defend the flock, combating every foe. The staff was lighter and more like a cane and longer, with a crook at the end. With its point the shepherd at times prodded the sheep that were careless, and with the hook he sometimes helped out one that had stumbled into the ditch, by putting the crook under its forelegs. Our Shepherd, too, has a rod for our enemies and a staff for his sheep—the one for our protection, the other for our relief and assistance and correction.

But alas! Not all of the sheep have full confidence in the Shepherd and are fully resigned to have no will but His. Some are continually getting into difficulty. Yet even such straying sheep the Shepherd will not leave, if they have become truly His. He goes after them, as the Psalm represents. His rod and His staff are their comfort. With the rod he beats off their enemies, the wolves that would injure; and with the crook of His staff He wisely and carefully assists the entangled sheep out of its difficulties—out from amongst the cares of this life, the entanglements and deceitfulness of riches, and the besetments of sin and of Satan. Many of the sheep of the Lord's flock thus can sing, "He restoreth my soul" —He brings me back to Himself; He makes me again to know, to appreciate, to enjoy His provision for me and to see how much better it is than anything I could have provided for myself.



How glad we are to know that all power is committed unto him in heaven and in earth and that under his protecting care nothing shall by any means harm us! What a comfort is here! No wonder that under such circumstances the sheep may enjoy "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," resting themselves, comforting themselves in the assurance that all things shall be overruled for their eternal welfare! R. 3268, R. 4278, R. 5653

**I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.
Neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.
John 10:28**

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

– Psalm 23:5a –

The Psalm diverges here and leaves the figure of the sheep and the Shepherd, adopting instead the illustration of a mighty lord who spreads a sumptuous feast for his humbler friend. In olden times an active hospitality meant much, and for a nobleman to receive one as his guest meant responsibility for his safety; and so the thought is that we, as the Lord's people, are accepted of him, counted as friends, are made to sit down to a bountiful feast, secure from the enmity of those who would injure us—secure from the great Adversary and all the wicked spirits in high places mentioned by the Apostle (Eph. 6:12)—secure so long as we are under the care of our great friend, our heavenly Father. The bounties of our table may indeed include some earthly good things, better or worse than those of the natural average man; but all of these, whatever they may be, accepted with joy and thanksgiving, are appreciated by those who recognize them as part and parcel of the bounties of the Friend above all others.

*This table is open to all those who love the Lord with all their heart,
mind, soul and strength—better than they love houses or lands,
parents or children, husband or wife, lodge or society or sectarian system or self.*

Is it strange that those so highly favored of the Lord and recognized as his guests and fed at his table should be hated by enemies? It would seem strange to us if it were not for the assurance of the Master himself, that whosoever will live godly will suffer persecution in this present time, and for the illustration of this in the Master's own experience, that it was the professedly godly, influential, great and nominally religious that persecuted him to death. We are not surprised, then, to find that our table is spread in the midst of enemies that now surround us on every hand. R. 3268

You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over.

– Psalm 23:5b –

The anointing of the head of the guest with oil was a part of the hospitality of olden times. The antitype of this with us is the outpouring of the holy Spirit upon all this class—this little flock, the body of Christ, of which he is the Head, Chief, the Shepherd, the Leader. Jesus, the Head of the Church, was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. That holy anointing oil used on the priests and kings of Israel typified the Holy Spirit, which came upon the Church representatively in Jesus. And this same anointing oil has come down over all the members of the Church, which is the Body of Christ, as we read in Psa. 133:2. Let us appreciate this anointing and abide under it, allowing it more and more to be what the Apostle terms an unction from the Holy One, affecting our every talent and power and bringing them all into subjection to the divine law of love.

The fullness of the cup, running over, has a double signification. It is a cup of joy and a cup of sorrow, and in both respects it overflows. He who would partake of the joys of the Lord must also partake of his cup of suffering; we must suffer with him if we would reign with him. It is sweet and precious, in many senses of the word to be privileged to participate in the sufferings of Christ, in any sacrifices or services for the Lord and His Cause. The sweet mingles freely with the bitter. But the Lord promises that in the future the Cup of new wine in the Kingdom shall more than compensate for any bitterness of the present time. Our Cup is full, but we would not wish it one drop less. [We] count the sufferings of this present time as not worthy to be compared with the glories that shall be revealed in us, and hence we are enabled to rejoice in tribulation, so that as the tribulations will overflow the rejoicing likewise overflows, and with the Apostle we can say, Rejoice, and again I say rejoice! R. 565, R. 3268 and R. 4278

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

– Psalm 23:6 –

The goodness and mercy which we anticipate beyond the veil has its beginning here already and is thus to be appreciated. Whoever knows nothing of the joys of the Lord in the present time will evidently not be prepared for the joys of the Lord in the Kingdom, whatever blessings and joys he may attain to under the administration of the Kingdom during the Millennial age. There is then joy and rejoicing granted to the Lord's faithful ones, not a momentary matter connected with their first acceptance of the Lord and their consecration of themselves to him. The goodness and mercy of the Lord is not to be looked back to as a thing of the remote past, but is to be recognized and appreciated as a thing of the present. How precious the thought—God's goodness, God's mercy, with all those who are truly His in Christ—following us day by day, moment by moment. Day by day God's goodness and mercy follow us, refresh us, strengthen us, bless us.

The conclusion of the whole matter—the end of the journey, is what? To occupy a place in the heavenly mansions in our Father's house! What a glorious consummation to the grandest of all hopes! Why should we murmur or complain at the roughness of the journey which will bring us to such a glorious goal?

Let us say with the Psalmist:

“What shall I render unto the Lord my God for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Most High!” R. 3268, R. 5653 and R. 4278

In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:2

O Absalom

Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Watch now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon!' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant."

2 Samuel 13:28

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

– Romans 12:19 –

It will be remembered that David's eldest son was Amnon, and that he had defiled his half-sister Tamar, the full sister of Absalom. King David, sorely vexed at the matter, appears to have been at a loss as to what manner of punishment he should properly meet out for the offense, so that two years passed without any being inflicted. Then Absalom took upon himself to be his sister's avenger. He made a feast, to which were invited all the King's children by his several wives. In the height of the feast, in disregard of the rules of etiquette and the claims of natural affection, Absalom slew his brother and then fled, from fear of justice, which, under their code, centered in his father, the King. What lesson is there in this experience for us? What should we copy? What avoid? In Spiritual Israel we are all princes, sons of the Great King, who is also the Judge. The lesson to us would properly be that the authority and responsibility for meeting out justice is not in our ambitions, but with the Father.

As the Scriptures declare, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." We are not to wait what seems to us a proper length of time, and then, if we see no divine punishment for what we consider to be no longer tolerable, to take the matter in our own hands—to murder one another. Nay, the command of our Great Teacher is, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." The lesson for us to learn is expressed in the Master's words, See to the beam in thine own eye, rather than put thyself to too much inconvenience examining the mote that is in thy brother's eye. To his own Master he standeth or falleth.

The parallel would not imply that literal murder would here be accomplished amongst the Lord's children. No, thank God! The world is too far advanced in civilization to make such a course practicable; but where the Absalom spirit is—the spirit of hatred, anger, envy, bitterness—strife is also. There is a modern method of assassination by the use of slanderous words, by insinuations, by the shrugging of the shoulders, etc. And this modern kind of murder is oftenest committed in the presence of the members of the royal family, the heavenly brotherhood. How terrible! do we say? Let us take heed that such blood-guiltiness, such "works of the flesh and the devil," be not upon us, else we shall never inherit the Kingdom. R. 4275

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:34

God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

– 2 Timothy 1:17 –

Absalom remained for three years at the court of his grandfather, Talmai, king of Geshun in Syria. By the murder of his elder brother he had put himself next to the throne of Israel, heir-apparent, and this, possibly, was considerably his inspiring motive in the crime, although he affected that the crime was committed in defense of justice and principle. Alas! how treacherous is the human heart! How frequently do we find double motives operating therein! We see the advantage of those who, as children of God, follow implicitly the Father's Word and leave all the results to him. They thus show their faith in God's power, as well as in God's justice, and thus, as the Apostle intimates, they show that they have become partakers of a holy spirit of wisdom— "wisdom from above; first pure, then peaceable, easy of entreatment, full of mercy and good fruits," a spirit of wisdom which leaves in the Lord's hands his own matters and trusts fully to his care. This is indeed "The spirit of a sound mind." Let us, dear brethren of the Royal Spiritual Family, apply this principle in all of our dealings and thus receive thereby increasing blessings. R. 4275

**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.
Who can know it?
Jeremiah 17:9**

After this it happened that Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right, but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me. Then I would give him justice." And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. 2 Samuel 15:1-6

[Absalom] did not openly plot mischief against his father, the king, nor speak vilely respecting him, nor manifest any antagonism; he was too deep, too adroit, too wise with earthly wisdom for such a course. He stole the hearts of the people away from the king to himself by feigning extreme humility and extreme zeal for justice, and by careful attention to his personal appearance and by attention to those in influential positions. He got up early, contrary to the usage of princes, and went forth to the King's gate, where he could see the people who, some justly and some unjustly no doubt, were awaiting the king, hoping for contracts and decisions in their favor, etc. These, beholding the handsome and elegantly-dressed prince, bowed themselves to the ground after the manner of the east, only to be lifted up by the hands and kissed and told with affected modesty and love that they should not do that; that it was a king's business to serve his people and that the prince was merely sorry, so sorry, that it was not in his power to do for them all and more than they asked. R. 4276

Now it came to pass after forty* years that Absalom said to the king, “Please, let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I made to the LORD. For your servant took a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, saying, ‘If the LORD indeed brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.’” And the king said to him, “Go in peace.” So he arose and went to Hebron. 2 Samuel 15:7-9

Feeling sure that his mock humility, combined with his handsome appearance, gentle manners and affected love for the people and for justice, worked successfully on the minds of the people, Absalom was ready for his next step—open rebellion against his father, the king of the nation and the appointee of divine providence. Surely he did not realize his situation in the odds of divine power against him. Thus for two years Absalom, the hypocrite and sycophant, endeavored (and was considerably successful in so doing) to draw to himself the love, the loyalty of the nation, which had belonged to his father David as the Lord’s anointed. Evidently the young man was leaning to his own understanding and forgetting, if he ever knew, that the Lord God was the Ruler of that nation, and he alone had the power to designate who should be and who should not be his representative upon the throne. R. 4276

**Our text says, “After forty years,” but scholars are agreed that this is a copyist’s blunder and that it should read “four years.” Some ancient authorities read this “four years”; so does Josephus.*

Then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, “As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, ‘Absalom reigns in Hebron!’” 2 Samuel 15:10

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

– 1 Peter 5:6-7 –

Into the conspiracy was drawn King David’s most valued counselor, Ahithophel, whose presence with the prince as one of his friends on the occasion would mean a tower of strength to his position and the attainment of his ambition. Many of the people, deceived for years, were drawn into this conspiracy. Besides, Absalom had carefully appointed men throughout the various tribes and various parts of the land district, who were posted for his designs and in full sympathy with them, and whose business it was to create a stampede in his favor, and to help by expressing evil insinuations against the king and expressing hopes of wonderful things, if Absalom took the kingship. These were to congratulate the tribes that they now had a most worthy king in Absalom, and to explain to them that when the trumpets were heard blowing this meant not that Absalom aspired to the kingship, but that he already was king.

Alas, that history shows so many perfidious characters like Absalom! And alas, dear friends, let us remember that while we have become New Creatures in

Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

1 Peter 5:8

Christ, we still have to contend with the mean, perfidious dispositions that were ours according to the flesh! Let us remember, too, that “we wrestle not with flesh and blood” merely, but additionally “with principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high positions.” Let us on the contrary remember the Apostle’s words, “Humble yourselves, therefore, brethren, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” — 1 Pet. 5:6. R. 4276

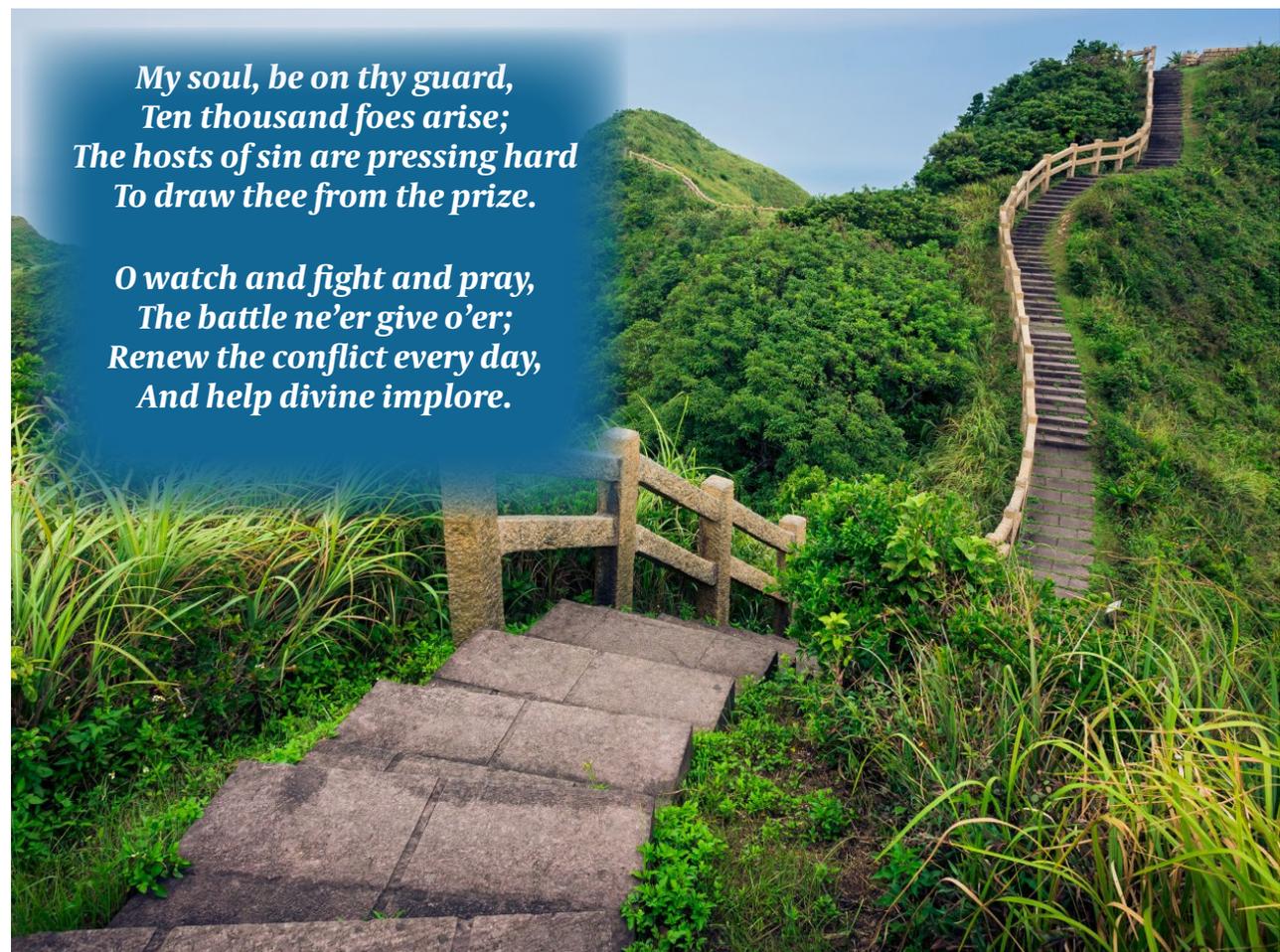
Strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

– Hebrews 12:12-13 –

We are all lame according to the flesh; some more, some less, but all need to observe the heavenly course and to walk circumspectly, seeing that pride and ambition are the greatest of foes to humanity and faith. Satan is the great giant who through these many centuries seeks to draw us away from the narrow path, away from full confidence in God and away from reliance on God's power and his wisdom and his Truth, by which alone we can ever become heirs of the Kingdom.

We shall never be beyond danger, dear Brethren, so long as we are in the flesh. Hence everything that we can do on the side of the Lord, on the side of righteousness, as New Creatures enlisted under the banner of our Redeemer, we should do—for the maintenance of our own standards and for the assistance of others in the fight against the world, the flesh, and the Adversary, in which we have enlisted. The text [above] should never be forgotten by any of the Soldiers of the Cross. The strongest need to remember it, and surely the weaker ones need to obey it. We are all lame. None is able to walk uprightly, perfectly, in the footprints of our Lord. At very best, we limp. How necessary, then, that we do our best to avoid trials and temptations which would be a special strain upon us because of our weaknesses of the flesh! Let us not be ashamed of regulating our lives so as to avoid temptations as far as possible; for this is the wise course admonished by the Lord's Word.

R. 4276 and R. 5975



So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword."
2 Samuel 15:14

That must have been the darkest day of King David's eventful life. Accompanied by his bodyguard, most of whom were foreigners—and of his own nation comparatively few with him—he fled from his own family and the capital city of his kingdom, which he had established, and from the people in whose interests he had given the best years of his life in harmony with the divine anointing. He fled from the face of the people who some years before had sung his praises as their deliverer from the hand of the Philistines— "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." This scene reminds us of our Lord's experience, of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the multitudes shouting Hosanna to the Son of David, and five days later shouting, Away with him, crucify him, release unto us Barabbas.

Here certainly was an occasion for the trial of David's faith and patience and love. What he would have done in earlier life we cannot tell. His history in every place shows him to have been a man of well-balanced mind, but his chief protection was his possession of a Spirit of a sound mind, the spirit of consecration to the Lord, the spirit of faith and trust and loving devotion. Instead of threatening the mob or returning railing for railing, or in any way defending himself, King David gave instructions to his guard that no harm should be done to those who were speaking evil of him, slandering, smiting. "The cup which my father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it," were our Master's words in his dying hour (John 18:11), and we can see his spirit exemplified in King David, who typified him in some respects. R. 4277

Absalom had a triumphal entry into Jerusalem and quite probably was intoxicated with the success. The records of his doings, of the various ways in which he endeavored to cast dishonor upon his father and to arouse the bitter prejudice of the people about him, all correspond with the vain, treacherous, ignoble character which we see displayed in this young man of large opportunities. We, who belong to the King's sons of a higher plane, should search our hearts diligently and scrutinize critically our every thought and word and act to make sure that we are thoroughly loyal to the Lord, our Father, the Great King; that we are not self-seeking, nor humble merely in outward appearance, but humble of heart, and that we are fully desirous of doing the Father's will, and that his will is not grievous to us, but that we can sincerely say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." —Psa. 40:8. R. 4277

But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head.

– Psalm 3:3 –

It is supposed that the 'fourth Psalm' and portions of the 'third' were written from the standpoint of David's experiences as an exile from his capital. Dean Stanley says, "It has been conjectured with much propriety that as the first sleep of that evening was commemorated in the 'fourth Psalm', so in the 'third' is expressed the feeling of David's thankfulness at the final close of that twenty-four hours." The king's objective point was a fortified city, Mahanaim, on the east side of Jordan; but the little army camped on the west side for the night. R. 4277

PSALM 3

1 A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son. LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me.

2 Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." Selah

3 But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.

4 I cried to the LORD with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill. Selah

5 I lay down and slept. I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around.

7 Arise, O LORD. Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone. You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8 Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah

PSALM 4

1 To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. A Psalm of David. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress. Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

2 How long, O you sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood? Selah

3 But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly. The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

4 Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

6 There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.

7 You have put gladness in my heart, more than in the season that their grain and wine increased.

8 I will both lie down in peace, and sleep. For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

– Psalm 1:6 –

The successful conspiracy of Absalom, so artfully planned and skillfully executed, finally drove David from Jerusalem and planted Absalom there. But the victory of the conspirators was not yet complete while David, the rightful sovereign, lived. So Absalom and his counsellors conspired further against the life of the king.

But the Lord raised up in Hushai, a friend for David, and placed him among the counsellors of Absalom, and thus through his counsel brought to naught the foolish and wicked conspiracy. In the pride and wickedness of his heart, bent on the slaying of his father, Absalom placed himself at the head of a great army and went forth to fight. In contrast with this wickedness mark the father's love, even under these extremely trying circumstances, saying to his men as they went forth to meet Absalom, "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom."

