

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XVIII. August, 1935 No. 8

The Habitation of God Through the Spirit

"Ye are God's husbandry, ye; are God's building." - 1 Cor. 3:9.

WHEN some object, substance, or possession, such as salt, light, a husbandry, or a building is used in Scripture to illustrate God's people, we may be sure there is some good reason. There must necessarily be some point of similarity between the thing named and the true child of God which it represents. The illustration is particular - 13, fitted to describe the qualities of such as God recognizes as peculiarly His own people. And so in our text, both a field and a building are used to denote the Church as the special object of divine care and purpose. For the present our attention may be more directly occupied with the last part of this text: "Ye are God's building."

What similarity, then, is there between God's children and a building?

A building is usually erected to be occupied by some one, more often as a habitation in which to permanently reside or to dwell in as a home. Thus God in His Word speaks of His dwelling in His people.. He says, "I will dwell in them and walk in them." And the Apostle prays for his brethren, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," for, as he says again, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. 2:19-22.) Here, then, is the fitness of the Scriptural illustration. A building is a dwelling place, and so God has chosen a building to represent the fact that He desires to really have in His Church a dwelling place for Himself.

The Need for a Sure Foundation

A tent may be erected without any very special need of testing the soil on which it is to be pitched for a night, or at most for a few brief days. But if one contemplated the erection of a building

constructed with strong permanent material, in which it is expected many years will be spent; and upon which the storms would beat through' many seasons, then a firm, substantial foundation would be carefully sought. Thus Jesus has said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock." - Matt. 7:24, 25.

The building Paul refers to in our text, constituted of Christ's redeemed people, and therefore called God's, building, has for its foundation the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock against which all the powers of darkness can never prevail in triumph. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation;" and to this the Apostle Peter adds, "he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." (Isa. 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6.) "But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold,' silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." - 1 Cor. 3:9-13.

Christ is indeed a "tried" foundation. He was tried when He came to His own nation and they received Him not. He was tried when His mission was misunderstood and He was hated by His brethren, and accused of allegiance with Beelzebub. He was tried when He drank the bitter cup of ignominy and shame. He was tried when all our guilt and sin was laid on Him, and though they were heavy, very heavy, He bore them. He shrank not from that dark, bitter experience when He knew that the cup might not, pass except He drank it. No, He bore it, bore it so that in due time justice will be satisfied to allow the sinner race go free from the prison-house; bore it till salvation was secured for all the guilty race who will receive it. Ah! Christ is a tried stone, and God's building needs no other foundation on which to stand.

And what of these who for the past nineteen hundred years have built on this "tried stone," this "precious corner stone"? Have they found themselves on a foundation crumbling under the searchlight of advancing truth? No, indeed. Through all the changing scenes, through the ebb and flow of movements among men, these saints have found "all other ground as sinking sand" and Christ alone an enduring foundation. They have "tried" Him when storms of affliction swept over them, and they have known His grace sufficient for every time of need.' They have "tried" Him in the waters of death, many of them in the deep, cruel waters of martyrdom. When every other foundation was being swept away, and when no human arm could sustain, when hope needed an anchor, a "sure foundation," God's people have found this "precious corner stone" an unfailing rock on which to build and to trust for time and for eternity. No storm could shake their inmost calm, while to that Refuge clinging.

Material for God's Habitation

It was not every kind of material that was wrought into the temple which Solomon built, and which was surely intended to typify that greater Temple of God which has been in process of construction throughout this Age of grace, and shortly to be completed. Solomon did not issue a proclamation to the people of that day saying that he would accept-all sorts of timber and stones as the building material of his gorgeous temple, but quite definite and restricted were his instructions. He said: "Command thou that they hew me cedar **trees out of Lebanon.**" The very best material to be found in all the earth was gathered at Jerusalem to be built into a temple which

was to outshine in splendor anything hitherto known. And yet that Temple which is to be the habitation of God through the Spirit, will eventually far excel in glory that temple built in the days of Israel's highest and richest attainments, and far excel in glory our present , powers of imagination to visualize.

Where then shall building material be found elegant enough to be reared on so precious a "corner stone" and on so "sure foundation" as Jesus Christ? If the earth must be searched from end to end to find suitable material for an earthly habitation of God, surely then,, if we were permitted to ascend 'into the realms of glory and 'behold the great Architect of this great Temple seeking material for it, would we not find Him gathering the pure, unfallen angels and constructing them into His spiritual habitation? Would not Gabriel and other glorious celestial beings be placed as shining pillars in this building of unsurpassable grandeur? So it would seem to us but it is not so in the plan of God. No, the habitation named in our text is composed of humbler material than angel hosts. Jesus Himself, the "precious corner stone," has, issued the call, saying, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance," and "him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." Thus all who will accept of Him as Savior and Lord, may find in Him this "tried" foundation stone, and though they be quarried from the depths of human sin, they may become in God's abounding grace "buildded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Behold God's messengers encircling the earth in search of material for this habitation. What do they find? Outstanding characters all polished and nicely fitted for such a building? Many wise and noble specimens of humankind marvelously preserved from the general leprosy of sin? Are these the kind of material they find? Ah! it is not after this fashion with God. If Solomon commanded the selection of Lebanon's best, how far above man's way is the transcending love of God. Crooked sticks and shapeless stones are gathered for His building. From the ranks of the lost sin-sunken and degraded of earth He has taken His material. Out from among the ranks of the "base things of the world, and things which are despised, bath God chosen His Temple material; "yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor. 1:27-29.) Illustrations of this blessed truth may be found in the Gospel records themselves. "A sinner" stands trembling in the house of Simon, and he with cold, self-righteous exclusiveness would shut her out from this "precious corner stone" on which God will 'build His habitation. To Simon she was only "a sinner," but to the Divine Architect she was a precious soul capable of 'being fitted into His building, there "to be to the praise of the glory of the God of all grace."

And once again another "forlorn hope" appears to add a testimony to this divine contradiction of man's ways, yes, as high as the heavens are above the earth: "Mary Magdalene, out 'of whom went seven devils." What a hopeless prospect! Can it be that a niche in the walls of that holy "habitation of God through the Spirit," can be found for her? Ah, yes, such are the possibilities since He came "not to call the righteous, 'but sinners, to repentance." He before whom she weeps seeks such broken hearts as hers, and the "goodness of God leading to repentance" has opened wide the gate of mercy through which such may pass, and in His love abide, and in His likeness and glory forever shine, as "God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus." "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! bow unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who bath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? . . For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things to whom be glory forever." - Rom. 11:33-36.

"Not Many Great"

In most buildings there are many more small pieces of material than large ones: more weak pieces than strong ones. There are but comparatively few large, heavy beams and pillars in contrast to the numberless thin boards and little pieces required. And there will be more pins than pillars, more light shingles than heavy sills, more small nails than heavy spikes. So it is with this building of God. As already seen, so few of earth's "wise," "noble," or "great," become part of this spiritual house, and while a few such are called, the "common people," poor in spirit but rich in faith, will compose the greater part of this habitation of God. Here again we are shown the marvelous love and power of God. No one need doubt his calling to so extraordinary an inheritance, if so be that his heart has been touched by the love of God, for here again His glory will be made perfect in weakness.

Still further comparisons 'between an ordinary building and God's greater building may be found in remembering that a large part of any building is out of sight. So many very, important pieces of material are hidden from view, and yet their place and share in the building is quite essential to its completeness. So it is with this handiwork of God. There are some in it who, 'because of gifts of the Spirit possessed, are placed by the Builder "as it pleaseth Him"-"some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers." But, and praise God that this is so, none of these are more necessary to the perfect design of God than the least of His saints, even as the human body is dependent on that which every single part supplies.