In the lesson which these circumstances afford let us mark well how short is the triumph of evil doers. Though their eyes stand out with fatness and they have more than heart could wish (Psa. 73:7); and though now the world calls the proud happy and they that work wickedness are set up, and they that tempt God are even delivered (Mal. 3:15), yet soon they will all be as stubble under the feet of the righteous. (Mal. 4:1.) The time may indeed seem long to those burdened by oppression; but it is not long in God's estimation. He will bring forth judgment unto victory just as soon as the wisdom of his purposes will permit. If justice be delayed, it is only for the development of some greater good than could be accomplished by a speedy adjustment. In this confidence, therefore, let the Christian rest, assured that all things—even the seeming delays—shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8:28.) R. 2025

A Song of Ascents. I will lift up my eyes to the hills---from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

– Psalm 121:1-2 –

[This] text reminds us that those who need help and who realize it should look to the Lord for it—not relying upon their own strength or wisdom nor upon the assistance of their fellows. We are not to despise assistance from any quarter, but our chief reason for receiving any assistance should be our conviction that it has come from the Lord, whether through the ear or through the eye and the printed page, or however. We are to remember that we are contending against a great Adversary and wily foe, and that we are not sufficient of ourselves to conquer, but that our only hope is in abiding in the Lord's love, by seeking to do those things which are pleasing to him and heeding the counsel of his Word and the leadings of his providence. A little carelessness along these lines, and the Adversary might readily entrap us and ensnare us and then lead us captive at his will. Ah, yes! we have the assurance of the Lord that there is but one place of safety at this time—into which more and more deeply we penetrate day by day. This place of safety is under the shadow of the Almighty, which figuratively signifies very close to the Lord. "No harm can come nigh that dwelling place," so far as the New Creature is concerned. Trials, tribulations, slanders may be exercised against us according to the flesh, but these cannot harm us as New Creatures, nor even disturb our peace of soul, while we are close to the Lord. R. 4311

If God is for us, who can be against us?

– Romans 8:31 –

It was in view of the Lord's providences and of his many deliverances from the power of his enemies, and of the uniform kindness and mercy of God as he meditated upon them, that David exclaimed, "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?" This consolation, variously expressed throughout the Scriptures, comes with all its blessed potency in our times of greatest need: the more desperate and determined the foes we encounter and the more fierce the conflict with the powers of darkness, the more glorious is the deliverance and the clearer are the manifestations of divine grace. And, as a consequence, faith takes deeper root, and, with renewed confidence and assurance, lays hold upon all the precious promises of God; and love and gratitude well up from hearts refreshed with an increased sense of the divine favor and blessing. So it was with David; and so it is with God's faithful people who lead a life of prayer and faith and close fellowship with God. R. 1914

.....
 • A Psalm of David. The LORD is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I
 • fear? The LORD is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? When
 • the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they
 • stumbled and fell. Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall
 • not fear. Though war may rise against me, in this I will be confident.
 •
 • Psalm 27:1-3
 •
 •.....

Trust in the LORD and do good. Dwell in the land and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass. Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret.

– Psalm 37:3-5,7 –

It is to the faithful soldiers of the Lord that the above words of the Psalmist are addressed—to the persecuted, tempted and tried. Hear them, tempest-tossed and fainting souls: they were long ago penned by the Lord's prophet for your edification— "Fret not thyself;" but "trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." How strong is the Lord, how wise and good! His promises have never failed to those that put their trust in him. We may feel that our efforts to be good and to do good are very unproductive, and that the opposition from within and without is very strong; but it is when we are weak—when we thus realize our own incompetency—that we may be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Let us endeavor to make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, and then lay hold of the Lord's strength to help us pursue our course in the narrow way of difficulty and trial. The fact that we are weak and lame does not separate us from the love and power of God; for "he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." R. 1840

Then someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!"

2 Samuel 15:31

Psalm 55:12-14;17-21

12 *For it is not an enemy who reproaches me. Then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me. Then I could hide from him.*

13 *But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance.*

14 *We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng.*

17 *Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.*

18 *He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me, for there were many against me.*

19 *God will hear, and afflict them, even He who abides from of old. Selah Because they do not change, therefore they do not fear God.*

20 *He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him. He has broken his covenant.*

21 *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart. His words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.*

**Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,
who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.**

Psalm 41:9

Then the king said to them, “Whatever seems best to you I will do.” So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.” And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom. So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the woods of Ephraim.

2 Samuel 18:4-6

The attack was evidently led by Absalom and his army, while David's forces were divided into three little bands under three of his able generals. Apparently with purpose they drew the battle into the woods, where their smaller forces would have the advantage over the attacking party. The result of the battle was the complete defeat of Absalom's forces, and the death of the latter. Riding on his mule through the woods, his head was caught between the forks of a branch, his mule going on, leaving him hanging by the head while the army was in rout. One of King David's soldiers found him, but would not kill him because the King had strictly charged all the soldiers before they left for the battle that they should do Absalom no harm. But when the soldier reported the matter to Joab, the King's chief general, the latter without hesitation slew the traitor, and at his command he was buried under a huge pile of stones. R. 4277

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

– Matthew 12:35 –

King David had proposed going with his army, but wiser counsel prevailed, for because of his advancing age (about 62 years), and because of his grief, and because of his love for his enemy, he would not be so competent as others to have charge of the battle. Conforming himself to the advice of his generals and counselors, he remained at Mahanaim, waiting near the gate for tidings from the battlefield to be brought by couriers, runners. On a lookout, a watchman perceived one of the runners, and, recognizing him by his movements, announced that it was Ahimaaz. King David at once remarked, He is a good man and undoubtedly will have good tidings for us. (v. 27.) What a lesson there is in that very expression! As our Lord said, “A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things.” (Matt. 12:35.) On the other hand, from a bitter heart proceed bitter words, evil speaking, injurious arrows. Our lives should be so that all of our friends and acquaintances would be ready to say of us, He is a good man; his message will have something of consolation in it. He is never a strife-breeder, nor a heart-wounder, nor a betrayer of confidences. When the runner reached the King, he prostrated himself to the King, saying, “All is well.” This was indeed good tidings to the King, but we note his love for his dishonoring, treacherous, enmitous son, evidenced by his first inquiry. R. 4277

Is the young man Absalom safe?

– 2 Samuel 18:29 –

Some may consider that the King had a love for his son to the extent of weakness. We will not dispute that, but we will hold that if he must err on the one side or the other, it was far more pleasing to the Lord that he should love his enemy too much rather than too little. That loving expression gives evidence that the King had under divine discipline learned considerable of the “Love divine, all love excelling.” If King David loved and pitied Absalom in his rebellious condition, how much more intently he must have loved him when he was in harmony; and so, if God so loved us while we were yet sinners that he gave his Son to die for us, how much more does he now love us since we are no longer aliens and strangers, but brought nigh by the precious blood and begotten of his holy Spirit through consecration, sanctification! (Rom. 5:8.) It does us good to see an illustration of great earthly love, because it pictures favorably to us the great lesson that the Master impressed by the words, “The Father himself loveth you.” R. 4278

O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!

– 2 Samuel 18:33 –

The good messenger broke the news as gently as possible to the King. He knew of the general rout of the enemy and of the concourse in connection with Absalom; but instead of telling all that he knew and, drawing upon his imagination for details, his goodness of heart led him to say little except that there had been a victory and that it seemed a great tumult, but did not know all of the particulars. Presently Cushie, a second runner, came, announcing the death of Absalom. King David's heart was bowed with great grief. This was what he evidently had feared. He betook himself to a room in the tower, on the way sobbing, “O, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!” Of these words one writer says, “There is not in all of the Old Testament a passage of greater pathos than this. The simple beauty of the narrative is exquisite; we are irresistibly reminded of him who, while he beheld the rebellious city of Jerusalem and thought of the destruction it was bringing upon itself, wept over it.”—Luke 19:41.

If in Absalom's perverse course of vanity, treacherous sedition, and in its ruinous end we find a lesson respecting the undesirable, evil, godless way, in King David's course we find the opposite lesson of faith and submission and growth in grace, knowledge and love. R. 4278

***“There is no far nor near, there is neither there nor here;
There is neither soon nor late, in the Chamber over the Gate,
Nor any long ago,
Nor any cry of human woe,
‘O Absalom, my son!’***

***“That ‘tis a common grief, bringeth but sweet relief;
Ours is the bitterest loss, ours is the heaviest cross;
And forever the cry will be,
‘Would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son!’***

--Longfellow

A foolish son is a grief to his father.

– Proverbs 17:25 –

The pity is that the King's love for his son did not take a more practical course at the proper time. He was an indulgent rather than a wise father. Evidently the flash and glitter of the young man's natural talents not only charmed the people but charmed his father, so that he practically had whatever he wanted of everything, the King failing to apply to his son the valuable lessons which he himself would learn, to the effect that the reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that true happiness and true prosperity are only to be found in this path, which wisdom indicates. His unwise love for his son led him to feel that the young man must sow his wild oats and should not be much restrained, and now when he witnessed the reaping of those wild oats his heart was convulsed with sorrow. And so it has been with many a father and many a mother who, although truly the Lord's, fail to apply to their children the lessons which the Lord has taught them by distressing experiences. It is unnecessary to comment upon the unwisdom of such love and to point the moral to Christian parents. It points itself, and Solomon the wise son expresses it tenderly when he said, in the words of our [verse], that "A foolish son is a grief to his father," and noted again that "He who spareth the rod hateth his son." From the practical standpoint, however the matter may appear to the superficial observer, the essence of wisdom is contained in his further observation, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Parents seem not to fully appreciate the fact that in the training of their children, either in the right way or in the wrong way, they are laying out for themselves either joys or sorrows for the future.

King David's inquiry respecting his son, "Is the young man safe?" should be the inquiry of every father and every mother respecting their sons and their daughters; but let them not do as David did—wait until sin has sprouted and blossomed and brought forth evil fruitage. Let them begin by realizing their duty toward their posterity in their earliest infancy. The duty of Christian parents toward their children is next to their duty to the Lord, —indeed the Lord has indicated that parental duty ranks first among all the earthly obligations of the saints. R. 3267

We have noted the fact that David committed a most awful crime, violating three of the divine commands most wantonly and inexcusably—coveting his neighbor's wife, committing adultery with her, and indirectly murdering her wronged husband. The Scriptures most pointedly condemn those sins, and intimate that the severe experiences which we have just recounted were permitted of the Lord to come upon [David] as retributive justice. Yet David's recognition of his sin and his penitence for it testify distinctly that at heart he was not a murderer and not an adulterer. The Lord who looketh at the heart approved him ultimately, while reprobating his misdeeds and permitting him to suffer therefore. R. 4278

We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

– Romans 8:28 –

Here, too, we may have an illustration of how God is able to **overrule** the affairs of the world in such a manner as to execute his designs without interfering with the free agency of any. Had it not been for David's sin and the penalty prescribed for it, Absalom might have had the same evil designs upon the kingdom, —might have made the same effort to accomplish his designs; but the Lord would not have permitted the matter to reach so successful a climax. An example of this is found in the subsequent attempt by a younger brother of Absalom to take the throne. He proceeded in many respects as Absalom did and under more favorable conditions, in that at that time the King had grown quite feeble with age and was unable to administer the interests of the kingdom personally or to take the field in battle. However, in due time the Lord brought the matter to the attention of David, so that the revolt was nipped in the bud before it had time to take effect, and Solomon instead of Adonijah was anointed king.

Just so it is with the Lord's people today. Conspiracies may arise to threaten the interests of the Truth, but the Lord is at the helm, and will permit these to go no further than in his judgment is wise—only so far as they will work for the Lord's glory and the accomplishment of his plans, for the instruction and disciplining of his people, and for the sifting out of those who at heart are enemies of the cause. The general lesson for us is confidence in the great King of kings and Lord of lords; implicit obedience to him and loyalty to the principles of his government; the law of love in our dealings with all the true Israel of God and with mankind in general. The Lord is able and willing to make the things which would seem to harm us work out for our everlasting good and work disastrously to those who essay the injury of his people and his cause. R. 3262

Abstain from all appearance of evil. (KJV)

– 1 Thessalonians 5:22 –

The conspiracy was successful to a degree that could scarcely have been anticipated. Practically the whole nation gave allegiance to Absalom, and that in so outward and marked a manner that it was necessary for them subsequently, after his defeat and death, to publicly request the King to return to the head of the government of all the tribes. If we wonder that a nation should so quickly forget the valuable services of so eminent a ruler, to whom it owed so much of its prosperity, let us remember that the King's confession would not be viewed by the populace as it is now viewed by God's holy ones. Doubtless some appreciated him in a measure, but more would disesteem him for "showing the white feather,"* and many would be inclined to consider him an "old hypocrite." His seclusion during those eleven years and his accumulation of treasure for the building of the Temple—perhaps involving taxes upon the people—could all have been viewed from an evil standpoint and have assisted in his unpopularity. It is the fortune of all of the Lord's people to be misunderstood by the worldly, even when conduct and words and intentions are the very best. How careful, then, we all should be to walk circumspectly, and to avoid every appearance of evil! R. 3262

** to show the "white feather" is to act like or appear to be a coward, to exhibit cowardly traits or behavior*

.....
: See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. :
: Ephesians 5:15 :
.....

You are my brethren, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?

– 2 Samuel 19:12 –

Just so it is in the world today. Earth's rightful King is not upon its throne, nor has the world recognized his right to it or desired his return. Men have been busy with their own schemes and plans of government. They have anointed various kings of their own choosing: in fact, they have tried every experiment of self-government; and, one after another, all have ended in failure. And now, after six thousand years of human experiment, the whole world is on the verge of a revolution, in the outcome of which they have nothing to expect but anarchy.

Under the various disintegrating influences of our peculiar day the old creeds are fast crumbling into ruin, and the old institutions which they held together are being terribly shaken; and the various attempts at reorganization on other grounds are all open to a thousand objections. The faith of all is being tested, and many who really care to have a faith, and who long for a firm establishment in divine truth, are indeed in dismay.

It is in view of this clearly discernible trend of present events that the thrones of earth are trembling, and that statesmen are greatly perplexed in seeking measures of policy to avert the impending disaster. The sea and the waves (the restless masses of humanity) are roaring, and the mountains (kingdoms) are shaking with the swellings thereof —Psa. 46:3.

We wait not for the King as the sweet babe of Bethlehem, nor yet as “the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all;” but we wait for him who, having been “put to death in flesh, was quickened [made alive] in spirit”—who was raised from death a spirit being—highly exalted above his condition as a man, higher even than his condition as a spirit-being before he humbled himself to become a man—highly exalted, even to the divine nature, far above human nature and angelic nature and every other nature. Such is the nature and majesty of the King for whom we wait, and whose presence and Kingdom we are assured can and will bring order out of earth's confusion, and bring to the world the blessings purchased with his own precious blood, given when he was a man, once for all and forever as man's redemption-price. R. 1690

.....
 • So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word to the king:
 • “Return, you and all your servants!” Then
 • the king returned and came to the Jordan. And
 • Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king,
 • to escort the king across the Jordan.
 • 2 Samuel 19:14-15
 •

David, being recalled by the people, returned to Jerusalem and set about bringing order out of the general confusion into which Absalom had plunged the nation. At the time of his returning a usurper, with some show of success, sought to intercept him and secure the throne for himself; but he was promptly dealt with, and David was again established in his kingdom, and several years of peace and progress followed. —2 Sam. 20:21. R. 2030

It is necessary for the discipline, trial and final proving of the Church of God that they should be subjected to adverse influence; for “to him that overcometh” is the promise of the great reward. If we would reign with Christ, we must prove our worthiness to reign, by the same tests of loyalty to God, of faith in His Word, of zeal for the Truth, of patient endurance, of reproach and persecution, even unto death, and in the unwavering trust in the power and purpose of God to deliver and exalt His Church in due time. To such faithful ones are the blessed consolations of Psalm 91, which we believe is a picture of the Church in the end of this Gospel Age—a picture of The Christ. R. 4925

Hearken:

Psalm 91

1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress. My God, in Him I will trust. 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge. His truth shall be your shield and buckler. 5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, 6 nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you. 8 Only with your eyes shall you look and see the reward of the wicked. 9 Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, 10 no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling, 11 for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. 12 In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. 13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. 14 Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him. I will set him on high, because he has known My name. 15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him. 16 With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation.

David's Gratitude

2 Samuel 22/Psalm 18



*Then David spoke to the LORD the words of this song,
on the day when the LORD had delivered him from the hand of
all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.*

2 And he said: The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer.

3 The God of my strength, in whom I will trust. My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge. My Savior, You save me from violence.

4 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, so shall I be saved from my enemies.

5 When the waves of death surrounded me, the floods of ungodliness made me afraid.

6 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me. The snares of death confronted me.

7 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry entered His ears.

8 Then the earth shook and trembled. The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken because He was angry.

9 Smoke went up from His nostrils, and devouring fire from His mouth. Coals were kindled by it.

10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down with darkness under His feet.

11 He rode upon a cherub, and flew, and He was seen upon the wings of the wind.

12 He made darkness canopies around Him, dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

13 From the brightness before Him coals of fire were kindled.

14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice.

15 He sent out arrows and scattered them, lightning bolts, and He vanquished them.

16 Then the channels of the sea were seen, the foundations of the world were uncovered at the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

17 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.

18 He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

**19 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support.
20 He also brought me out into a broad place. He delivered me because He delighted in me.**

21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.

22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For all His judgments were before me. And as for His statutes, I did not depart from them.

24 I was also blameless before Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity.

25 Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in His eyes.

26 With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful. With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless.

27 With the pure You will show Yourself pure. And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.

28 You will save the humble people, but Your eyes are on the haughty, that You may bring them down.

29 For You are my lamp, O LORD. The LORD shall enlighten my darkness.

30 For by You I can run against a troop. By my God I can leap over a wall.

31 As for God, His way is perfect. The word of the LORD is proven. He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

32 For who is God, except the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?

33 God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect.

34 He makes my feet like the feet of deer, and sets me on my high places.

35 He teaches my hands to make war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

36 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation. Your gentleness has made me great.

37 You enlarged my path under me so my feet did not slip.

38 I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them. Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed.

39 And I have destroyed them and wounded them, so that they could not rise. They have fallen under my feet.

40 For You have armed me with strength for the battle. You have subdued under me those who rose against me.

41 You have also given me the necks of my enemies, so that I destroyed those who hated me.

42 They looked, but there was none to save, even to the LORD, but He did not answer them.

43 Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth. I trod them like dirt in the streets, and I spread them out.

44 You have also delivered me from the strivings of my people. You have kept me as the head of the nations. A people I have not known shall serve me.

45 The foreigners submit to me. As soon as they hear, they obey me.

46 The foreigners fade away, and come frightened from their hideouts.

47 The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let God be exalted, The Rock of my salvation!

48 It is God who avenges me, and subdues the peoples under me.

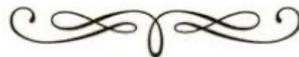
49 He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me. You have delivered me from the violent man.

50 Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name.

51 He is the tower of salvation to His king, and shows mercy to His anointed, To David and his descendants forevermore.

This entire chapter is one of David's songs of praise and gratitude to God for his goodness and his loving providences which had been so manifest toward him ever since his anointing by Samuel the prophet, and doubtless before that as well. It calls to mind another expression of one of his psalms,—“Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright.” (Psa. 33:1.) Indeed, the writings of David, and all the prophets and apostles as well, abound in fervent expressions of praise and thanksgiving to God. They not only praise the Lord themselves, lovingly and gratefully recounting all his mercies, but, with impassioned eloquence and holy enthusiasm, they call upon all the sons of men, and every thing that hath breath, and even inanimate nature, to laud and magnify his holy name. The worshippers are also bidden to bring with them to the concert of praise every musical instrument of human device; and grateful reverence exclaims,—“Blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen!” —Psa. 33:2,3; 50:1-6; 72:19. See also Exod. 15:1-21.