This fact, so true even now while the Church remains in the flesh, will assuredly continue to be true when the Temple is wholly completed. How beautiful is the unity of the Spirit which gathers in all who for these nineteen centuries have built on Christ the solid Rock. To praise God for the "pillars" which have given strength to this building all through its period of construction, is eminently proper and good, but is it not equally important and proper for us to remember with gratitude the vastly greater number of "out-of-sight" parts of the building of God? It is not difficult to see Paul, and John, or other Apostles, nor can we forget the outstanding men and women of subsequent years, whose ministry and influence have left an indelible impression behind, yet there have been, and there still are those obscure saints who have filled, and who continue to fill an important place in God's purposes. Thank God for all of these!

Who can measure the value of those contributors to the upbuilding of the Church, whose voices may never be heard outside the room in which they ' suffer on beds of pain. Who but God can know the value of the prayers of faith that go up from a heart of love going out in deep solicitation for all who love the Lord. Who but God can know the full importance of the words of comfort and exhortation such obscure ones may utter to other tried and tempted ones who may not as yet have reached the place of perfect rest in Christ, where "faith can firmly trust Him come what may." Who can question that such unseen ones are as really acceptable and necessary to the completeness of God's building, as some whose gifts and offices bring them more into prominence. How beautiful are the ways of God! How all "comparisons," such as are common to the natural mind, fade away in the spiritual habitation of God through the Spirit. All one in Christ. All equally dear and precious to Him who loved us and washed us in His own blood, and through whom we shall be presented faultless before His Father, and ours.

Though the material of which God's building is composed is thus very poor, and as we have seen, so unworthy of the "tried" foundation stone upon which it rests, yet there are two things which make it very precious, and these are its capacity and its durability, Under the fashioning hand of the Builder that material improves. It gradually becomes more like the foundation on which it is being built. Yes, indeed! poor as the material may be when God takes it to build it into the walls of His habitation, it has capacity for great improvement; and as God continues to dwell in this

abode in the hearts of His redeemed ones and they continue to have this intimate fellowship with Him, beholding His face, then are they "changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Time and accident demolish the most durable building man can, erect. Man's buildings, composed of the hardest stones, and protected from decay by all the devices known to science, will still crumble away under the ravages of time. But this spiritual house, made of such material as God is choosing, will last forever. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The habitation of God, wrought from "sinners saved by grace," bought by the precious blood of the Lamb of God, shall stand, "world without end.

Of Divine Origin and Workmanship

When we see any thing which has some striking evidences of skill and beauty in its construction, our first question is likely to be "Who made this"? Does this question then arise, Who made this marvelous, this indestructible building? The Lord Himself has answered that He is its builder, saying to Peter and to all, "Upon this rock will I build My Church." None e but God in Christ can build His habitation. It will be the blessed privilege of those called into Christ to assist each other, but no one -but God can put any one into this building. No one will ever be able in the eternal life to come, to point to some stone in that completed Temple and say, "There is a stone of my setting." No, not even an Apostle will be able to point to any such one. To God shall be all the praise and glory, and on every stone in that building there will be the mark of His tools, and the seal of His love and power. There is nothing in this building from capstone to foundation that does not belong to God, for "Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's" is all so blessedly true. Everything in it from the least to the greatest under its "chief cornerstone," will have been bought and paid for with the precious blood of Christ, redeemed, but not with "corruptible things as silver and gold," but purchased by a sacrifice which only the love of an infinitely compassionate God and Savior could ever make.

All then, who have been thus honored of God, called from among men to participate in so high a favor, should surely be experiencing an ever-increasing impetus of loving devotion to God filling their hearts, and find themselves confessing with greater and greater joy,

"Lord I am Thine, entirely Thine,
Purchased and saved by blood of Thine."

And, realizing more and more fully how absolutely we belong to Him by right of purchase, and experiencing the drawings of His mighty love growing stronger from day to day, surely we shall say out, of a glad and enraptured heart, "Take myself and I will be, ever only, all for Thee."

So let us rejoice, dearly beloved, that God is so graciously willing to build us together for a habitation of Himself, that He is so willing to dwell with and in us. Let us seek more and more to open wide the doors of our hearts and give Him full possession of every corner therein. Let Him fill our minds with the perpetual sunshine of His countenance, drive out all fear' and sin, and cheer our lonely hours of patient waiting for His call, "Come up higher," with the bright and confident assurance that He has indeed found a habitation in our heart's deepest love.