So must the Christian continually call to mind the works of the Lord, especially his own individual experience of the Lord's leading and care and deliverances from dangers and snares and the wiles of the adversary. If we keep these things in mind and meditate upon them, our appreciation of God and his goodness grows, and the spirit of love and praise takes possession of the heart, and thus we are made to rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything to give thanks. So also the soul is made to hunger and thirst after God and to realize that God alone is its satisfying portion, and to desire more and more of his fulness. Thus, as the Psalmist suggests, our prayer will be, “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.” —Psa. 42:1. R. 2031



David Numbers The People

When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them.
Exodus 30:12

The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people."
2 Samuel 24:2

Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. And God was displeased with this thing. Therefore He struck Israel.
1 Chronicles 21:1,7

Satan provoked David to number Israel, contrary to the command of the Lord; God was displeased and smote Israel. Again David repented and prayed earnestly for forgiveness. The Lord offered him three things, one of which he must choose as the punishment for his sin. "Thus," saith the Lord, "Choose thee either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel." (1 Chron. 21:10-14.) Realizing his own weakness, David, in humility declined to make a choice. The three days' pestilence was sent upon Israel, and there fell seventy thousand men; but in the meantime, before the punishment reached David, he had received the Lord's forgiveness for his sin. R. 5106

And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done, but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.
2 Samuel 24:10, 18-19

Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

– Hebrews 9:11 –

The site of the Temple was Mount Moriah, and one of the most prominent spots on that mount is supposed to have been the site of the altar. This place selected for the altar, under divine guidance, is believed to have been the same spot upon which Abraham offered his son, Isaac, the type of Christ, and received him again as from the dead in a figure, the Lord providing as his representative, upon the same spot, the ram caught in a neighboring thicket. —Gen. 22:3-13; Heb. 11:17-19.

It is supposed that this same spot was subsequently the threshing-floor of Araunah, where David offered the acceptable sacrifice to the Lord which stayed the plague. (2 Sam. 24:21-25.) The Mosque of Omar now occupies the site of the ancient Temple built by Solomon; and the Mohammedans, who have great respect for the holy places, have left the site of the ancient altar exposed to view, protecting it with a railing. The visitor may there see today, the very spot on which thousands of typical sin offerings were sacrificed, the base of the various altars which were erected from time to time. It is of solid rock, and has a rather distinct groove or trench about it, which probably conducted the blood of the slain

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
Hebrews 9:12-15

animals to what seems to be a natural drain or sewer by which the blood flowed in the direction of the Valley of Jehoshaphat—the valley of graves.

As we viewed this historic rock some years ago, and thought of the thousands of beasts slain there as types of the great ransom sacrifice, and noted the natural passageway by which the blood was carried off, our thoughts reverted to the Lamb of God, the great sacrifice for sins, and how the life which he laid down became a fountain or stream of life, not only for the dead of Israel, but all who died in Adam. The flow of blood toward the valley of graves seems to speak symbolically of life for the dead, secured through our dear Redeemer's sacrifice. R. 2510

In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.
Zechariah 13:1



The Mosque of Omar and its court now cover the site. It is surrounded by a wall, and the space enclosed is nearly twice the size of Solomon's Temple and courts. The mosque is a fine one and is surmounted by a most graceful dome. The building has fifty-six elegant windows in Mosaic glass. At one time none but favored Mohammedans were permitted to enter this mosque, but now it is accessible to all nations, though with some formality and at a trifling expense for guards, etc.

The original rock-top of Mt. Moriah is to be seen in the mosque, and a cave under it may be entered. A hole connects the top rock with the cave, and an aqueduct thence leads to the brook Kedron. Hence it is supposed that upon this rock the sacrifices were killed and that the aqueduct or sewer connected by the hole and the cave was used for carrying off the blood, and the water used in flushing and cleansing the altar. When we remember that the brook Kedron is in the valley of Jehoshaphat, "the valley of dry bones" (the general burying ground of the city), and then reflect that this valley was typical, as well as the blood of the sacrifices, we may read it thus--The blood of Christ the antitypical sin-offering, in a way unseen by the world in general, reaches unto all that are in their graves and secures for all mankind an awakening from death and an opportunity for life everlasting. —Rom. 5:9. R. 1395

The Temple of The LORD

David had now accomplished nearly all of his earthly mission. He found the dominion small, and now it was much extended. He found it in disorder, and left it thoroughly organized. He found religion at a low ebb, and he had succeeded in greatly reviving and energizing religious devotion and zeal. He found powerful enemies on every side, threatening the destruction of the nation, but he had subdued all the enemies and led the nation to a condition of peace and introduced them to a season of unparalleled prosperity. And not only so, but he had laid the foundation for the more permanent establishment of the service of God and the religious health of the nation in his preparations for the building and service of the temple which God had promised that his son and successor should build, and in the religious zeal and enthusiasm he had aroused on the part of the whole people, so that as one man they were at the service of Solomon in the great work. His life had been an eventful and a troubled one, not without its grave mistakes, but it had accomplished great things in bringing order out of confusion and establishing peace and prosperity on a permanent footing. The glory of Solomon's reign was but the harvest of David's labors and sufferings. While David was not permitted to build the temple himself, because he was a man of war, this was no reproach against David for engaging in those wars, for he had done so in the name of the Lord and for his people, and not from the unholy ambition of the world's warriors, for plunder and prestige. R. 2030

“All this,” said David, “the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans.”

– 1 Chronicles 28:19 –

To some who think of the building of the Jewish temple as a mere mechanical service, like the building of any other temple, heathen or Christian, it may seem that there was much unnecessary ado about it. How strange, they mentally say, that it should be considered necessary for the whole nation to be at peace before the building could be undertaken! Why could not some be building while others were out fighting the battles? and why should the king be charged with the business? Were there not in all Israel plenty of architects and workmen and men suited to oversee the work, without burdening the king with it?

The sacred edifice was not one of human designing: the plans and specifications were given to David by the spirit of the Lord. It was to be a building into every fiber of which should be worked the religious devotion and zeal of the whole nation, and which should therefore stand as a monument of such devotion and zeal, and a testimony to coming generations which should awaken and preserve the same in them. Thus viewed, the work was indeed a great work; and, since all the people were to be interested and active in it, it was necessary that it should be undertaken only in a time of peace, when the attention of the people was not absorbed in wars and their attendant perplexities and calamities. It is manifestly appropriate, too, that the Lord's anointed king, in preference to any other individual, should have been charged with this important business, since it was a national enterprise, and he stood as the representative and head of the nation. R. 2030

King David rose to his feet and said, “Hear me, my brethren and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. But God said to me, ‘You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood.’”

– 1 Chronicles 28:2-3 –

Notwithstanding the King's age and decrepitude, and the fact that it was usual to sit in such assemblages, he stood upon his feet as implying the importance of the matters to be dealt with. His salutation to the officers and representatives of the realm was a gracious one: “Hear me, my brethren, and my people!” King David was not evidently of the dictator class, and all noble men and women will appreciate him all the more because of this. Notwithstanding his greatness, his success as a soldier in establishing and enlarging the kingdom, and his eminence as a poet, and his evident favor with God, he was not by any or all of these things made haughty, domineering, tyrannical, but even in speech was a faithful, humble shepherd to the people over whom God appointed him. No wonder his name is revered to this day not only by the Jews, his countrymen, but by all who love the Lord and the principles of righteousness.

With full candor the King related to his princes his own desires for the glory of God and the nation in connection with the building of the Temple, and with equal candor he explained why the Lord rejected the work at his hands—because he had been a man of war and had shed blood. Herein we see a wide distinction between the character of our God and his Temple and that of other gods and their temples. The gods of the heathen are gods of war and their mighty ones are their bloody ones. One is impressed with the same thought in connection with some of the homage given to war heroes in the nominal Christian church. For instance, in Westminster Abbey the names of generals and admirals and men of the world in general are almost the only ones made prominent. Nor was this an exceptional matter in David's case: we see the same principle pointed out in the Law. (Num. 31:19.) Those who participated in battle were unclean and required purification for seven days before participating in the privileges of citizenship. R. 3276

Go and tell My servant David, “Thus says the LORD: You shall not build Me a house to dwell in. I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a name like the name of the great men who are on the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more, nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. Also I will subdue all your enemies.

1 Chronicles 17:4,7-10

Furthermore I tell you that the LORD will build you a house.

1 Chronicles 17:10

The LORD God of Israel chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler.

– 1 Chronicles 28:4 –

David called attention to the fact that the Lord had chosen him to be their King; that he had decreed that he should be their King forever—that is, that the kingship should be in the line of his posterity. He called their attention to the fact that the tribe of Judah was the tribe of royalty by divine appointment, and that in the tribe of Judah the house of Jesse had been chosen by divine direction through the Prophet Samuel, and that in the family of Jesse, above all of his sons, the Lord had chosen David to be King over all Israel. In this speech the King was not attempting to defend his position on the throne, for that was conceded by all the tribes; but he did wish that the people should recognize the matter in a still higher light—that it was God who was their real King, and that God had taken the supervision of the affairs of the nation and had ordered and directed matters up to that juncture. It is well that spiritual Israelites should refresh their memories similarly; that they should call to mind that God, who was the King of typical Israel, is specially the King of spiritual Israel, and that being our King the affairs of his Church are not left to chance or haphazard, but are, in their largest interests at least, under divine supervision and care. The Apostle points this out in respect to our Lord, the great High Priest, saying, “No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God.” So our Lord Jesus called not himself to a position of headship in the Church, but was evidently appointed to that position by the Father, as the Apostle declares, “God hath given him to be the head over the Church, which is his body.” —Eph. 1:22,23. R. 3276

Of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons), He has chosen my son, Solomon, to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

– 1 Chronicles 28:5 –

David had no doubt whatever respecting the Lord’s choice for his successor. How he knew the mind of the Lord on the subject we are not informed, but evidently he had assured Bathsheba years before that her son Solomon should fill the throne, and now he probably announced the matter, declaring that God had given him assurance that Solomon should build the great temple which King David had not been permitted to build, but for which he had accumulated great stores of gold, silver, iron, marble, precious wood, etc. The word of the Lord, “I have chosen him to be my son and will be his Father,” we are not to understand as meaning that Solomon was lifted up from the house of servants, of which Moses was the head, and made a member of the house of sons, of which Christ is the head — “Whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence of our rejoicing firm unto the end.” According to the Scriptural record, the first opportunity for any members of the house of servants to become sons of God was granted at the time of our Lord’s first advent, and in view of the fact that he had already made consecration of his life as man’s redemption price. (John 1:12,13.) Solomon was God’s son in a typical sense—he typified God’s great Son, the Christ. R. 3276

.....
• He said to me, ‘It is your son Solomon who shall build My house and •
• My courts, for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father.’ •
•
• 1 Chronicles 28:6 •
.....

As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.

– 1 Chronicles 28:9 –

It was doubtless due to David's increasing reverence for the Lord, and his realization of the mistakes made in the training of his other children, and his desire that his successor to the throne should honor the Lord and carry forward the interests of religion—these things doubtless led the king to put his son Solomon under the special care of the Prophet Nathan, with the view to his preparation to serve the Lord and his kingdom righteously, and to build the temple of the Lord which David had purposed to build but was not allowed.

There is a golden sentiment expressed in these words. Outward service is not sufficient in our dealing with the Lord. "He seeketh such to worship, as worship him in spirit and in truth." Solomon's excellent start in his high office and the favor of God, which then came upon him had been preceded by years of study. Under the Prophet's direction and under his father's suggestions he was enabled to enter into the spirit of his father's plan respecting the erection of the great temple at Jerusalem which would put religion, the true religion and worship of God, in the most prominent position before the nation of Israel. He got, sympathetically, the spirit of his father which discerned that the whole nation of Israel would be specially blessed in putting God and his worship in advance of every other thing and interest. He was informed respecting the stores of material and wealth gathered by his father for the temple purposes and consecrated to that service. In these things Solomon found abundant opportunity for the exercise of his intelligence and his ambitions along proper and helpful lines, which drew him nearer to the Lord and taught him how better to serve the Lord and his people Israel as his father's successor.

So we see, as we seek the Lord with all our hearts as "dear children," and with willing minds, that he makes known to us his great plans and purposes respecting the future. He makes known to us his purpose to have a temple, and preparations already made therefore, and how and when it will be built and its object: the blessing of all the families of the earth. At each step of the way, as we the more fully enter into sympathy with God's great plan of the ages, it serves to develop us the more and to prepare us for the share in that Temple and Kingdom. R. 4286

David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and of good courage and do it. Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD."

– 1 Chronicles 28:20 –

This counsel to Solomon may also with equal propriety be accepted by every Christian in the service of the Lord,— "Be strong and of good courage." Both strength and courage are necessary to faithful service and to success in the good fight of faith; and both are developed by patient endurance and faith in God under the various trials to which the Christian is exposed. The counsel of the Apostle Paul to the Church also tallies with that of David to Solomon, when he says, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" and again,— "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong;"—Eph. 6:10; 1 Cor. 16:13. R. 2030

And King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” So they came before the king. The king also said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon.” Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, and all the people said, “Long live King Solomon!” And all the people went up after him, and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth seemed to split with their sound. 1 Kings 1:32-33;39-40

That Solomon was the Lord's choice among David's sons to succeed him upon the throne of Israel is clear from 1 Chron. 22:8,9. — “The word of the Lord came to me, saying,...Behold, a son shall be born to thee who shall be a man of rest: and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.” (See also 2 Sam. 12:24,25; 1 Chron. 17:11-15; 2 Sam. 7:12-17.) And it was in view of the fact that Solomon was the Lord's choice, that David assured Bath-sheba, Solomon's mother, that her son should surely inherit the Kingdom. —1 Kings 1:13,30.

Solomon was the second son of David by Bath-sheba. His name signifies “the peaceful,” thus commemorating the promise of God concerning him. The additional name Jedediah (the beloved of Jehovah) seems to have been given by Nathan the prophet as a sign of David's forgiveness and restoration to the divine favor (2 Sam. 12:25), as the special love thus expressed before the child could know or choose good or evil could not have been for his own merit, and therefore must have been for his father David's sake, whom God had loved and chosen, and of whose posterity was to come the long promised Messiah—King of the antitypical Kingdom of God. Hence the names, Solomon (the peaceful) and Jedediah (the beloved of the Lord) indicated that David was still the beloved, that he was fully restored to the divine favor, and that the promises of God made to him and his posterity still held good.

Solomon came to the throne at an early age, probably at about nineteen or twenty. Of his personal qualifications at this time we know but little except from 1 Kings 3:3, — “And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed [unto the Lord] and burnt incense in high places.” This was prohibited by the Mosaic law (Deut. 12:13,14), but was accepted of God until the Temple was built. —See 1 Sam. 9:12; 1 Kings 3:2. R. 2045

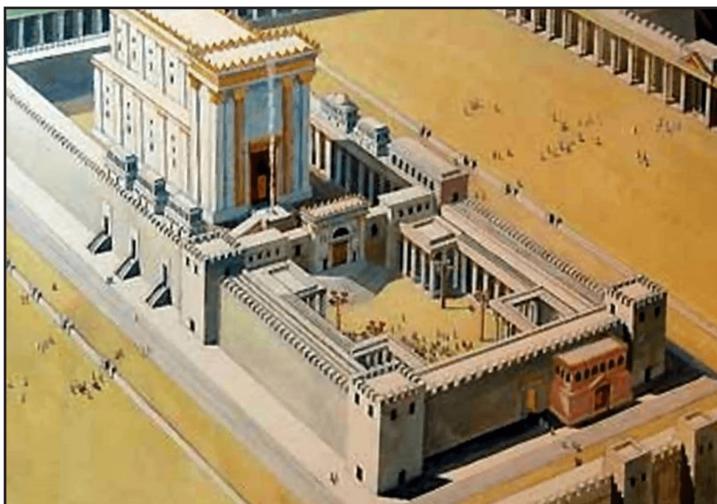
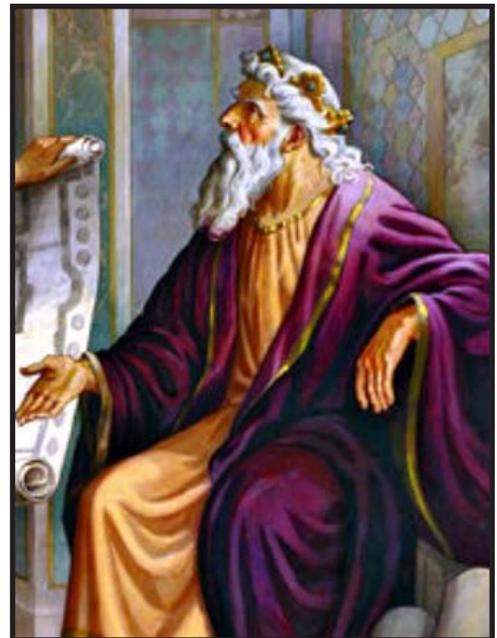
The Lord's instructions to the kings of Israel were...that the king should study the law of the Lord, and put its principles in practice— “that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left.” (Deut. 17:18-20.) But no king, either of Israel or of any other nation, however wise or good, ever did that. All have been more or less inflated with the pride of power, and their hearts have been lifted up above their brethren. Even David, the beloved of the Lord, succumbed to this baneful influence until, being greatly intoxicated with it, he fell into gross sin. The temptations of power to our impaired humanity in any position are always to the gratification of pride, ambition and self-aggrandizement. The only ruler of the world who will fully meet the requirements of the divine law, turning not aside to the right hand nor to the left, will be Jehovah's Anointed Son, our blessed Lord Jesus, who so loved his (future) subjects that he gave his life for them. His heart is never lifted up by pride, though God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in heaven and things in earth. —Phil. 2:9-11. R. 2046

Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: “My son Solomon, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced, and the work is great, because the temple is not for man but for the LORD God. Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for things to be made of gold, silver for things of silver, bronze for things of bronze, iron for things of iron, wood for things of wood, onyx stones, stones to be set, glistening stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver.”
1 Chronicles 29:1-3

In view of its divinely ordained typical significance, it is also manifestly appropriate that its beauty, its costliness and all its adornments should represent the labor and care and sacrifices of the loving hearts and active hands of a people devoted to God. So David expressed it, when he said, “The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries.” —1 Chron. 22:5.

“All this,” said David, “the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans.”
1 Chronicles 28:19

In the charge of David to his son Solomon concerning the building of the temple, to which our attention is called, we catch a glimpse of the man after long experience and discipline had mellowed and enriched his character. Now, over every other ambition, his zeal for God predominates, and his chief desire for Solomon is that he may prove true and faithful to God and zealous in his service and that so he might abide in the divine favor. R. 2030



“The house to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it.” So David made abundant preparations before his death.
1 Chronicles 22:5

**Then David said to all the assembly, “Now bless the LORD your God.”
So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers and bowed
their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.
– 1 Chronicles 29:20**

The prayer and thanksgiving of David to God, recorded in 1 Chronicles 29:10-19, ascribing praise to him for the privilege of collecting the materials for his temple and humbly acknowledging that all their gifts were only returning to God that which was his own, expressing his joy in the freewill offerings of the people and praying that their hearts might ever incline to him, and that he would give unto Solomon a perfect heart, is full of touching pathos, reverence, meekness and holy enthusiasm. Read it and underscore its touching phrases, that again and again you may be refreshed and instructed by it. Then mark (vs. 20) how he led all the people to fervently bless the Lord, and how the enthusiasm thus kindled anointed Solomon a second time to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord. (vs. 22,23.) This second anointing was like the grand Amen! of the whole nation to the first anointing (1 Kings 1:38-40), which was, comparatively speaking, done in a very quiet way. R. 2030

**Blessed are those who dwell in Your house. They will still be praising
You.**

– Psalm 84:4 –

Psalm 84:1-12 is another expression of David's devotion and zeal for the service of the Lord. While we thus contemplate the typical temple which kindled such an enthusiasm among the worthy saints of the Jewish dispensation, with what intensity of zeal and fervor should we regard that antitypical temple, the Church of the living God, whose living stones shall to all eternity show forth the praises of him who quarried and polished and fitted them together until it grew into a holy temple for the Lord in which he is pleased to dwell, and of which Christ Jesus is the chief corner stone.

—Eph. 2:19-22. R. 2030

**Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow
citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having
been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ
Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being
fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also
are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**

Ephesians 2:19-22

10 Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly, and David said:

“Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty. For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. 12 Both riches and honor come from You, and You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might. In Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. 13 Now therefore, our God, we thank You and praise Your glorious name. 14 But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You. 15 For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, as were all our fathers. Our days on earth are]as a shadow, and without hope. 16 O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own. 17 I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things, and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You. 18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. 19 And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision.” 20 Then David said to all the assembly, “Now bless the LORD your God.”

So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.

1 Chronicles 29:10-20

**For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.
– 1 Corinthians 3:17 –**

[St. Paul] here referred to the Church in its present condition, on probation, as though it were a finished Temple, because by faith may be realized the Lord's presence and protecting care amongst these members in their temporary organization as the Church of Christ. But the same Apostle shows that this Temple is not quite complete, saying, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles, Jesus, Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord." (Eph. 2:20,21.) In a word, as St. Peter suggests, the Lord's consecrated ones, as living stones for the glorious spiritual Temple of the future beyond the veil, are now being shaped, chiseled, polished, fitted for their places.

.....
 .
 . **You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house,** .
 . **a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices** .
 . **acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** .
 .
 . **1 Peter 2:5** .

That glorious Temple, The Christ, in the power of the First Resurrection will share in the glory, honor and immortality of the divine nature; and through it during the Millennium, the heavenly Father will communicate his blessings to the world of mankind for their uplifting out of sin and death. Thus, as the High Priest in his robes of glory and beauty represented The Christ, the Messiah, Jesus the Head and the Church his Body, so the temple in which he served likewise symbolizes the same Redeemer and the same Church. The one illustration discloses one relationship or communication between God and men. The other represents another feature of the same ministry of reconciliation, as it will ultimately reach the world of mankind.

From this standpoint we can readily see that God's temple, built by Solomon, represented so glorious a class and such rich blessings of God to men that it was very appropriate that the type of these riches of grace should be costly, ornate, beautiful in the highest degree.

But now in the strict sense of the word these living stones are undergoing the process of chiseling and polishing, and the stone-yard and surroundings are not gorgeous and beautiful. Rather, as the Apostle declares, the Church in its present condition is a body of humiliation, or, as improperly translated, "Our vile body." The Church in the present life, like her Lord, is disesteemed in the world, despised, persecuted, "counted as fools all the day long," and "the filth and offscouring of the earth." It is in full harmony with these actual conditions pointed out in the Scriptures and known to us by experience that we see it to be the will of God that our present religious conditions should be very humble ones, unostentatious, inexpensive, to the intent that our energies may be the more efficaciously used in the forwarding of the work at the present time, rather than in attempting to make further types of the "glory that is to follow" our Resurrection "change."

This is further shown in the type. God's association with his people now is represented in the tabernacle and its court and its tent, all of which were temporary. Thus the Apostle speaks of us who are in this tabernacle as groaning, waiting for our house from heaven, waiting for our "change" to the Temple condition through the power of the First Resurrection. R. 4296

Oh bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, who keeps our soul among the living and does not allow our feet to be moved.

**– Psalm 66:8-9 –
(To Natural Israel)**

In this Psalm the Prophet David calls upon all the world to praise the Lord. In prophetic language he exclaims: "All the earth shall worship Thee; they shall sing to Thy name!" Then he recounts the wonderful manifestation of the Power of God in His dealings with Israel; he calls upon the people to bless the Lord and sound His praises abroad. Taking a retrospective view of the dealings of Jehovah with His people, he continues: "For Thou, O God, hast proved us, Thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place!" —vs.10-12.

The Psalmist then declared that he would enter into the house of the Lord, and would pay unto the Lord the vows which he had made in the time of his trouble. He recounts the goodness of God to himself. He tells that he had cried unto the Lord and extolled His praises, that his prayers had been answered, and that he had been lifted up and blessed and delivered. He calls upon Israel to remember all the leadings of the Lord in their past history and all His goodness to them as a people, and exhorts them to sound forth the praises of His great name. God had brought the people of Israel up out of bondage to Egypt; He had protected them through all their wilderness journeyings and ever since.

King David reminds them that they had been kept alive, that God had not permitted them to be exterminated —He had "suffered not their feet to be moved." They were not vanquished by their enemies, so long as they had trusted and obeyed. R. 5500

**I will go into Your house with burnt offerings. I will pay
You my vows, which my lips have uttered and my mouth has
spoken when I was in trouble. I will offer You burnt sacrifices of
fat animals, with the sweet aroma of rams. I will offer bulls
with goats. Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will declare what He has done for my soul.
Psalm 66:13-16**



Oh bless our God, you peoples! And make the voice of His praise to be heard, who keeps our soul among the living and does not allow our feet to be moved.

– Psalm 66:8-9 –

(To Spiritual Israel)

Although this Psalm has a primary significance as relates to Natural Israel, our thought is, in harmony with the applications made by our Lord and the Apostles, that these words are even more appropriate in their application to Spiritual Israel. The Lord has brought us up out of the world. He has delivered us from the great taskmaster, Satan. He has guided us through the wilderness journey; He has fed us with the Manna from Heaven; He has brought us forth the Water of Life from the great Rock of Ages smitten for us, that we might drink and live. He has washed our feet from the dust of our wilderness way. He has faithfully disciplined and chastened us as His sons; He has gone before us through all the toilsome march, and has been our Rearward as well, to protect us from all danger and harm. **If Natural Israel had great cause for thankfulness and praise, what should be our attitude, for all the marvelous manifestations of His love and care for us, His Spiritual Israel!**

Our God never fails His children: His name is Faithfulness! He has never permitted His Church to be exterminated, notwithstanding all the assaults of error and of the powers of darkness. There are still true people of God in the world, and ever have been. Throughout the Dark Ages, the great fact of our Redeemer's sacrifice for sin was still held by some of the true saints of the Lord. This precious truth was never completely lost during those years of darkness and obscurity, and in God's due time His Church emerged from the wilderness, "leaning upon the arm of her Beloved." The light has since grown brighter and brighter to the faithful, watching ones. And what a flood of glory now shines upon the path of the saints!

**Through the LORD's mercies
 we are not consumed, because
 His compassions fail not.
 They are new every morning.
 Great is Your faithfulness!
 Lamentations 3:22-23**

The saints of God during the past centuries did not need these additional blessings which are supplied to the faithful of today, but their every need was supplied. We are living in the days of the "cleansed Sanctuary." More Truth is now due than at any time in the history of the Church. Truly, our Lord has "brought us into His banqueting House, and His banner over us is Love!" (Songs 2:4.) Truly, "He holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved." R. 5500

**Therefore by Him let us
 continually offer the
 sacrifice of praise to God,
 that is, the fruit of our lips,
 giving thanks to His name.
 Hebrews 13:15**



David's Final Chapter

Your throne shall be established forever.

– 2 Samuel 7:16 –

David's throne was perpetual through the line of Solomon down to Zedekiah, and when the Lord rent the Kingdom from the hands of Zedekiah he did not give it to another family, but proclaimed an interregnum—a suspension of David's Kingdom, which might not go to another. The language of the prophecy concerning Zedekiah is, "O thou profane and wicked prince, whose time is come that iniquity should have an end: remove the diadem, take off the crown; this shall no more be the same. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it unto him." (Eze. 21:27.)

There has been no King of Israel, from Zedekiah's day to the present—the overturning of the Kingdom has been very thorough. The kings who reigned over Israel at the time of the first advent, and previously and subsequently, were not Israelitish kings, nor of Israelitish birth, but were appointees of Gentile governments, which, from Zedekiah's day to the present, have trodden under

foot the sacred land. The fulfillment of this promise to David is nevertheless secure, sure as the word and oath of the Almighty; and we who were by nature Gentiles, but who have been betrothed to Abraham's great Son and David's great Son and Lord, are still looking forward to and praying and patiently waiting for the fulfillment of this promise, saying, "Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" —even as our Lord taught us to do. As soon as this antitypical David, "Beloved," shall have assumed the reigns of government at the time appointed of the Father, he, as the antitype also of Solomon, on the natural plane, will build the Lord's house, and his throne shall be established forever —for it is the throne of the Kingdom of Jehovah. R. 3258

**Overthrown, overthrown, I will
make it overthrown! It shall be
no longer, until He comes whose
right it is, and I will give it to Him.**

Ezekiel 21:27

**In mercy the throne will be established. And One will
sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, judging and
seeking justice and hastening righteousness.**

Isaiah 16:5

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

– Isaiah 9:6-7 –

This prophesy seems to be a continuation of that in Isaiah 7:14—“A virgin shall conceive and bear a son.” And thus we read, Matt.1:21-23; also, in Luke 1:27-35. “Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee, **therefore**, also, that **holy** (sinless—undefiled—pure) thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Peter asserts that David knew “That God swore to him, with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins he would cause one to sit upon his throne.” (Acts 2:30 —**Diaglott.**)

Thus, Christ Jesus shall become, not only the recognized ruler and governor of Israel (over which David's throne extended), but more—over all the nations and families of earth. Hence, we read of “**the increase of his government**” over that of David; and his government, unlike David's, shall not be disturbed by rebellions, etc., but it shall be at peace and in control of all. In all the increased government he shall have lasting peace, and his government not come to an end forever, (to the age) **i.e.**, until he shall put down all opposition and subdue all things to his will. Then, in the end of the Millennial age, he shall deliver up the kingdom (control) to God, even the Father—presenting to him the justified and perfectly restored of the human race, who thereafter shall be directly amenable to the Father. (See 1 Cor. 15:24-25.) R. 452

**He will be great and will be called
the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God
will give Him the throne of His father David. And
He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
and of His kingdom there will be no end.**

Luke 1:32-33

Messiah's Kingdom is styled “the Throne of David” for two reasons: first, the name David signifies Beloved, and the Messiah, as the Beloved of God, of the Father, is the Antitype of David, even as Messiah's Kingdom will be the Antitype of David's kingdom. David merely “sat upon the throne of the Kingdom of the Lord”; it was not his. So the Greater than David will sit upon the Throne of the Kingdom of Jehovah, to order it and to establish it to completion, during the thousand years of His reign. Then He will deliver it up. “The zeal (love) of Jehovah of Hosts will perform this,” operating through Messiah. R. 5136

A Notable Sermon by a Notable Man (Acts 13:16-41)

16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, “Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as



strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it.

18 Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness.

19 And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

20 After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they asked for a king. So God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’

23 From this man’s seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior --- Jesus.”

– Acts 13:16-23 –

The first Sabbath day [at Antioch of Pisidia, Acts 13:13-14] found Paul and Barnabas in a Jewish synagogue, according to their custom; because the Jews who had been waiting for the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies were the best prepared soil for the Gospel message; at least so far as their heads were concerned. Entering with the others they took seats and, after prayers, listened to the reading of a portion of the Law, a selection from the prophets by the Elder of the congregation, styled the “angel of the synagogue.” Then came the time for addresses by the rabbis or other learned persons. The officiating Rabbi recognized Paul and Barnabas as intelligent and cultured men and sent them word that they would be pleased to have them use the liberty of the synagogue, and give the people an address, if they felt so disposed. Then Paul stood up in his place, not going to the public stand. Saluting with his hand, St. Paul began his address, saying that he had something that should be heard by all Israelites and by others who revered God. He proceeded in a wonderful discourse, which in some particulars reminds us of Stephen’s address—which St. Paul [at the time] had doubtless heard and rejected. His argument was:

1 That God, having a great blessing to bestow upon mankind, had chosen the nation of Israel as a channel for the blessing; and that his care for that nation, ordering its affairs for centuries, was in line with this original purpose.

2 He showed that, by and by, in that nation of Israel God had further indicated the choice of a special family through which the blessing should come. Messiah was to be the offspring of David. And “the sure mercies of David,” to be accomplished in Messiah, would mean God’s sure mercies to Israel as a nation, because Messiah would come to them as their King.

3 Finally, after centuries of waiting, Messiah did come in this very line of descent of the house of Israel—of the family of David—Jesus of Nazareth. —V. 23.

4 The Messiahship of Jesus had already been recognized to a considerable extent. —Vs. 24-26.

5 The Jewish nation as a whole, however, represented by their rulers, heedless of the testimony of the prophets, and ignoring Jesus’ manifest purity, had accomplished his death through the Romans. —Vs. 27-29.

6 The Messiahship of Jesus was proven by his resurrection from the dead. This accorded with the prophecies of the Scriptures and was attested by numerous witnesses. (Vs. 30-37.) Note the absence of cant and rant in this discourse. Note the appeal to reason, the logic of the argument—fact upon fact, each in its proper place and order. However, the mere recitation of these facts might have accomplished little. The Apostle proceeded to draw from the facts a great lesson, most important to his hearers, namely, that

7 All were sinners, and that Jesus, the Messiah, through his death, had become the Saviour of sinners. Whatever his future work, he was already doing work for all those who would hear the message and give hearty response. R. 4364

God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:

‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’

Acts 13:33-34

**What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
– Psalm 116:12-13 –**

To Spiritual Israel these words have a peculiar significance which they could not have had to the Prophet David. Nevertheless, we would suppose that the Prophet had to a considerable degree the proper thought as to the sentiment of the words. King David no doubt felt an appreciation of God's goodness. His Psalms show us that he had a very appreciative heart, grateful for the blessings that came to him from the Lord. Properly enough his heart cried out: "What shall I render unto the Lord?" What return can I make for all His lovingkindness?

David knew of God's promise to Abraham; he knew that God would sometime bless all the families of the earth, and that this blessing would come through the Seed of Abraham. The Children of Israel knew that they were Abraham's seed. King David was one of these, and he felt that in some way he would be identified with this Promise. The matter was more or less vague to him; but, nevertheless, Abraham's Seed was to bless the world.

In proposing to "take the cup of salvation," we think the Psalmist had in mind that whatever experiences the Lord might consider necessary for him he would accept; for he must have a share in that salvation. He would continue to call upon the Lord that he might have such a share; he would pay his vows unto the Lord "in the presence of all His people." He had made solemn vows, and he would fulfill them—he would consider this a privilege; he would delight in doing God's will.

To the Christian, however, all this has a much deeper significance. Beginning with our Lord Jesus, these words have a special meaning to each of the sons of God called to joint-heirship with the great Head of the Church. Having been begotten of the Holy Spirit and received into sonship, these wish to make a special return for all God's mercies. These have the actual forgiveness of their sins through Jesus, as David did not. His sins were only typically covered; and if he could say: "What shall I render?" surely much more should we say: "What shall *I* render unto the Lord?"

Who that has trusted the Lord through many years, through sunshine and shadow, through smiles and tears, by still waters and through storm and tempest, has not proved the verity of His precious promises and His abiding faithfulness! Surely, "***Not one thing hath failed*** of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you!" (Joshua 23:14.) In the smallest and in the greatest affairs of our lives He has ever watched for our interests. Every cloud has had a golden lining!

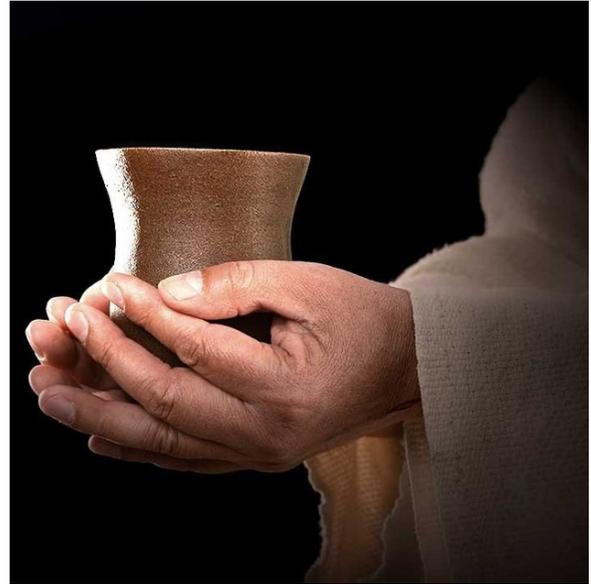
What, then, shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits? What have we, indeed, that we have not received from Him? Nothing! As

The Father has made a special provision for those who have made a full surrender of themselves to Him. The experiences which He has arranged for them constitute "the cup of salvation." And in accepting this cup from the Lord, we are accepting all the experiences that come to us in His providence, whatever they may be—joy or sorrow, pain or pleasure or anything. As Jesus exclaimed: "The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" so should this be the language of our hearts.

a tender parent loves to see his child appreciatively accept his favors, so does our Heavenly Father regard our attitude toward Him, and our manifestation of appreciation of His favors and love toward us. His unspeakable gifts to us were purchased at a great cost to His heart. Then we will thankfully take the cup of salvation, through faith in our Redeemer, and pay our vows unto the Lord. We will drink this cup with our dear Master—this cup of suffering and of joy. "We will trust and not be afraid."
R. 5538

**I will pay my vows to the LORD now in the presence of all His people.
– Psalm 116:14 –**

“I will pay my vows unto the Lord *now*,” said the Psalmist. And “now is the acceptable time—*now* is the Day of Salvation” —for the Church. *Now* is the time sacrifices are to be offered—not by and by. The Lord has so arranged that this Vow which we take upon ourselves, this Covenant of Sacrifice, must be fulfilled by us. The flesh which we consecrate must be consumed. If we seek to withdraw the sacrifice from the altar, we shall be dealt with in such a manner as to destroy the flesh; else we ourselves shall be destroyed. If we faithfully drink of the cup which the Father has prepared for us, we shall afterward receive the blessings which He has promised to those who thus drink. Therefore, now, in the present life, we drink of this cup He has given us; for unless we do this *now*, we shall have no share in the Kingdom blessings in the life to come.



The concluding statement of the Psalmist as given in our text is that he would pay his vows “in the presence of all His [God’s] people.” It is not enough that we shall be loyal in our hearts; but the Lord desires a public confession, a witness before men. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10.)

Let us appreciate more and more this “cup of blessing” which we are privileged to drink with our blessed Master. Our Father’s ear is ever open to the cry of His children. They are as dear to Him “as the apple of His eye.” They “are graven upon the palms of His hands.” “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you,” is His promise to His own. All that we can render will be at best very, very little in return for all His bounties, for all His matchless grace toward us. But the measure of love and zeal that accompanies our little all will indicate the measure of our gratitude to our Heavenly Father and our great Redeemer. R. 5539

*What shall I render, Lord, to Thee?
Thy love surpasses all my thought!
What can a fitting tribute be
To Him who my poor life hath bought?*

*Who sought me in my low estate,
And raised me up to heights Divine!
What words can fitly sound Thy praise,
Or thought encompass love like Thine?*

*What shall I render, Lord, to Thee?
My heart, my strength, my life, I bring!
My hands, my voice, in service glad,
To Thee, my Savior and my King!*

**Are you able to
drink the cup that
I am about
to drink?
Matthew 20:22**

Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance.

– Psalm 89:15 –

SALVATION is the joyful sound, as the poet has well expressed it, saying:

*Salvation! O the joyful sound,
What tidings for our race!
Deliv'rance for the world is found
Through God's abounding grace.*

This joyful salvation sound is the Gospel, as declared by the angelic messengers—“Good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people.”

Our Lord in symbol pointed out to us the fact that the message of his grace in the closing days of this Gospel Age would be so different from the commonly accepted message, misnamed the Gospel, that it would properly be termed a new song, although it would be the old song of Moses—the message of blessing typified by the writings of Moses and by all the ceremonies of the Law, and the message of the Lamb, the good tidings announced in connection with our Lord's birth, and throughout his own ministry, when all the people “bare him record, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth” (not threats of eternal torment to nine-tenths of the human family); and the testimony of all the apostles respecting the Lamb of God and the great work to be accomplished by him in taking “away the sin of the world.” It is merely this same song that is now being sung by those whom God has blessed with a knowledge of present truth—it is “the joyful sound” which only the people thus blessed know or can sing.