St. Paul's Obedience to the Heavenly Vision

"Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." - Acts 26:19.

WE ARE all familiar with the circumstances leading up to the scene in which the words quoted above were uttered. The speaker, the Apostle Paul, is one of the most remarkable characters in history, and especially in religious history. If there be one stumbling-block to the higher critic more outstanding than any other, it is doubtless the Apostle Paul-born at Tarsus, into a family with pronounced pharisaical connection in all probability, educated, wealthy or of more than ordinary financial standing, trained in the Jewish law by Gamaliel, a man of considerable influence in the council and himself a member of that council. This is a brief description of Saul, the arch-persecutor of the early Christian Church.

These critics find it difficult to reconcile Saul of Tarsus with Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ, the great evangelist of the Christian faith. How could a man with this background come to so radical a change of allegiance, from the dreaded antagonist to the staunch defender of and martyr to the cause? How can the higher critic understand anything about the changed life of any man, not having experienced that change himself? And we know that he has not done so because 'he is not led by the Spirit of God; therefore he is not a son of God. How can one who denies the foundation of the faith, and stigmatizes the personal experiences of the Christian as emotional and superstitious, be expected to speak the language of the consecrated believer? His conclusions are reached by the cold reasoning of his intellect, he knows nothing of the heart experiences. He has not been drawn of God, he has never had a heavenly vision to which he might be "not disobedient." He has never been led by the Holy Spirit into all truth. He knows nothing of the Comforter. What humble believer would exchange these things which he possesses, for the mighty intellect of an Alexander Hamilton, or for the power of a Caesar?

A Remarkable Contrast

Let us contrast the principal actors in this scene. On the seat of authority we see the representative of the great Roman Empire and the Idumean king and his beautiful sister, wearing the garb of worldly authority and surrounded by all the pomp, and ceremony of those things which shall pass away; officials, soldiers, and crafty Jews, filled, with an unholy -curiosity to see the prisoner, who in due time is ushered into their presence, bound in chains, but well poised and with firm step, as one who is supported by a knowledge of the righteousness of his position, and who is ministering the truth and those things which are eternal in the heavens.

Hark back in your imagination and listen to the prisoner's account of his conversion on the road to Damascus, an account so stirring as to elicit from one: "Paul, thou art beside thyself. Much learning hath made thee mad," and from the other, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." What a witness especially under such circumstances! "Let him who would be My disciple take up his cross and follow Me"! Has one ever taken up his cross more effectively than this marvelous man, or shown a deeper insight into the truths of the Christian faith? He has a message of comfort and instruction for all, from the babe in Christ to the one who like himself can say as he finishes his course, "I have kept the faith"; and we like to add, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that

day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." What a blessed assurance of hope and of faith!

The Heavenly Vision

When Paul spoke of the "heavenly vision," he voiced an experience which at some time, in some way, must come to every growing Christian. Not that one must or can see Jesus in either the fleshly body or the spirit 'body, but when, by extension of the meaning of the word vision, each must reach the point in his experience when he rises to a more exalted height of appreciation of the grace of God to him; when the things of time are seen in their true worth and his soul sincerely cries out

"Only Thee, my soul's Redeemer!
Whom have I in heaven beside?
Who on earth, with love so tender
All my wandering steps will guide?"

"Only Thee whose blood has cleansed me,
Would my raptured vision see,
While my faith is reaching upward
Ever upward, Lord, to thee."

Paul had other visions in his life than this of which he here speaks, and by these he was led on to do the mighty works which were his. We do not look for the miraculous visions in this day, nor is it necessary for our guidance and sustenance. Paul's vision was for a definite purpose and his experience marked a momentous incident in the history of the Church. Nevertheless, circumstances often work out in such a way that we see the will of God, and figuratively speaking, hear His voice as though calling to us, "This is the way, walk ye in it." When we search the Scriptures in order to show ourselves workmen that need not be ashamed, and to discover the will of God concerning us, and are led step by step into a higher life and have revealed to us the ever increasing glories of the imparted life, we as truly have the vision as (did Paul on the Damascus road, and as Moses when he saw God in the burning bush and received his revelation concerning the next phase in His plan relative to the Israelitish nation. Peter and John saw heavenly visions also which were given for a definite purpose, Luke and Mark received their inspiration through the sustained facts concerning our Savior's life, death, resurrection, and ascension. And so we of today have the record of these facts and the experiences of the Apostles to inspire us in our heavenly work.