It is a worldly proverb that truth is stranger than fiction, yet this proverb is illustrated throughout “Christendom” today—the vast, vast majority of professed followers of Christ are strangers to the truth, but thoroughly familiar with the fictions of human invention—“traditions of the elders,” which “make void the Word of God.” It is in full accord with this that the angel declares to the Revelator that no man can learn to sing this song except the elect—the 144,000, the “little flock.” (Rev. 14:3.) Indeed, nothing is more manifest than that it is necessary to be somewhat of an “overcomer” of the world and its spirit which pervades nominal Christendom, ere any would have the courage to sing this song—to declare before men the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the goodness and grace of the divine plan, of which Jesus and his sacrifice are the center. To all others “the fear of man bringeth a snare,” and stoppeth their mouths from speaking “forth the praise of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.” “But the people that do know their God [his character and plan] shall be valiant and do exploits,” and like the apostles of old will feel and say, Whether it be right to obey God or men, judge ye; but we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. —Dan. 11:32; Acts 4:19,20. R. 2568

In harmony with the foregoing is the intimation of our text which implies that in order to be of the people who will know the joyful sound it will be necessary to “walk in the light of God's countenance.” Or, reversing the statement, the thought is that all who walk in the light of God's countenance shall be his blessed people, and shall know the joyful sound. R. 2570

Let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us. Yes, establish the work of our hands.

– Psalm 90:17 –

Only those who see the beauty of the great King, who discern something of his justice, his mercy and love, his wisdom, his power, can clothe their new minds with these glorious graces which more and more shine before our anointed vision as the beauty of the Lord our God. And the more clearly they are discerned, the more faithfully can we copy them, and the better do we love the joyful sound, and the better can we sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb. R. 2570

You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive. You have received gifts among men.

– Psalm 68:18 –

This grand expression respecting the glorious outcome of the Savior's work is quoted by the Apostle Paul in [Ephesians 4:8]. The figure thus thrust before our mental eye is that of a great Conqueror whose victory is being heralded. With the Romans we know that it was a custom that generals returning from various wars were granted what were termed "Triumphs"—that is to say, triumphal processions, that the people might have tangible evidence of their victories.

The prophecy says nothing about our Lord's descending from the heavenly glory to the earthly nature, but St. Paul supplies this feature saying, "He that ascended, what is it but that He first descended, into the lower condition of the earth?" (Eph. 4:9.) Thus the Apostle asserts that He that descended is He that ascended above all heights, that all things may be fulfilled through Him. An important thought here noted is that our Lord not only left the heavenly glory, but that He returned to a still more excellent glory—He did not suffer the disastrous loss of the heavenly nature as a result of His obedience in taking the human nature. As He left the heavenly nature to take the human, so in returning He left the human nature to ascend again to that which He had before, with the additional glory of the divine nature.

With most of the conquerors in olden times the captives were made slaves. Not so, however, will be the result of Jesus' victory. He leads forth to liberty and eternal life those who have been slaves of sin and death. Oh, that will be a glorious Triumph for the great Redeemer! In the language of the Bible, "He shall see the fruitage of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isa. 53:11.) What a glorious fruitage! —not only His own exaltation—not only the exaltation of His faithful Bride class, and the additional exaltation of "the virgins, her companions, which follow her," and the exaltation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets, but finally the deliverance to human perfection of all the groaning creation willing to accept the same upon the Divine terms of loyalty to God and to the principles of His Government, as these shall be made known to them. R. 5066

The Captain of our Salvation has gone before, He has accepted us as His joint-heirs, and we are following on, blest by the gifts which He dispensed when He ascended up on high; and we, in turn, will be His gifts to the world of mankind. When as Priests and Kings we shall be associated with our Lord, we shall bless all the families of the earth with a glorious opportunity of knowledge and obedience, that they may, if they will, attain life everlasting, "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." —Rom. 6:23.

I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them---My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them. I, the LORD, have spoken. I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land, and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.

– Ezekiel 34:23-25 –

We are not from this to understand that the Prophet David of old is to be made Jehovah's representative and given the care of the sheep in the future. The word David signifies **beloved**; and the thought, we believe, is that the antitype of David is meant. Jesus is preeminently beloved of the Father; and the Bride class, the Church, are to be the members of Christ, their Head—members of the Beloved. Thus the Lord Jesus said of His people, "The Father Himself loveth you."

We see then that The Christ, Head and Body—Jesus and the Church—are to be the antitypical David, or Beloved of God, into whose care all who are His sheep or who desire to become His sheep during the Millennial Age will be committed. The wild beasts, representing the evil-doers, those who will devour, destroy and do harm, will be caused to cease; and the whole world will become "the fold." No longer will there be need of making a special fold, building the fences against the enemies; for the sheep will be in a quiet and restful condition— "in the woods."

**The LORD preserves all
who love Him, but all the
wicked He will destroy.
Psalm 145:20**

**Then He who sat on the
throne said, "Behold, I
make all things new."
Revelation 21:5**

In other words, the close of the Millennium will witness what the Lord has declared, that nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all His holy Kingdom. (Isaiah 11:9.) It will witness also what Jesus has declared; namely, that from that time onward, there shall be no more sighing, no more crying, no more dying, no more curse, because all the former things shall have passed away. "And He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:3-5.) Even Satan shall be bound, to deceive the world no more until Messiah shall have fully accomplished the work of perfecting the flock. R. 5694

**As the Father knows Me, even so I know
the Father, and I lay down My life for the sheep.
And other sheep I have which are not of this fold.
Them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice,
and there will be one flock and one shepherd.
John 10:15-16**

The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice! Let the multitude of isles be glad! Clouds and darkness surround Him. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.

– Psalm 97:1-2 –

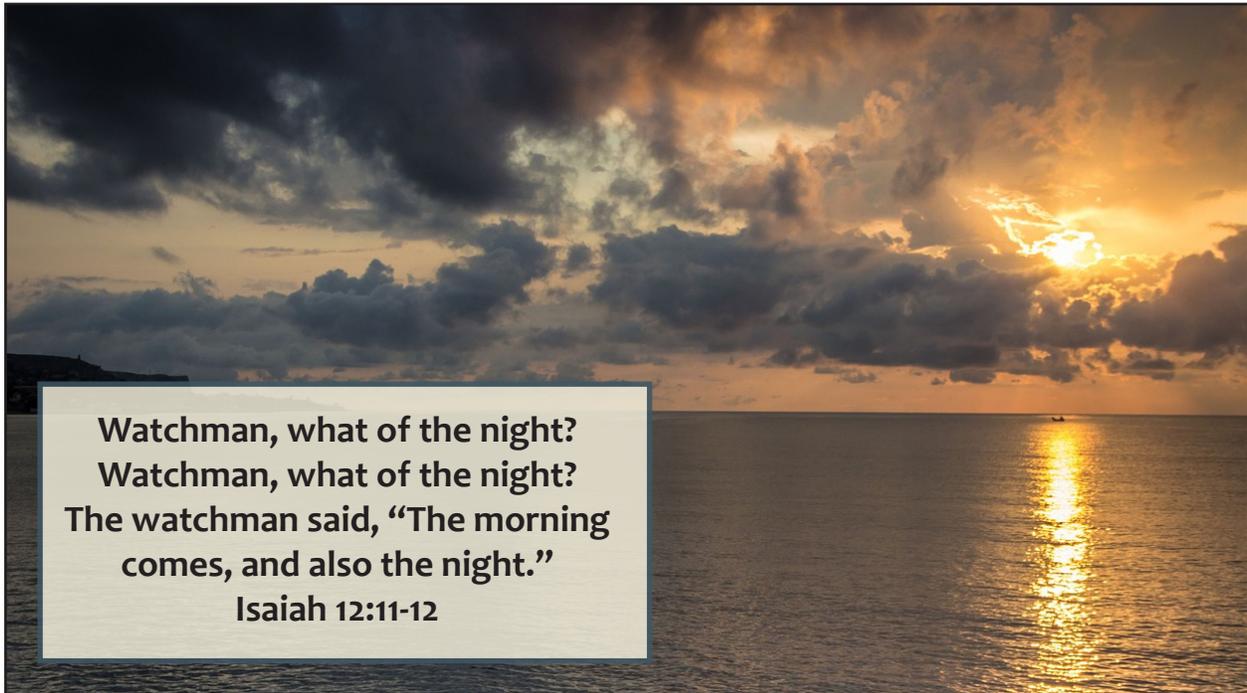
God's holy Prophets of the Old Testament and of the New give us numerous pictures of our day and the events now taking place in the world. The Psalmist David, taking prophetically a standpoint of observation future from his day declared, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof!" (Psa. 97:1.) [This] began to be true when our Lord Jesus, having returned to earth to set up His Kingdom, took unto Himself His great power. Yet not until His Kingdom has been fully established in the earth will His glorious Reign be clearly recognized. How true it is that the storm clouds are all about us in this Day of the Kingly presence of Jehovah's great Representative, the Executor of His great Purposes!

He is judging the nations and weighing them in the balance. Judgment is being laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet (Isa. 28:17), to the intent that ere long the equitable principles of His Government may be established in all the earth. Not only will all unrighteousness be made manifest, but "a fire goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies." (Psa. 97:3.) This work of judgment and the consequent Time of Trouble being a necessary preparation for the glorious Reign of Righteousness that shall immediately succeed it, and all being wisely directed by the High and Holy One, who is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind," the Prophet bids us discern in it an abundant cause for rejoicing and gladness. (See Psa. 96:9-13; 98:1-9.) Indeed, there is great cause for rejoicing, not only among the saints, but in the whole earth; and it is the privilege of the saints to tell the glad tidings to all who will hear.

But whether men hear or whether they forbear, let us tell it out, and by and by when the great afflictions of this Judgment hour begin to seal the instruction upon the hearts of men, then the blessed testimony will be as healing balm. They will see that He who smote them in His wrath, and scourged them in His hot displeasure, is also merciful and gracious, and unwilling that they should perish, but desirous rather that they should turn unto Him, obey His counsels and live. R. 5989

**"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice"
--is prophetic of that blessed time when the
antitype of David's throne, the Kingdom of
Jehovah's Anointed, our Lord Jesus, shall
be established in all the earth. Then indeed
may the earth rejoice; for that king will
reign in righteousness, and justice
and judgment will be the
habitation of his throne. R. 1996**





For His anger is but for a moment. His favor is for life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

– Psalm 30:5–

The literature of the world shows that intelligent men have refused to believe that the Divine Purpose in the creation of our earth has yet been attained. Continually we find references to 'the Morning of the New Day,' to the 'Golden Age,' etc., etc. Yet not to the longings of men's hearts, but to the promises of our God, do we look for real instruction on this subject. The Bible most emphatically declares that the entire period of human history thus far has been a night time.

The Prophet David explains, 'Weeping may endure for a Night, but joy cometh in the Morning;' (Psalm 30:5.) Thus prophetically we are assured that there will be a Morning whose glory, brightness and blessings will fully compensate for all the dark shadows of the Night time past. Our text is another prophecy along the same line. [Isaiah 12:11-12] The message of the Lord is, 'The Morning cometh.' St. Paul writes that up to his time the world had been under a reign of Sin and Death, not under a Reign of Righteousness and Life. (Romans 5:21.) He points out also that the Day of the Lord will come, and will come gradually, stealthily, taking the world unawares— 'as a thief in the night.' —1 Thes. 5:1-6.

All of the Apostles assure us that it is not God's purpose to permit the reign of Sin and Death to continue forever. They tell us that the Divine Program is that Messiah, in the Father's appointed time, will take to Himself His great power and reign King of kings and Lord of lords—putting down sin and every evil thing, uplifting humanity and granting a Divine blessing where for six thousand years there has been a Divine curse. The Bible writers explain that this does not signify a change in the Divine Purpose, but that God had planned this thing in Himself from before the foundation of the world; and that although He had permitted Sin to enter and Death to reign, He had made fullest provision for the Redeemer to die for our sins and eventually to become the Restorer and Life-giver to Adam and his race—to as many of them as will accept everlasting life on the Divine terms.

R. 6013

**Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!
– Matthew 13:43 –**

Amongst the Lord's people even, few yet understand that Jesus distinctly teaches that the 'Sun of Righteousness,' which will arise with healing in His beams and whose light will constitute the New Day, will be composed of the Church of Christ glorified—changed from human to Divine nature by participation in the First Resurrection. Our Lord Jesus tells this in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. He declares that in the end of this Gospel Age all of the wheat class will be gathered into the Heavenly Garner, and that 'then shall the righteous shine forth as the SUN in the Kingdom of their Father.' (Matthew 13:43.) We must not think, however that this signifies the Church without the Redeemer, but must remember that Jesus is 'the Head over the Church which is His Body' —Ephesians 1:22,23.

How wonderful, how beautiful, how appropriate are the word-pictures of the Bible! No one but the Lord knew of the great Divine Plan. No one but Him, therefore, could give these pictures of its development. In various terms and figures of speech the Bible attempts to give us a little glimpse of the glorious conditions of that Day. The New Day and the Kingdom will be 'the desire of all people.' In that Day the righteous will flourish, and evil-doers will be cut off from life. During that thousand-year Day of Messiah's Kingdom, Satan is to be bound, 'that he may deceive the nations no more.' (Revelation 20:2,3.) Landlordism will come to an end; for 'they shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat the fruit thereof,' but 'shall long enjoy the work of their hands.' —Isaiah 65:22.

The earth is to yield her increase. (Psalm 67:6.) Streams are to come forth in the desert; the solitary places are to be made glad. The entire earth is to become like the Garden of Eden. It is God's footstool, and He declares that He will make it glorious. It is not to be burned up with literal fire, as once we supposed. It is to 'abide forever.' (Ecclesiastes 1:4; Psalm 104:5.) 'He formed it not in vain; He formed it to be inhabited.' —Isaiah 45:18; 66:1; 60:13; 35:1,7. R. 6013



Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments, O LORD.

– Psalm 97:8 –

So says the Psalmist speaking prophetically. Taking a standpoint future, and looking back, he tells how Zion and Judah were made to rejoice by some special tidings of great joy. Was it the tidings of a long promised Messiah for whom the world had been looking for four thousand years, now found in Bethlehem? This was good news, but not the tidings referred to. Was it the message that the sacrifice is accomplished which has procured man's redemption? That is the foundation of all their hope, but that is not the special cause of rejoicing mentioned here. Was it that the crucified one has been raised from death by the power of the Father? That was glorious news; for in that God hath raised him from the dead, he hath given assurance unto all men of the acceptance of his sacrifice as a satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and therein, all who believe, may read their title clear to everlasting life.

But there is still another cause of rejoicing mentioned by the Prophet, and it is the greatest cause of rejoicing we have ever yet had. It was blessed to know that the plan of God had so far progressed as to secure the birth, death, and resurrection of the promised deliverer; but it would be still more blessed to know that the plan has so nearly reached its glorious consummation as to show that the time is fulfilled for the actual establishment of his kingdom and the commencement of his reign which is to bring mankind into the actual possession of the life and blessings secured by the ransom, and this is just the message that now comes to us; and those who believing, realize it, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: "The Lord reigneth!" and the fulfillment of every foretold sign of his presence bears witness to the fact.

The true Zion are now made manifest. They hear of his presence, remember the foretold signs and realize their fulfillment; they mark the accumulated testimony of all the prophets, and they have learned from the Scriptures that the object of that reign is the restoring and blessing of all the families of the earth, which he purchased from the dominion of death nearly nineteen centuries ago.

In view of this good news the Prophet not only foretells Zion's rejoicing, but he calls upon the earth to rejoice with her— "The Lord reigneth! let the earth rejoice." (Psa. 97:1) But the earth is not yet prepared to rejoice; for "Clouds and darkness are round about him," (Psa. 97:2), and they cannot see the blessings beyond because they walk only by sight, and not by faith. They do not know the Lord and have neither faith nor interest in his coming. They will only come to realize his presence in the exhibition of his power, under which they will first suffer before they can be blessed; for the powers of this world must either melt or be overthrown in the great time of trouble which accompanies the setting up of the kingdom of God.

Is it any wonder that Zion rejoices as she realizes the presence of him who has been consuming this power with the spirit of his mouth (by the manifestation of his truth), and who is to completely destroy it with the brightness of his presence (Gr., *parousia*)? 2 Thes. 2:8. The first to realize it after Zion, will be the daughters of Judah, fleshly Israel, whose blindness shall be taken away. Already we learn that the blindness is beginning to be turned away. Soon all the daughters of Judah will see and rejoice together because of the Lord's judgments against oppression and tyranny, and because of the returning favor of his "Covenant people." Soon the glory of the Lord will be revealed to all; the clouds being rolled away the Sun of righteousness shall shine forth with healing [restitution] in his beams and all flesh shall recognize it together. R. 814

All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name. For You are great, and do wondrous things. You alone are God.

– Psalm 86:9-10 –

Thus we see that the Plan which God has adopted furnishes opportunity for the manifestation of the principles underlying His own glorious character, which neither angels nor men could so clearly have understood by any other means. When the great work of restoration is fully accomplished,

angels and men will see the **Justice** of God—a Justice which permitted the penalty of death to be executed upon our race for six thousand years—a Justice which provided a Redeemer to pay this penalty for Adam, that he and all his posterity might go free—a Justice, too, which provided a great reward for the faithful Son who carried out, at such a cost to Himself, the Father's Purpose! This is the highest conception of Justice of which men or angels could conceive!

**Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne.
Mercy and truth go before Your face.
Psalm 89:14**

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

By this means God will also manifest His sympathetic **Love**, which otherwise neither angels nor men might ever have known. Had there been no sin, no death, no sorrow, no pain, they might never have known the depths of Divine Mercy. After

sin had entered the world, the angels beheld the Love of God, in that He “gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever [of mankind] believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life” for another! The Father's Love was thus shown in His Plan to send His Son to die for the world. This Love will be manifested to all men in the incoming Age, now very near at hand.

Through His Plan God will manifest His **Power** also; for while His Power has been shown in the creation of the worlds, of men and of the various orders of angels, still this manifestation of energy is small in comparison to the Power which He will yet exercise. This Power will restore every individual of the race to his former condition; every soul of man will be awakened from the tomb. This will be a manifestation of Power that is beyond the comprehension of humanity.

He has made the earth by His power. He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding.

Jeremiah 51:15

Then, too, God's **Wisdom** will be wondrously manifested. When the grand outcome of the Divine Plan of the Ages shall have been seen in its glory and majesty by all the created intelligences of God, all will hail Him as the infinitely Wise One—who fittingly ordained that every creature formed in His image should be tested as respects absolute loyalty, that only the loyal and obedient should have life, and that all others should be destroyed!

Thus we see that in His wonderful Program for dealing with sinners, angelic and human, God chose the very best way, the one most profitable to angels and to men, the one which most redounds to His own ultimate glory and honor. “Who shall not reverence Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?...All the nations shall come and worship before Thee, when Thy judgments are made manifest!

—Revelation 15:4. R. 5430

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

– Psalm 24:3-5 –

In this psalm the prophet David takes the standpoint of the dawn of the Millennial age, when, after the great time of trouble, the kingdoms of this world will have become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ (Rev. 11:15)...And he will set his King upon his holy hill of Zion, and give to him the nations for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. (Psa. 2:6; Psa. 2:8.) Then indeed shall the King, the Lord's anointed, reign in righteousness; and princes shall decree justice (Isa. 32:1); and, in consequence, there shall be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. —Psa. 72:7.

There will then be but one Kingdom (mountain or hill) in all the world—the Kingdom of God; and his Anointed will be King in all the earth in that day. (Zech. 14:9.) This hill or kingdom of the Lord is that to which the Psalmist refers when he raises the question, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?” To ascend into the hill of the Lord is to come into his Kingdom as loyal and obedient subjects, as true citizens, worthy of all its blessings and privileges, and not as aliens and foreigners, having no part or lot in the common interests and inheritance of all the true and loyal people of God, viz., eternal life and all its blessings of righteousness, peace and everlasting joy. Who indeed shall be counted worthy thus to ascend into the mountain of the Lord? “And who shall stand in his holy place?”

The answer to both inquiries is the same—He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.” These will be the required qualifications for citizenship in the Kingdom, when the Kingdom is established; and they are also the qualifications required now of all those who would be heirs of that coming Kingdom. The prophet does not ignore faith, but points to that character which is the legitimate consequence of a true faith exercised unto godliness. A faith which does not produce character is null and void. (Jas. 2:17.) Therefore it is plain that both the heirs and the subjects of the Kingdom of God must have that character which is both begotten and developed by the faith of the gospel; for if the faith of the gospel be held in unrighteousness there is no place in the Kingdom for any such. (Rom. 1:18.) R. 1744

He who has clean hands.

– Psalm 24:4 –

[This] means clean actions, clean conduct. If bad habits of any kind have been cultivated, they must be promptly forsaken. The hands must not be defiled with the holding of bribes, nor with the gain of oppression, and every evil thing must be resolutely put away. (Isa. 33:15.) It is in vain that any profess loyalty to God and to his anointed King and Kingdom while they continue in a sinful course of action. Loyalty to the Kingdom signifies determined opposition to sin in all its forms, and a firm resistance of it. R. 1744

He who has a pure heart.**– Psalm 24:4 –**

[This] signifies purity of will, intention or purpose, which, like the needle to the pole, always turns toward righteousness. Though some sudden or strong temptation may for an instant, through the weakness of the flesh, draw it to the right or to the left, yet quickly it recovers its normal position which is true to righteousness and truth. A pure heart loves righteousness and truth, and hates iniquity. It loves purity, and despises all that is impure and unholy. It loves cleanliness of person, of clothing, of language and of habits. It delights only in the society of the pure, and shuns all others, knowing that “evil communications corrupt good manners.” R. 1744

He who has not lifted up his soul to an idol.**– Psalm 24:4 –**

Pride is an abomination to the Lord and to all those who partake of his spirit. It is a weed, which, if once permitted to take root in the heart, will soon crowd out every grace. The Psalmist says, “I hate vain thoughts;” and such should be our sentiments. The grace of humility, meekness, is one of the most beautiful that can adorn the character. It takes a sober estimate of personal qualifications, is not puffed up, does not behave unbecomingly, and seeks to exercise its talents, not for pride and vain glory, but for the joy of doing good. It is modest, candid and sincere, both in consideration of its own qualifications and those of others. What comfort and pleasure are found in the society of those possessed of such a spirit. R. 1744

He who has not sworn deceitfully.**– Psalm 24:4 –**

Those who make a solemn covenant with the Lord, and who thereafter willfully despise or ignore it, have sworn deceitfully; and surely no such disloyal subjects can be admitted either to citizenship or heirship in the Kingdom of God. But those who, in this age, have made a solemn covenant with God and who are true to their covenant, even unto death, they shall ascend into the holy place, the temple of God—they shall be the heirs of the Kingdom, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; while all such, in the age to come, shall be recognized and privileged citizens of the Kingdom. These shall receive the blessings of the Lord promised in his Word. After first receiving the imputed righteousness of Christ through faith, they may, under divine grace, be made perfect in righteousness and worthy of eternal life. R. 1744

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

– Psalm 17:15 –

Jesus would have his disciples understand that righteousness and Truth are scarce commodities at the present time amongst men—that the world is full of error and sin and unrighteousness. His disciples, by reason of enlightenment, will discern between good and evil, righteousness and sin. And they must so love Truth, righteousness, as to hunger and thirst for it. To such, spiritual food will be granted. Truth will be dispensed to them as “meat in due season.” Nevertheless, because their longings infinite for righteousness are circumscribed by imperfections of the flesh in the present time, they will not attain full satisfaction until they shall experience their resurrection “change.” “When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” (I Cor. 13:10.) “I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.” —Psa. 17:15.

Well, says some one, will not Abraham and the Prophets, and others of past ages, who were so faithful to God, and who suffered so much for conscience sake, have a right to feel envious of the Gospel Church some of whom have not suffered half so much, and yet will be so much more highly exalted? Not at all. They will recognize God's right to do what he will with his own, and they shall be satisfied when they awake with God's likeness as Adam had it. (Psa. 17:15; 36:8; 63:5; 104:13; Jer. 31:12-14.) The perfect man will not know or understand the spiritual glory, that being wisely hidden from him; and he will be so absorbed and enraptured with the glory that surrounds him on the human plane, that he will have no aspirations for things unseen and not revealed. R. 4558 and R. 613

A Psalm of David.

Bless the LORD, O my soul and all that is within me. Bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

– Psalm 103:1-4 –

“O my soul!” —the appeal is not merely to the lips, but to the entire being. And so we find it with ourselves and others today: whoever is truly thankful to the Lord and offers him praise, remembering his benefits, will seek to render substantial thanks also in deeds that will be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord. The Prophet David may have appropriated the words to himself as a Jew, and may have thought of his own physical healing and blessing as evidences of the Lord's favor under the Law Covenant. But the prophetic application of this Psalm to spiritual Israel is still more interesting. The spiritual Israelites are New Creatures, and have this treasure in earthen vessels.

With these it is the New Creature that recognizes his healing, his forgiveness, his reconciliation to God; and, according to God's promise, all things are working together for good to him, because he loves God and has been called according to the Divine purpose. Continually the New Creature has cause to exclaim, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases!” St. Paul, carrying out this same thought, declared that the great Redeemer will ultimately present His Church before the Father faultless and perfect in love—“sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown an animal body, raised a spirit body.” We shall be like Him and see Him as He is and share His glory. R. 2551 and R. 4981

**My times are in Your hand.
– Psalm 31:15 –**

THE TIME, MY SOUL, IS SHORT!

No time to linger by the way,
No time for ease, no time for play;
No time for earthly loves or joys,
No time for worldly cares or toys —
The time, my soul, is short!

No time to murmur or complain,
No time to heed the heart's dull pain;
No time for tears or mournful song,
No time to ask, How far? How long? —
The time, my soul, is short!

Ah, yes! 'tis short—yet time enough
To run thy course, so steep and rough;
Just time to reap “the fields,” so white,
Before the coming of “the night” —
Just time, my soul, just time!

Just time to make thy heart more pure,
Just time to make thy “calling sure,”
Just time to enter through “the door,”
To reign with Christ for evermore —
Just time, my soul, just time!

GERTRUDE W. SEIBERT

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him.

– Psalm 34:8-9 –

The Scriptures declare that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psa. 111:10) —not a selfish fear; but a reverential fear; not a fear that the Lord is evil instead of good; not a fear that he will eternally torment or otherwise unjustly deal with his enemies; but a reverence of the Lord which recognizes his greatness and his goodness, appreciates the same, and fears to do aught that would be displeasing to him or that would separate from his love and favor. This proper kind of fear, which is the beginning of wisdom will never be lost, so long as the wisdom is maintained. We creatures of the dust, “by nature children of wrath, even as others,” and transformed and renewed only by the Lord’s grace and power and truth, must never lose sight of our own littleness and insufficiency, and of our complete dependence upon the Lord’s mercy and favor. To lose sight of this would surely mean our fall. Hence, although the Apostle declares that perfect love casteth out fear, we esteem his meaning in this passage to be the dread fear rather than reverential fear. Perfect love will cast out dread and slavish fear, but it will cultivate and stimulate and increase our reverence for the Lord; so that, as the Apostle again declares, even the advanced Christian who has lost his slavish fear, will, from love of God, and from a desire to please him and to attain the end which he has indicated for us, “fear, lest a promise being left us... any should seem to come short of it.” —1 John 4:18; Heb. 4:1. R. 2986

Your mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the great mountains. Your judgments are a great deep. O LORD, You preserve man and beast. How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! For with You is the fountain of life. In Your light we see light. Oh, continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart.

Psalm 36:5-7, 9-10

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.

– Psalm 63:5-6 –

By the expression as to satisfying his soul with marrow and fatness, the Prophet David evidently referred to the abundance of God’s favor and blessing which had come to him. He had a large portion, a fat portion, and appreciated God’s goodness, God’s favor toward him, taking him as a shepherd boy from among the flocks, and privileging him to engage in His service and finally bringing him to the throne as the king of Israel. For all this he was very grateful to the Lord. He appreciated all of God’s blessings. It was appropriate that his mouth should give praise, that he should be joyful, that he should speak of the Lord’s loving-kindness. So we find in the Psalms of David many beautiful expressions in which he gives great praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty. He speaks also of God’s majesty, of His wondrous power and might, and refers to the heavens as His handiwork. Whoever has time for meditation, will receive a great blessing if his thoughts shall turn toward the Almighty, acknowledging His goodness, seeking to give praise to God for all His manifold mercies, meditating upon God in the night watches. R. 5785

**Many, O LORD my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done.
And Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order. If I
would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.
– Psalm 40:5 –**

Looking back at the things that God already has done for us, we see that the Prophet has defined some of these, saying, “He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.” (Verse 2.) If we can apply this heartily to ourselves, what a cause it is for thankfulness. As we look about us, and see the whole world lying in the Wicked One, without God and having no real hope, —merely vague impressions—and when we look back and see how the Lord has delivered us from the horrible pit of condemnation and sin, how he has had mercy upon us and delivered us, and established our feet of faith upon the rock foundation, Christ and his redemptive work, well may we give thanks, and tell his mercies all abroad. Looking back we may see that happy day that fixed our choice upon our Savior and our God, as being the time from which our goings have been established, —our course no longer vacillating. It was there that we obtained a fixed purpose, a ballast which has hindered us from being upset when tossed, hither and thither, by the varying winds of philosophy and human speculation. Praise God for this which he already has done for us! No wonder, as the Prophet proceeds to say, we realize that “He has put a new song into our mouth, —even praise unto our God.” The new song is not one of doubt or of fear, nor concerning anguish of sinners; but a song of God’s Justice and Mercy and Love, —reasonable and harmonious in its every cadence. Thank God! It has brought a new life to us; a new pleasure in life, as well as new aspirations and new hopes for others as well as for ourselves. We can never thank the Lord enough for the blessings which we have already received at his hands, —for the things which he has already done for us.

And yet the things that we already enjoy of the Lord’s favor we are assured are but a foretaste of the blessings yet in reservation for them that love him—blessings which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to see or appreciate, but which God hath lovingly declared, and which we grasp by faith, seeing through a glass only obscurely, as yet, the glory, honor and immortality promised to the faithful. What we now have are not realities so much as promises and hopes. Present experiences being but the beginning of our comfort, we agree with the Prophet, that the number of God’s favors cannot be reckoned, computed. We are exceedingly his debtors; we can never discharge the obligation. But then we are his children; he is pleased to give us these things, and his request in return is that we shall act toward him in such a manner as will betoken our gratitude, and that we are indeed his offspring, begotten of his spirit. R. 3000

**He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry
clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.
He has put a new song in my mouth—Praise to our God!
Many will see it and fear, and will trust in the LORD.
Psalm 40:2-3**

LORD, make me to know my end and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You. And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.

– Psalm 39:4-5,7 –

Yes, it is always our blessed privilege to carry our sorrows and vexations to the Lord; “For he knows how to steal the bitter from life’s woes.” He does it, as the Psalmist suggests (vs. 4-6), by showing us, through experience, the vanity of all earthly things and their utter inability to satisfy the soul’s cravings, or to comfort the wounded spirit. Then comes the thought that the present life, with its cares, vexations and sorrows is passing away, that our days are but as a handbreadth, and however vexing our experiences, they will soon be over; and if we permit them to do so they will only work out in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and develop in us strong and noble characters, disciplined to thorough self-control, thoughtful consideration, patient endurance of affliction and loving loyalty and faithfulness and trust in God. Then the assurances of the blessed rewards of righteousness in the life to come begin to have a new and deeper significance, and we are made to realize that this is not our continuing city, but we seek one to come. Thus the heart is separated from earthly things, and made to realize the superior worth of heavenly things. Nothing but the Lord himself can satisfy the longings of the soul, which, tempest-tossed and tried, comes to realize—

*How vain is all beneath the skies,
How transient every earthly bliss,
How slender all the fondest ties,
That bind me to a world like this!*

Thus chastened and comforted, we learn to look beyond the present to the glory that shall by and by be revealed in the faithful overcomers, who, by patient continuance in well-doing in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, seek for the prize revealed to faith alone. Thus disciplined and blessed under fiery trials by going to the Lord for comfort and help, the child of God begins to realize what it means to be dead to the world and alive toward God, with a keen appreciation of his love and goodness and grace; and being thus separated from the world, and more firmly united to Christ, the language of the heart is, as the Psalmist further suggests,

“And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.” R. 1937

Appreciating the Lord’s promise of blessing to such as obey it, we have in mind that the Great King Eternal, the Creator, has adopted us into his family and given us the spirit of sonship whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” He has given us “exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the divine nature” and sharers with our heavenly brother Jesus in his Messianic Kingdom. How we should honor him! How it should be the chief endeavor of life to us to glorify our Father in heaven! How we should hearken to his words and keep them before us— “If ye love me, keep my commandments!” How we should realize that the end of his commandment is Love—out of a pure heart, fervently! How we should realize that hereby we know that we love God, if we keep his commandments—and his commandments are not grievous unto us, if we delight to do his will! Of this character are the sons who, as copies of the Redeemer, will be the heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord in his Kingdom. R. 4276

The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. Yes, I have a good inheritance.

– Psalm 16:6 –

It is only the faithful who are thus kept. We are not to understand that the Lord keeps any who do not themselves make the proper effort to know the will of God that they may do it; it is those who are following in the footsteps of Jesus, doing all in their power to please the Lord as they are able to discern the way wherein He would have them walk. These are today causing the voice of His praise to be heard, and grace sufficient is their portion. If the trials of faith, submission and trust shall be greater in the near future than they have yet been, these faithful ones will not fall. Their feet shall not be moved, even though a host encamp against them, and thousands fall at their side. "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." These will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, even though they be required for a time to follow where they cannot see.

Let us therefore go forward with good courage, knowing that He who hath led us thus far will continue to lead. He who favored us first will favor us last; and "He that is on our side is greater than all they that be against us." Thanks be to God that His grace has preserved us, that He has kept us from falling, that so many of us are still of one heart and one mind to go forward unflinchingly, whatever the coming days may bring! If they shall bring hardship and persecution, pain and trial, His grace will uphold us still. If they shall bring us tests of faith and endurance, His promises will not fail. Let our entire trust be centered in God. Let us continue to rejoice in Him. "Let Him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord, which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord." (Jer. 9:24.) R. 5500

***5 O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance
and my cup. You maintain my lot.***

***6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. Yes,
I have a good inheritance.***

***7 I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel. My
heart also instructs me in the night seasons.***

***8 I have set the LORD always before me. Because He
is at my right hand I shall not be moved.***

***9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices.
My flesh also will rest in hope.***

***10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will
You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.***

***11 You will show me the path of life. In Your presence
is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures
forevermore.***

Psalm 16:5-11

You will show me the path of life. In Your presence is fullness of joy. At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

– Psalm 16:11 –

When we consider how much is said in the Scriptures about joy and rejoicing among God's people, we are deeply impressed with the thought that our heavenly Father is very solicitous for the happiness of his children, even in the present life. So the Psalmist bids all the anointed body rejoice, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." (Psa. 33:1.) And Isaiah, speaking for the same class, says, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels." —Isa. 61:10.

This blessed joy, which so wonderfully lifts the soul above all the vicissitudes of the present life, is, as the prophet expresses it, joy in the Lord, not a joy in earthly possessions, or earthly hopes or ambitions. These earthly things are all so transitory and so changeable that a single blast of adversity may sweep them all from us; but not so is it with those whose hearts are centered in God and to whom he has shown the path of life. These have learned to estimate the things of this present life according to their true values; they see that all of its joys are both transient and unsatisfactory and that the only real value in it is in the opportunities it affords for experience and discipline and education in the things of God and for hearing the call of God and making our calling and election sure. In thus making the proper use of the present life—walking in the path of life which God shows us through his Word—we have the present joys of hope and faith in the things unseen, but sure and eternal; knowing also that by and by in the immediate presence of God we shall have fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at his right hand—the chief place of favor.

But while the fullness of joy in its widest sense is reserved for that blessed time when we shall be like the Lord and see him as he is (1 John 3:1,2) and be in his presence and at his right hand (in his chief favor), there is a fullness of joy in the presence and favor of God which is the privilege of every Christian now. Our capacity for joy now is not what it will be by and by, but it is possible now to have our little earthen vessels as full as they can hold of the joy of the Lord. And day by day it is our privilege to realize the presence and favor of God, if, by walking in the path of life, the path of obedience and loving service, we draw near to God. "If a man love me," said our Lord Jesus, "he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." —John 14:23.

It is indeed the will of God that all his children should be happy in him, that they should be always rejoicing; and if any one lacks this blessing, he is living below his privileges. Beloved, let us not be contented to live beneath our privileges. Let us appreciate the favor of God to the extent of seeking for it more and more diligently, remembering the exhortation, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." All the riches of divine favor are ours if in faith and humility we claim them and place ourselves in position to receive them as directed through the Word of God. "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full." And your joy can no man take from you, so long as you abide in Him who is our life, our joy, our rest, our hope. R. 1948

O God, You are my God. Early will I seek You, my soul thirsts for You, my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land.

– Psalm 63:1 –

The inspired Psalmist in loftiest strains of devotion and fervor puts into the hearts and minds of God's consecrated people sentiments of faith and trust and love and adoration to God, who is worthy of all praise. While many of these sentiments were based upon his own checkered experience, they were uttered under divine inspiration for the instruction and edification specially of the true spiritual Israel of God. Thus the Lord himself would indicate to us the sentiments of fervent devotion to him that should fill our hearts; and in this view of the matter we see how closely he would draw us to himself in love and faith and childlike confidence. While reason and common sense have their rightful place and are indispensable to a religious life, the soul that never mounts upon the wings of holy and fervent emotion, that is never stirred to its depths by a sense of the divine goodness and beneficence, has never yet experienced the blessedness of the relation of sonship. A true son of a beloved and approving father naturally experiences the fervor of tender emotion. Especially is this so of a true son of God who recognizes in his heavenly Father the perfection of every grace, the crowning glory of all excellence, and who lives in close communion and fellowship with him and has the constant witness in himself of his love and approval. Ah, those were no empty words of our blessed Lord Jesus when he said, — "The Father himself loveth you." R. 1914

The mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them. The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.

– Psalm 103:17-19 –

God's grace and mercy are to extend to the whole world of mankind—every creature for whom Christ died. The time for dealing with the world and giving them their opportunity of sharing in God's grace and mercy has already been appointed by the Father. It will be during the Millennium—the thousand years of Christ's Reign. He will be the great spiritual King of the earth; and His Church will be associated with Him as His joint-heirs and assistant rulers, teachers, healers, uplifters, rewarders and punishers of mankind during the Millennium. All this service of the world will be with a view to bestowing upon them, if they will, the grace of God, the mercy of God, which He purposed from the beginning, and which is to be brought to mankind through Messiah's Kingdom of Glory. For a thousand years the rising Sun of Righteousness will bless the world, flooding the earth with the light of the knowledge of God. Every creature will have his eyes of understanding opened to see, to know and to understand the Love of God, His tender Mercy and His Wisdom, all centered in and manifested through our Lord Jesus Christ. R. 5817

I remember the days of old, I meditate on all Your works, I muse on the work of Your hands. I spread out my hands to You. My soul longs for You like a thirsty land.

– Psalm 143:5-6 –

We observe that in Israel the spirit of praise was cultivated by calling to mind and recounting what the Lord had done for them. “If I do not remember thee,” says David, “let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.”—Psa. 137:6. See also Ex. 15:1-21; Deut. 7:17-18; 8:2; 15:15; 32:7; 1 Chron. 16:12; Psa. 20:7; 63:5-7; 143:5,6; 77:10-12.

So must the Christian continually call to mind the works of the Lord, especially his own individual experience of the Lord's leading and care and deliverances from dangers and snares and the wiles of the adversary. If we keep these things in mind and meditate upon them, our appreciation of God and his goodness grows, and the spirit of love and praise takes possession of the heart, and thus we are made to rejoice in the Lord always, and in everything to give thanks. So also the soul is made to hunger and thirst after God and to realize that God alone is its satisfying portion, and to desire more and more of his fullness. Thus, as the Psalmist suggests, our prayer will be, “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”—Psa. 42:1. R. 2031

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving. Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the LORD is the great God, and the great King above all gods!

Psalm 95:1-3

Praise the LORD! I will praise the LORD with my whole heart!