Our Spiritual Vision

Paul saw Christ in this vision-the risen, glorified Christ. but we have the authenticated story of its effect upon the Apostle and others with whom he came in contact, to which we may turn again and again in this search for a clearer leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit. His vision was only momentary, though never to be forgotten. Ours may be perpetual if we take advantage and look often upon Him- who promised to send the Spirit of truth that we may learn of Him and come unto Him and humble ourselves under His mighty hand, that we may put off the things of the flesh and put on the things of the Spirit, that we may on bended knee and with bowed heart truly and sincerely pray:

"Oh, turn me, mold me, mellow me for use,
Pervade my being with Thy vital force,
That this else inexpressive life of mine
May become eloquent and full of power,
Impregnated with life and strength divine.
Put the bright torch of heaven into my hand,
That I may carry it aloft
And win the eye of weary wanderers here below
To guide their feet into the paths of peace.
I cannot raise the dead,
Nor from this soil pluck precious dust,
Nor bid the sleeper wake,
Nor still the storm, nor bend the lightning back,
Nor muffle up the thunder,
Nor bid the chains fall from off creation's long unfettered limbs,
But I can live a life that tells on others' lives,
And make this world less full of anguish and of pain;
A life that like the pebble dropped upon the sea
Sends its wide circles to a hundred shores.
May such a life be mine
Creator of true life, Thyself the life Thou givest,
Give Thyself, that Thou mayest dwell in me and I in Thee.

Besides these usual, common ways, the ways which reach us through the medium of the understanding and intellect, may there not be a more subtle way, one which reaches us through the heart side of our minds, still deeper and more real perhaps -- at a time when the affairs of the flesh are laid aside and our minds have drifted into the more rarified atmosphere of the spiritual, and we feel lifted up and in closer harmony with the Infinite? Not the mere ecstasy of the emotional, but are there not moments when we seem to grow in stature as men in Christ Jesus and when we feel that God has answered our prayer and has "bid our soul on soaring wings ascend into a purer clime"?

In this state we discern more clearly the value of our experiences and impressions of life; and inspirations come and help us, when we again descend the mountain top where we have communed with God and, our faces glow with His reflected glory, and it seems easier to mingle with men because of this assurance of faith. Our hearts go out in love and sympathy and we thank Him for His revelations, for the visions He has given us.

These are no idle, dreams or mere emotions, for men have been influenced by such things; some seeming trifle has been the turning point in their lives. They have gone on to greater things and looking back have recognized that the hand of God has been leading them., The natural circumstances of life, its environments and preferences, have often fitted men for important roles in the unfolding of God's plans, after perhaps they have been purified in the crucible of Christian enlightenment and faith. This has been true of many of the fellowservants of Christ.

This Damascus road experience of Paul may be duplicated by many, in that the light 'of God's truth concerning them, comes equally suddenly to them-and indeed seems to be demanded by the uninformed, some even questioning the validity of their conversion because they have known no such spectacular moment. It is to be doubted that any true conversion can be said to be instantaneous. Such cases are those where the seed has fallen by the wayside or upon stony

ground -- merely emotional manifestation of a superficial mind. True conversion is invariably associated with a condition or series of events leading up to it. The words of the voice from heaven in Paul's case would lead one to think that he had been one of those over whom the power of God had been hovering. That statement, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," would seem to emphasize this thought.