– Psalm 111:1 –

As we thus consider that, by the voice of inspiration, the whole human race is called to praise and worship and thanksgiving, we are led to consider further the relationship which the spirit of praise has to the Christian or godly character. David says, it is “comely for the upright.” But why so? It is because loving gratitude is one of the divinely implanted instincts of a soul bearing the image of God, and one which should therefore be cultivated. It is this element of the intelligent creature that is designed to be responsive to the divine goodness and benevolence; and it is this element of character in man, which makes fellowship and communion with God possible. If the goodness of God could awaken in us no sense of grateful appreciation; if we were wholly dead to such sentiments, there could be no pleasure on God's part in manifesting his goodness to us, and there would be nothing in us to call out his love; and so also nothing, of all his goodness and grace, would awaken love in us. But since for the divine pleasure we are and were created (Rev. 4:11), God endowed his intelligent creature with this element of character which, being responsive to his own goodness, institutes a lively and delightful fellowship with himself, which is the chief end of human existence, both on the side of the creature and of the Creator. Psa.16:11; Pro. 11:20; Pro. 15:8. R. 2031

The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let the God of my salvation be exalted. Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name. Great deliverance He gives to His king, and shows mercy to His anointed, to David and his descendants forevermore.

– Psalm 18:46,49-50 –

It is plain, therefore, that in the cultivation of the spirit of praise, thanksgiving and loving appreciation of all the manifest goodness of God, is the Christian's secret of a happy life. And in order to the cultivation of such a spirit it is necessary that we continually call to mind his acts of mercy and of grace; that in our prayers we frequently tell him how all his goodness is remembered, how every fresh evidence of his love and care causes faith to take deeper root and makes the sense of his presence and favor more fully realized; and how through such experiences our love and joy are made to abound more and more. We love him because he first loved us; and every time we see some new mark of his love, our love, if we have truly appreciative hearts, is called out more and more, and we are made to rejoice in God, in whose presence is fullness of joy. It is to this end that our Lord encourages our frequent coming to God in prayer with large requests for his favor, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive, **that your joy may be full.**" —John 16:24. R. 2031

Psalm 21:1-7

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD. And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! You have given him his heart's desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips. For You meet him with the blessings of goodness. You set a crown of pure gold upon his head. He asked life from You, and You gave it to him---length of days forever and ever. His glory is great in Your salvation. Honor and majesty You have placed upon him. For You have made him most blessed forever. You have made him exceedingly glad with Your presence. For the king trusts in the LORD, and through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be moved.



Index

Scriptures

Gen. 1:26.....	p. 48	1 Sam. 12:5.....	p. 22	1 Sam. 22:1-2.....	p. 109
Gen. 1:27.....	p. 47	1 Sam. 12:13.....	p. 22	1 Sam. 23:14-15.....	p. 109
Gen. 1:31.....	p. 49	1 Sam. 12:14-15.....	p. 26	1 Sam. 23:16-18.....	p. 109
Gen. 26:4.....	p. 3	1 Sam. 12:22.....	p. 23	1 Sam. 26:4-8.....	p. 114
Exo. 3:5.....	p. 58	1 Sam. 12:23.....	p. 23	1 Sam. 26:9.....	p. 114
Exo. 20:3.....	p. 64	1 Sam. 12:24.....	p. 24	1 Sam. 26:23.....	p. 117
Exo. 20:4-5.....	p. 65	1 Sam. 13:8-12.....	p. 28	1 Sam. 26:24.....	p. 117
Exo. 20:12.....	p. 95	1 Sam. 13:13.....	p. 29	1 Sam. 28:3-8.....	p. 123
Exo. 30:12.....	p. 214	1 Sam. 13:14.....	p. 29	1 Sam. 28:11.....	p. 123
Num. 4:15.....	p. 152	1 Sam. 15:22.....	p. 32,155	1 Sam. 30:1-6.....	p. 118
Num. 7:9.....	p. 152	1 Sam. 15:26.....	p. 122	1 Sam. 30:6.....	p. 118
Deut. 5:29.....	p. 33	1 Sam. 16:1.....	p. 35	1 Sam. 30:8.....	p. 118
Deut. 6:5-9.....	p. 2	1 Sam. 16:7.....	p. 74	1 Sam. 30:18-19.....	p. 118
Deut. 10:21.....	p. 9	1 Sam. 16:10-11.....	p. 75	2 Sam. 1:11-13.....	p. 126
Deut. 17:15.....	p. 19	1 Sam. 16:12.....	p. 75	2 Sam. 1:14.....	p. 126
Deut. 17:18.....	p. 172	1 Sam. 16:13.....	p. 77,80	2 Sam. 1:17-18.....	p. 127
Deut. 17:19-20.....	p. 172	1 Sam. 16:14-17.....	p. 88	2 Sam. 1:19-27.....	p. 127
Deut. 26:10.....	p. 27	1 Sam. 16:18.....	p. 88	2 Sam. 1:26.....	p. 129
Deut. 28:1.....	p. 4	1 Sam. 16:19-22.....	p. 88	2 Sam. 2:3-4.....	p. 134
Deut. 28:2-14.....	p. 4	1 Sam. 16:23.....	p. 88	2 Sam. 2:4.....	p. 131
Josh. 24:15.....	p. 57	1 Sam. 17:1-4,8.....	p. 89	2 Sam. 2:4-7.....	p. 135
Jud. 2:18.....	p. 3	1 Sam. 17:10,16....	p. 89	2 Sam. 2:10-11.....	p. 138
1 Sam. 7:3.....	p. 3	1 Sam. 17:22-24,32	p. 89	2 Sam. 3:1.....	p. 139
1 Sam. 8:4-5.....	p. 6	1 Sam. 17:33-35....	p. 90	2 Sam. 3:8.....	p. 139
1 Sam. 8:5.....	p. 5	1 Sam. 17:36.....	p. 90	2 Sam. 3:9-10.....	p. 139
1 Sam. 8:6.....	p. 6	1 Sam. 17:37.....	p. 90	2 Sam. 3:11-12.....	p. 139
1 Sam. 8:7.....	p. 8	1 Sam. 17:40.....	p. 91	2 Sam. 3:17-19.....	p. 139
1 Sam. 8:10.....	p. 12	1 Sam. 17:45.....	p. 91	2 Sam. 3:20.....	p. 139
1 Sam. 8:19-20.....	p. 6,12	1 Sam. 17:47.....	p. 91	2 Sam. 3:27-28.....	p. 140
1 Sam. 8:22.....	p. 13	1 Sam. 17:58.....	p. 94	2 Sam. 3:31-34.....	p. 140
1 Sam. 9:1-2.....	p. 14	1 Sam. 18:1.....	p. 95	2 Sam. 3:36-37.....	p. 140
1 Sam. 9:15-16.....	p. 14	1 Sam. 18:2.....	p. 94	2 Sam. 3:38.....	p. 140
1 Sam. 9:17.....	p. 14	1 Sam. 18:3.....	p. 96	2 Sam. 4:8-11.....	p. 141
1 Sam. 9:21.....	p. 15	1 Sam. 18:4.....	p. 96	2 Sam. 5:1-3.....	p. 146
1 Sam. 9:27.....	p. 15	1 Sam. 18:5.....	p. 96	2 Sam. 5:3.....	p. 145,146
1 Sam. 10:1.....	p. 15	1 Sam. 18:9.....	p. 99	2 Sam. 5:5.....	p. 148
1 Sam. 10:6.....	p. 16	1 Sam. 18:10-11....	p. 100	2 Sam. 5:10.....	p. 147
1 Sam. 10:9-10.....	p. 16	1 Sam. 18:12,14....	p. 100	2 Sam. 5:12.....	p. 149
1 Sam. 10:21.....	p. 17	1 Sam. 18:13,15....	p. 100	2 Sam. 6:5.....	p. 153
1 Sam. 10:23-24....	p. 18	1 Sam. 18:16.....	p. 100	2 Sam. 6:6-7.....	p. 153
1 Sam. 10:26-27....	p. 19	1 Sam. 18:28-30....	p. 102	2 Sam. 7:1-2.....	p. 157
1 Sam. 11:13.....	p. 21	1 Sam. 19:1-2.....	p. 102	2 Sam. 7:7.....	p. 157
		1 Sam. 19:9-10.....	p. 102	2 Sam. 7:8-11.....	p. 160
		1 Sam. 20:3-4.....	p. 102	2 Sam. 7:12-16.....	p. 162
		1 Sam. 20:31-35....	p. 102	2 Sam. 7:13.....	p. 162
		1 Sam. 20:40-41....	p. 104	2 Sam. 7:16.....	p. 230

2 Sam. 9:1-2.....	p. 168	1 Chron. 24:10,18-19	Psa. 23:1-6.....	p. 187
2 Sam. 9:3.....	p. 168	Psa. 23:2.....	p. 189
2 Sam. 9:4-5.....	p. 168	1 Chron. 28:2-3.....	Psa. 23:3.....	p. 190
2 Sam. 9:6-7.....	p. 169	1 Chron. 28:4.....	Psa. 23:4.....	p. 190,191
2 Sam. 9:8-10.....	p. 170	1 Chron. 28:5.....	Psa. 23:5.....	p. 192
2 Sam. 9:11.....	p. 170	1 Chron. 28:6.....	Psa. 23:6.....	p. 193
2 Sam. 10:19.....	p. 151	1 Chron. 28:9.....	Psa. 24:3-5.....	p. 244
2 Sam. 11:1.....	p. 172	1 Chron. 28:19... p. 218,223	Psa. 24:4.....	p. 244,245
2 Sam. 11:2-6.....	p. 173	1 Chron. 28:20.....	Psa. 25:4-5.....	p. 134
2 Sam. 11:9.....	p. 173	1 Chron. 29:1-3.....	Psa. 25:9.....	p. 72
2 Sam. 11:14-16.....	p. 173	1 Chron. 29:10-20... p. 225	Psa. 25:14.....	p. 68
2 Sam. 11:17.....	p. 173	1 Chron. 29:19.....	Psa. 27:1.....	p. 150
2 Sam. 12:1-7.....	p. 177	1 Chron. 29:20.....	Psa. 27:1-3.....	p. 203
2 Sam. 12:7.....	p. 178	2 Chron. 3:1.....	Psa. 27:4.....	p. 158
2 Sam. 12:13.....	p. 178	Psa. 1:2.....	Psa. 27:5-6.....	p. 118
2 Sam. 12:13-20.....	p. 179	Psa. 1:6.....	Psa. 27:14.....	p. 105
2 Sam. 13:28.....	p. 194	Psa. 3:1-8.....	Psa. 28:6-7.....	p. 126
2 Sam. 15:1-6.....	p. 195	Psa. 3:3.....	Psa. 29:1-11.....	p. 63
2 Sam. 15:7-9.....	p. 196	Psa. 4:1-8.....	Psa. 29:2.....	p. 120
2 Sam. 15:10.....	p. 196	Psa. 5:4.....	Psa. 29:11.....	p. 151
2 Sam. 15:13.....	p. 198	Psa. 8:1.....	Psa. 30:5.....	p. 240
2 Sam. 15:14.....	p. 199	Psa. 8:3-4.....	Psa. 31:13-16.....	p. 106
2 Sam. 15:31.....	p. 204	Psa. 8:5.....	Psa. 31:14.....	p. 132
2 Sam. 18:4-6.....	p. 205	Psa. 8:6-9.....	Psa. 31:15.....	p. 247
2 Sam. 18:29.....	p. 206	Psa. 10:4.....	Psa. 31:24.....	p. 106
2 Sam. 18:33.....	p. 206	Psa. 11:1.....	Psa. 32:1.....	p. 182
2 Sam. 19:12.....	p. 209	Psa. 14:1.....	Psa. 32:1-11.....	p. 183
2 Sam. 19:14-15.....	p. 209	Psa. 14:2.....	Psa. 32:3-4.....	p. 176
2 Sam. 22.....	p. 211-213	Psa. 16:5-11.....	Psa. 32:5.....	p. 182
2 Sam. 24:2.....	p. 214	Psa. 16:6.....	Psa. 33:6.....	p. 43
2 Sam. 24:10,18-19	p. 214	Psa. 16:11.....	Psa. 33:8-9.....	p. 43
2 Sam. 24:20-21 ...	p. 215	Psa. 17:1-15.....	Psa. 33:13-14.....	p. 54
2 Sam. 24:23-24....	p. 215	Psa. 17:15.....	Psa. 34:2.....	p. 72
2 Sam. 24:25.....	p. 215	Psa. 18.....	Psa. 34:7.....	p. 106
1 Kings 1:32-33.....	p. 222	Psa. 18:1-2.....	Psa. 34:8-9.....	p. 248
1 Kings 1:39-40.....	p. 222	Psa. 18:3.....	Psa. 34:9.....	p. 56
1 Kings 6:7.....	p. 226	Psa. 18:30.....	Psa. 36:5-7,9-10 ...	p. 248
1 Chron. 12:21-23 ...	p. 138	Psa. 18:32.....	Psa. 36:7.....	p. 61
1 Chron. 13:1-4.....	p. 152	Psa. 18:35-36.....	Psa. 37:3-5,7.....	p. 203
1 Chron. 15:15.....	p. 154	Psa. 18:46,49-50....	Psa. 37:4.....	p. 119
1 Chron. 15:26-28 ..	p. 155	Psa. 19:1-2.....	Psa. 37:5.....	p. 138
1 Chron. 16:7-36.....	p. 156	Psa. 19:7-8.....	Psa. 37:6-7.....	p. 141
1 Chron. 17:4,7-10... p. 219		Psa. 19:12-13.....	Psa. 37:9.....	p. 142
1 Chron. 17:10.....	p. 219	Psa. 19:14.....	Psa. 37:23-24.....	p. 87
1 Chron. 21:1,7.....	p. 214	Psa. 21:1-7.....	Psa. 39:1.....	p. 113
1 Chron. 22:5.....	p. 223	Psa. 23:1.....	Psa. 39:2.....	p. 112

INDEX

Psa. 39:4-5,7.....	p. 250	Psa. 90:12.....	p. 86	Psa. 138:6.....	p. 71
Psa. 40:2.....	p. 25	Psa. 90:17.....	p. 237	Psa. 139:1-6.....	p. 38
Psa. 40:2-3.....	p. 249	Psa. 91:4.....	p. 101,150	Psa. 139:13-18.....	p. 39
Psa. 40:3.....	p. 25	Psa. 91:1-16.....	p. 210	Psa. 139:14.....	p. 47
Psa. 40:5.....	p. 249	Psa. 93:2.....	p. 46	Psa. 141:3.....	p. 112
Psa. 40:8.....	p. 184	Psa. 95:1-3.....	p. 254	Psa. 143:5-6.....	p. 254
Psa. 41:9.....	p. 204	Psa. 96:8-9.....	p. 60	Psa. 145:2-3,5,9.....	p.41
Psa. 42:1-2.....	p. 67	Psa. 97:1-2.....	p. 239	Psa. 145:18.....	p. 175
Psa. 42:5.....	p. 111	Psa. 97:8.....	p. 242	Psa. 145:19.....	p. 56
Psa. 45:7.....	p. 80	Psa. 97:12.....	p. 158	Psa. 145:20.....	p. 238
Psa. 46:1.....	p. 101	Psa. 98:1.....	p. 147	Psa. 147:11.....	p. 56
Psa. 51:1-3.....	p. 180	Psa. 100:3.....	p. 185	Psa. 148:1-14.....	p. 73
Psa. 51:6.....	p. 179	Psa. 102:19-20.....	p. 52	Psa. 149:4.....	p. 62
Psa. 51:9-10.....	p. 180	Psa. 102:25.....	p. 43	Pro. 3:5-6.....	p. 132
Psa. 51:17.....	p. 180	Psa. 103:1-4.....	p. 246	Pro. 3:7.....	p. 71
Psa. 55:12-14.....	p. 204	Psa. 103:8,11.....	p. 58	Pro. 4:18.....	p. 147
Psa. 55:16,18,22...	p. 198	Psa. 103:8-11,17....	p. 182	Pro. 4:23.....	p. 103
Psa. 55:17-21.....	p. 204	Psa. 103:13-14.....	p. 82	Pro. 15:3.....	p. 47
Psa. 56:2.....	p. 110	Psa. 103:17.....	p. 57	Pro. 17:17.....	.p. 96
Psa. 56:3.....	p. 110	Psa. 103:17-19.....	p. 253	Pro. 17:25.....	p. 207
Psa. 56:4.....	p. 111	Psa. 104:1-35.....	p. 44-45	Pro. 20:22.....	p. 114
Psa. 56:11.....	p. 110	Psa. 105:1.....	p. 119	Pro. 21:3.....	p. 155
Psa. 57:1.....	p. 102	Psa. 105:9-11.....	p. 151	Pro. 22:4.....	p. 72
Psa. 57:7.....	p. 112	Psa. 108:5.....	p. 62	Pro. 22:6.....	p. 2
Psa. 63:1.....	p. 253	Psa. 110:1.....	p. 167	Pro. 23:17.....	p. 5
Psa. 63:3.....	p. 69	Psa. 110:4.....	p. 79	Pro. 25:21-22.....	p. 116
Psa. 63:5-6.....	p. 248	Psa. 111:1.....	p. 254	Eccl. 9:5,10.....	p. 124
Psa. 66:8-9.....	p. 228,229	Psa. 111:10.....	p. 55,56	Songs 8:6.....	p.99
Psa. 66:13-16.....	p. 228	Psa. 112:4-5,9.....	p. 169	Isa. 1:26.....	p. 11
Psa. 68:18.....	p. 237	Psa. 116:12-13.....	p.234	Isa. 9:6-7.....	p. 231
Psa. 68:24,35.....	p. 155	Psa. 116:14.....	p. 235	Isa. 12:11-12.....	p. 240
Psa. 69:9.....	p. 161	Psa. 118:1.....	p. 119	Isa. 16:5.....	p. 230
Psa. 78:70.....	p. 37	Psa. 119:10.....	p. 85,154	Isa. 33:22.....	p. 21
Psa. 84:4.....	p. 224	Psa. 119:11.....	p. 85	Isa. 40:31.....	p. 143
Psa. 84:11.....	p. 111	Psa. 119:12,15-17....	p.86	Isa. 42:8.....	p. 65
Psa. 86:9-10.....	p. 243	Psa. 119:33-34.....	p. 154	Isa. 45:7.....	p. 5
Psa. 89:3-4.....	p. 163	Psa. 119:67.....	p. 184	Isa. 45:15.....	p. 53
Psa. 89:7.....	p. 58	Psa. 119:97.....	p. 82	Isa. 46:9-10.....	p. 50
Psa. 89:14.....	p. 42,243	Psa. 119:101.....	p. 87	Isa. 55:1.....	p. 67
Psa. 89:15.....	p.236	Psa. 119:105.....	p. 83	Isa. 55:3.....	p. 165
Psa. 89:19.....	p. 77	Psa. 121:1-2.....	p. 202	Isa. 55:9.....	p. 160
Psa. 89:20.....	p. 77	Psa. 130:4.....	p.181	Isa. 55:11.....	.p. 49
Psa. 89:28-29.....	p. 166	Psa. 132:11.....	p. 162	Isa. 57:15.....	p. 51
Psa. 89:34-36....	p. 163,166	Psa. 133:1.....	p. 149	Isa. 61:1.....	p. 78
Psa. 90:2.....	p. 46	Psa. 133:2.....	p. 79	Isa. 61:10-11.....	p. 30
Psa. 90:4.....	p. 41	Psa. 136:3-9,23-24....	p.59	Isa. 66:1.....	p. 42

Jer. 17:9.....	p. 34,195	Rom. 12:14,17-18 ...	p.116	1 Pet. 4:13.....	p. 105
Jer. 31:33-34.....	p. 165	Rom. 12:19.....	p. 194	1 Pet. 5:5.....	p. 71
Jer. 51:15.....	p. 243	Rom. 12:19-21.....	p. 116	1 Pet. 5:6-7.....	p. 196
Lam. 3:22-23.....	p. 229	Rom. 15:1.....	p. 171	1 Pet. 5:8.....	p. 121,196
Eze. 21:27.....	p. 230	1 Cor. 1:18.....	p. 76	2 Pet. 3:18.....	p. 27
Eze. 33:11.....	p. 142	1 Cor. 1:26.....	p. 81	1 John 2:1.....	p. 181
Eze. 34:23-25.....	p. 238	1 Cor. 1:27-29.....	p. 76	1 John 3:1.....	p. 167
Hos. 13:9.....	p. 10	1 Cor. 3:17.....	p. 227	1 John 3:18.....	p. 97
Hos. 13:11.....	p. 1	1 Cor. 4:13.....	p. 76	1 John 4:16.....	p. 53
Amos 3:2.....	p. 27	1 Cor. 8:6.....	p. 7	Rev. 21:5.....	p. 238
Amos 4:12.....	p. 125	1 Cor. 13:1-8.....	p. 136	Rev. 22:16.....	p. 163
Hag. 2:7.....	p. 20	1 Cor. 13:4-5.....	p. 136		
Zech. 13:1.....	p. 216	2 Cor. 4:8-10.....	p. 110		
Mal. 3:6.....	p. 46	Eph. 1:7.....	p. 30		
Mal. 4:2.....	p. 241	Eph. 1:22-23.....	p. 7		
Matt. 3:17.....	p. 75	Eph. 2:19-22.....	p. 224		
Matt. 5:17.....	p. 174	Eph. 2:20-21.....	p. 164		
Matt. 12:35.....	p. 205	Eph. 4:32.....	p. 171		
Matt. 13:43.....	p. 241	Eph. 5:2.....	p. 128		
Matt. 18:10.....	p. 107	Eph. 5:15.....	p. 28		
Matt. 20:22.....	p. 235	Eph. 5:17.....	p. 17		
Mark 13:32.....	p. 125	Eph. 6:10-11.....	p. 94		
Luke 1:32-33.....	p. 231	Phil. 2:3-5.....	p. 170		
Luke 4:21.....	p. 78	Col. 1:18.....	p. 7		
Luke 6:27.....	p. 115	1 Thes. 3:3.....	p. 27		
Luke 6:28-29.....	p. 115	1 Thes. 5:22.....	p. 208		
Luke 10:27.....	p. 64	2 Tim. 1:17.....	p. 195		
Luke 16:15.....	p. 74,81	Heb. 1:1-2.....	p. 11		
John 2:16-17.....	p. 161	Heb. 1:14.....	p. 107		
John 3:16.....	p. 98,243	Heb. 3:4-6.....	p. 161		
John 3:20-21.....	p. 124	Heb. 4:12.....	p. 83		
John 4:23.....	p. 86	Heb. 9:11.....	p. 216		
John 10:7,11.....	p. 185	Heb. 9:12-15.....	p. 216		
John 10:14.....	p. 188	Heb. 11:6.....	p. 66		
John 10:15-16.....	p. 238	Heb. 12:12-13.....	p. 197		
John 10:28.....	p. 191	Heb. 12:22-23.....	p.107		
John 13:34.....	p. 194	Heb. 13:15.....	p. 229		
John 14:2.....	p. 193	Jam. 1:8.....	p. 120		
John 15:12.....	p. 97	Jam. 1:15.....	p. 174		
Acts 5:39.....	p. 19	Jam. 1:17.....	p. 46		
Acts 13:16-23.....	p. 232	Jam. 3:10.....	p. 137		
Acts 13:22,23.....	cover	Jam. 4:3.....	p. 10		
Acts. 13:33-34.....	p. 233	Jam. 4:6.....	p. 18		
Rom. 8:28.....	p. 143,208	1 Pet. 1:13.....	p. 121		
Rom. 8:31.....	p. 203	1 Pet. 2:5.....	p. 227		
Rom. 12:10.....	p. 168	1 Pet. 3:8-9.....	p. 103		

Poems

<i>Chamber Over the Gate</i> (excerpt)....	p. 206
<i>My Soul, Be on Thy Guard</i>	p. 197
<i>The Time, My Soul, Is Short</i>	p. 247
<i>The Word of God</i>	p. 84
<i>The Word of Truth</i>	p. 70
<i>What Shall I Render?</i>	p. 235

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p. 40 excerpt – *David: Shepherd, Psalmist, King* by F. B. Meyer

Back Cover

Excerpts by Charles T. Russell – PD39 (p.50); QB 199; PD43 (p. 53)

King David by Hannah Taylor

Appendix

GLOSSARY OF NAMES:

The People in David's World

Abiathar—priest to David together with Zadok; son of Ahimelech; escaped slaughter of priests at Nob; carried the Ark; conspired with Adonijah when he contended for the throne; removed as priest by Solomon. 1 Sam. 22:20-21; 2 Sam. 15:29,35; 2 Sam. 20:25; 1 Kings 1:7; 1 Kings 1:25; 1 Kings 2:26-27

Abigail—wife of Nabal; wife of David; mother of Daniel; taken captive by the Amalekites. 1 Sam. 25:3,42; 1 Sam. 30:5; 1 Chron. 3:1

Abigail—sister of David; mother of Amasa. 1 Chron. 2:16-17; 2 Sam. 17:25

Abinadab—housed the Ark of the Covenant for twenty years after recovering from the Philistines. 1 Sam. 7:1-2; 2 Sam. 6:3-4; 1 Chron. 13:7

Abishag—Shunammite woman brought to David on his deathbed; became central figure in conflict between Adonijah and Solomon. 1 Kings 1:1-4; 1 Kings 2:13-23

Abishai—one of David's mighty men; son of Zeruah; brother of Joab and Asahel; nephew of David; went with David to Saul's camp; killed Abner with Joab; defended David against Shimei; captain of a group of three mighty men. 1 Sam. 26:6-11; 2 Sam. 2:18; 2 Sam. 3:30; 2 Sam. 16:9-11; 2 Sam. 18:2; 2 Sam. 19:21; 2 Sam. 23:18-19

Abner—commander of Saul's army; son of Ner; cousin of Saul; killed Asahel; served Ishbosheth; defected to the House of David; murdered by Joab and Abishai; honored by David as a great prince. 1 Sam. 14:50; 1 Sam. 26:5; 2 Sam. 2:22-23; 2 Sam. 3:27,30; 2 Sam. 3:31-38

Absalom—son of David and Maacah; avenged his sister, Tamar; killed his half-brother, Amnon; fled to Geshur for three years; conspired to steal the throne from his father, David; died ignominiously. 2 Sam. 13:1,22; 2 Sam. 13:28-29; 2 Sam. 13:37-39; 2 Sam. 15:6,10; 2 Sam. 18:9-17

Achish—King of Gath whom David worked for while hiding from Saul; sent David away the first time because he thought he was crazy; sent David and his men away later to please the people even though Achish thought highly of David. 1 Sam. 21:10-15; 1 Sam 29:1-11

Adonijah—son of David and Haggith; good looking like his half-brother Absalom but younger; considered himself the "heir apparent" after Absalom's death; contended for the throne at the end of David's reign; conspired with Joab and Abiathar; was spared by King Solomon if he proved worthy; used Bathsheba to petition King Solomon for Abishag; killed by Binniah at command of King Solomon. 1 Kings 1:5,6; 1 Kings 1:7-8; 1 Kings 1:51-53; 1 Kings 2:22-25

Adoram—David's treasurer; died later under King Rehoboam. 2 Sam. 20:24; 1 Kings 12:18

Agag—King of the Amalekites; spared by Saul in slaughter; killed by Samuel. 1 Sam. 15:7-9; 1 Sam. 15:32-33

Ahimelech—High priest of Nob; gave David the shewbread to eat and the sword of Goliath; killed in the slaughter of the priests of Nob at Saul's command. 1 Sam. 21:1-9; 2 Sam. 8:17

Ahimaaz—son of Zadok; a good man; helped David to defeat Absalom; tried to spare David the news of Absalom's death. 2 Sam. 15:35-36; 2 Sam. 18:22-23,27

Ahinoam—wife of Saul; daughter of Ahimaaz; bore Saul four sons and two daughters: Jonathan, Jishui, and Malchishua, Ishbosheth, Merab and Michal. 1 Sam. 14:49-50; 1 Chron. 9:39

Ahinoam—wife of David; mother of Amnon. 1 Sam. 25:43; 2 Sam. 2:2; 2 Sam. 3:2

Ahithophel—David's closest advisor; betrayed David and sided with Absalom in his pursuit of the throne; advised Absalom to go in to David's concubines; committed suicide. 2 Sam. 15:12; 2 Sam. 15:31; 2 Sam. 16:21-22; 2 Sam. 17:15; 2 Sam. 17:23; 1 Chron. 27:33

Amasa—leader of Absalom's army; returned to David after Absalom's death; appointed leader of army of Judah in place of Joab; murdered by Joab. 2 Sam. 17:25; 2 Sam. 19:13; 2 Sam. 20:4,8-10

Amnon—firstborn son of David; born to David and Ahinoam; molested his half sister, Tamar; was murdered by Absalom. 2 Sam. 3:2; 1 Chron. 3:1; 2 Sam. 13:10-14; 2 Sam. 13:28-29

Araunah (Ornan)—Jebusite; owner of the threshing floor David bought. 2 Sam. 24:21,24; 2 Chron. 3:1

Asahel—one of David's mighty men; son of Zeruah; brother of Joab and Abishai; nephew of David; pursued Abner on foot and was killed by Abner. 2 Sam. 2:18; 2 Sam. 2:22-23; 2 Sam. 23:24

Barzillai—an aged man who helped David in his hour of need; sons were later blessed by David. 2 Sam. 19:31-39; 1 Kings 2:7

Bathsheba—wife of Uriah the Hittite; wife of David; mother of Solomon and Nathan. 2 Sam. 11:3,26-27; 2 Sam. 12:24

Benaiah—one of David's mighty men; son of Jehoiada; appointed by David as leader over his guard; one of three mighty men honored by David; remained loyal to David when Adonijah contended for the throne; killed Adonijah at command of King Solomon; killed Joab at command of King Solomon; appointed to head of Solomon's army; killed Shimei at command of King Solomon. 2 Sam. 20:23; 2 Sam. 23:20-23; 1 Kings 1:8; 1 Kings 2:25,31-35; 1 Kings 2:46

Chimham—servant of Barzillai who accompanied David across the Jordan. 2 Sam. 19:37-40

Cushi—courier who announced the death of Absalom to King David. 2 Sam. 18:31-32

David's Mighty Men—the group of valiant warriors who remained loyal to David and fought many battles for the House of David. 2 Sam. 10:7; 2 Sam. 23:8-39; 1 Chron. 11:10-47

Doeg—Saul's chief servant; an Edomite; reported David's location and slaughtered eighty-five priests of Nob at Saul's command. 1 Sam. 21:7; 1 Sam. 22:18-19,22

Eight Wives of David: Michal, Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah, Bathsheba. 1 Sam. 18:27; 1 Sam. 25:42-43; 2 Sam. 3:2-5; 2 Sam. 11:26-27

Eli—High priest at Shiloh; father of two evil sons; custodian of Samuel. 1 Sam. 1:3; 1 Sam. 1:24-28

Eliab—firstborn son of Jesse; oldest brother of David; passed over by Samuel to be anointed; angered with David over Goliath episode. 1 Sam. 16:6; 17:28

Gad—Prophet of God; helped David escape Saul; delivered news of God's punishment to David when he numbered the people. 1 Sam. 22:5; 2 Sam. 24:11-14,18-19

Goliath—Philistine giant who challenged Israel and whom David defeated. 1 Sam. 17:4,23,50

Hushai—loyal friend and companion of David; personal counselor; helped David to defeat Absalom. 2 Sam. 15:32-37; 2 Sam. 17:5-7,14; 1 Chron. 27:33

Haggith—wife of David; mother of Adonijah. 2 Sam. 3:4; 1 Chron. 3:2

Ira—Jairite; David's chief minister or priest. 2 Sam. 20:26

Ishbosheth (Esh-Baal)—son of Saul; succeeded Saul as King of 11 tribes of Israel; reigned 2 years until David was anointed over all Israel; returned Michal to David; murdered in his bed. 1 Chron. 9:39; 2 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 3:14-15; 2 Sam. 4:5-12;

Ittai—loyal friend and servant of David; a Gittite from Gath; crossed the Brook Kidron with David when fleeing from Absalom. 2 Sam. 15:21,22; 2 Sam. 18:2,5

Jehoshaphat—David's recorder. 2 Sam. 20:24; 1 Kings 4:3

Jesse—father of David; son of Obed; grandson of Boaz and Ruth; Bethlehemite from the tribe of Judah; father of eight sons. Ruth 4:17,22; 1 Sam. 17:12,58

Joab—commander over all the army of Israel under David; son of Zeruah; brother of Abishai and Asahel; nephew of David; obeyed David's order to put Uriah on the front lines of battle; murdered Abner; murdered Absalom; murdered Amasa; accomplished the death of Sheba; numbered the people at David's command; conspired to help Adonijah gain the

Joab (con'd)—throne; was warned about to Solomon by David; died at the hand of Benaiah by command of King Solomon. 2 Sam. 2:18; 2 Sam. 3:27; 2 Sam. 11:1; 2 Sam. 11:16; 2 Sam. 18:10-14; 2 Sam. 20:10; 2 Sam. 20:13-22; Sam. 24:2-9; 1 Kings 1:7-8; 1 Kings 2:5; 1 Kings 2:28-34

Jonadab—servant of David; son of Shimeah, David's brother; nephew of David; friend of Amnon; hatched the plan for Amnon to molest Tamar. 2 Sam. 13:3-5, 32-35

Jonathan—oldest son of Saul; most loyal and beloved friend of David; helped David escape Saul; covenanted with David and the LORD mutual loyalty and friendship to descendants forever; honored in David's Song of the Bow. 1 Sam. 19:1-6; 1 Sam. 20:12-17,42; 1 Sam. 20:34-42; 2 Sam. 1:18-27

Jonathan—son of Abiathar; helped David to defeat Absalom; announced Solomon's kingship to Adonijah. 2 Sam. 15:35-36; 1 Kings 1:42-48

Kish—father of Saul; from the tribe of Benjamin. Sam. 9:1,2; 1 Sam. 14:51

Maacah—wife of David; mother of Absalom and Tamar. 2 Sam. 3:3

Mephibosheth—son of Jonathan; grandson of Saul; became lame as a young boy; honored by King David through his covenant with Jonathan; taken in to King David's court; continued to be honored after David returned to Jerusalem. 2 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 9:6-11; 2 Sam. 19:24-30

Mephibosheth—son of Saul and Rizpah, Saul's concubine; brother of Armoni; killed by David as atonement to the Gibeonites. 2 Sam. 21:8

Merab—oldest daughter of Saul; pledged to David but given to another. 1 Sam. 14:49; 1 Sam. 18:17-19

Michal—daughter of Saul; wife of David; helped David escape from Saul; despised David when he danced before the Lord; was given to another husband and later was returned to David; remained childless but raised the five sons of Adriel. 1 Sam. 14:49; 1 Sam. 18:20; 1 Sam. 19:13,17; 1 Sam. 25:44; 2 Sam. 6:16,20; 2 Sam. 21:8

Mighty Men—See *David's Mighty Men*

Nathan—Prophet of God; communicated God's wishes to David regarding building of the Temple; confronted David's sin; mentor and teacher to Solomon; instrumental in thwarting Adonijah's plans to take the throne. 2 Sam. 7:17; 2 Sam. 12:1-14; 1 Kings 1:11,22-27

Nathan—son of David and Bathsheba; in the line of the Seed of David and lineage of Jesus. 2 Sam. 5:14; 1 Chron. 14:4; Luke 3:31

Ner—uncle of Saul; father of Abner. 1 Sam. 14:50-51

Obed-Edom—Blessed because he housed the Ark of the Covenant after the first attempt to transport it. 2 Sam. 6:11,12

Ornan—See *Araunah*

Rechab and Bannah—brothers; sons of Rimmon the Beerothite; murdered Ishbosheth in his bed; brought head of Ishbosheth to King David; executed by David. 2 Sam. 4:5-12

Rizpah—concubine of Saul; daughter of Aiah; mother of sons Armoni and Mephibosheth; publicly mourned the execution of her sons and cared for their bodies. 2 Sam. 3:7; 2 Sam. 21:10-11

Samuel—last Judge of Israel; Prophet of Israel; son of Hannah; raised by Eli; anointed Saul; anointed David; killed Agag. 1 Sam. 1:20; 1 Sam. 3:1,20; 1 Sam. 7:15; 1 Sam. 10:1; 1 Sam. 12:1-2; 1 Sam 15:32-33; 1 Sam. 16:13

Saul—son of Kish; from the tribe of Benjamin; father of Merab, Michal, Jonathan, Ishbosheth; anointed by Samuel as the first King of Israel; sinned against God twice; he and his descendants removed by God from becoming king; became obsessed with destroying David; visited a witch in his desperation; died ignominiously. 1 Sam. 9:1-2; 1 Sam. 9:15-16; 10:1; 1 Sam. 10:24; 1 Sam. 13:10-14; 1 Sam. 15:1-29; 1 Sam. 18:29; 1 Sam. 19:9-11; 1 Sam. 23:14-15; 1 Sam. 28: 7-8; 1 Sam. 31:2-4

Sheba—a rebel; Benjamite from the city Abel of Beth Maachah who led a revolt against David; was beheaded by the people of his city. 2 Sam. 20:1-2,6-7,13-22

Shimei—relative of Saul; cursed David; repented to David; spared by David and recounted to Solomon; banished to confinement in Jerusalem by King Solomon; killed by Benaiah at command of King Solomon. 2 Sam. 16:5-13; 2 Sam 19:16-23; 1 Kings 2:8-9

Sheva—David's scribe. 2 Sam. 20:25

Shimeah—brother of David; father of Jonadab. 2 Sam. 13:3

Shobi, Machir, Barzillai—three faithful friends of David; comforted him in his hour of need. 2 Sam. 17:27-29

Solomon—son of David and Bathsheba; succeeded David as King of Israel; built a magnificent temple. 1 Kings 1:39; 1 Kings 2:12; 1 Kings 6

Sons of David: Amnon, Daniel, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream, Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, plus nine more sons. 1 Chron. 3:1-9; 2 Sam. 5:14-15

Sons of Jesse: Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah, Nethanel, Raddai, Ozem, David. 1 Sam. 16:5-11; 1 Chron. 2:13-15

Sons of Saul: Jonathan, Jishui, and Malchishua; also Ishbosheth. 1 Sam. 14:49; 2 Sam. 2:8,10; 1 Chron. 9:39

Tamar—daughter of David and Maacah; sister to Absalom; molested by her half brother, Amnon. 2 Sam. 13:1-22; 32

Tamar—daughter of Absalom. 2 Sam. 14:27

Uriah—husband of Bathsheba; one of David’s mighty men; loyal soldier to David; put at front lines of battle by David. 2 Sam. 11:3; 2 Sam. 11:8-9; 2 Sam. 11:14-17; 2 Sam. 23:39

Uzzah—son of Abinadab; drove the Ark on first attempt; touched the Ark of the Covenant and was struck dead. 2 Sam. 6:3-7

Witch of En Dor—woman who performed a séance and called upon Samuel at Saul’s command. 1 Sam. 28:7

Wives of David—Michal (1 Sam. 18:27); Ahinoam (1 Sam. 25:43); Abigail (1 Sam. 25:42); Maacah (2 Sam. 3:3); Haggith (2 Sam. 3:4); Abital (2 Sam. 3:4); Eglah (2 Sam. 3:5); Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:24); Ten Concubines (2 Sam. 20:3)

Wives of Saul—Ahinoam (1 Sam. 14:50); Rizpah, a concubine (2 Sam. 3:7)

Zadok—loyal priest to David; served as priest with Abiathar; carried the Ark; anointed Solomon. 2 Sam. 15:25; 2 Sam. 19:11; 2 Sam. 20:25; 1 Kings 1:34,39

Zeruiah—sister of David; mother of three sons: Joab, Abishai, Asahel. 2 Sam. 2:18, 1 Chron. 2:16

Ziba—servant of Saul; servant of Mephibosheth; father of fifteen sons; honored by David. 2 Sam. 9:9-11; 2 Sam. 16:1-4; 2 Sam. 19:17,29