Saul of Tarsus was a Christ hater. He had pursued His followers to harass them and persecute them. Nothing seemed too evil for him to do in his animosity. But he had seen their courage, their faith, their trust, their allegiance to the cause of Christ; their despoiling was taken calmly, their dispersion was accepted as one of the all things of which the Apostle later spoke. He had been present at the death of Stephen, had heard his great testimony, had seen the reflected glory of Stephen's Master in his face as he looked into the open heavens and pleaded for the forgiveness of his murderers as, "he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Could it be possible that these hated ones were right, and he with his pharisaical attitude might be wrong? Here perhaps was one of the mysterious ways in which God moves, His wonders to perform. True to the psychology of such a mind, when it began to have imaginings as to his own position, he all the more earnestly tried to carry out his object to exterminate these unbelievers in the Law. Self-justification in regard to a false premise or proposition invariably, in the human mind, will stimulate an increased activity along these erroneous lines, and so it was in this case.

What Wilt Thou have Me to do

Paul could not shut from his sight the agony and the beauty of the face of the dying martyr, Stephen. Unconsciously the thought had begun to break down his resistance, until at that final moment he became helpless. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." These words coming from Him whom he had viciously pursued, destroyed 'his last vestige of opposition. "Who art Thou Lord?" was his last feeble stand. God had been little by little breaking this giant whom He had selected to carry the message to the Gentile peoples; and incidentally, largely through his efforts was it brought to the western world.

"What wilt Thou have me to do?" was not the question of a deluded man, nor of an epileptic, nor of the victim of a sunstroke, as some of the critics would have us believe; but of a man who had been brought to a complete, unquestioned final state of submission to God. And he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but immediately in his helpless condition expresses his determination to do Christ's will. He now has none of his own will. What does the higher critic know of such an experience as this in his own soul?

Are We Obedient to the Heavenly Vision?

The practical value of this record to the professing believer is, Are we "kicking against the pricks"? We surely could not be accused of persecuting the, Lord, but are we kicking against the pricks, or are we constantly by our lives and attitude asking, What wilt Thou have me to do? If we are guilty of the former, then we need not, nor can we, properly ask the latter question. If we are still kicking against the pricks, we have not made a full consecration. Our wills are not wholly dead. Therefore, our standing in Him is merely nominal. Paul's reaction to the vision was obedience. Many professing Christians are dreamers, merely idealists into whose minds come beautiful visions of what they would like to be in character, and service, but they are not obedient

to, the heavenly vision. Their lips have not been touched by the live coal from off the altar, their iniquity has not been taken away, nor have they said, "Here am I; send me." They have never consecrated. If they have, they should take the viewpoint of the Psalmist when he says, "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord, for He shall pull me out of the net"; and with the Apostle again we must forget the things which are behind and reaching forth to those which are before, we must, press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

If we are still kicking, let us cease to do so and ask this question of Paul's, "What wilt Thou have me to do?" If done earnestly, then we have the evidence that we are led by God in the knowledge of our complete submission, our obedience to the heavenly vision.

Now if we have had the vision and if we have been obedient, what effect will it have upon our lives? This matter of vision and obedience to it, is a factor in the accomplishment of the things of the world about us. The great advancement along all lines of human endeavor are dependent on a vision of better things to be attained unto, but in this sphere of activities men have failed to conform their ways to the, ways of God, so that because of him who is the prince of this world great confusion has come, with distress to nations and fear of those things which are coming to pass.

If this with regard to the vision of better things be true of the world, how much more may be done by and to those who have laid their all upon the altar of sacrifice and are carrying their two hands full of incense beaten fine and placing it upon the coals of the altar within the Holy.

Visions and dreams are an oft-repeated incident in the lives of those prominent in the Scriptures. Some are manifestly of God, while some are as surely of the Adversary. It is no doubt because of this that we are cautioned to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world." It behooves us then to watch lest we yield obedience to a vision which does not harmonize with the Spirit of God. That there are such today is very manifest.

Is it possible that any of God's people may have erected an idol at the door of the inner Gate, that looketh toward the north, or caused God to go far off from His sanctuary in our hearts? Have we possibly polluted His temple, which temple we are, by marring its walls with the form of any creeping thing or abominable beast; or have we turned our faces toward the east. and are we worshipping the sun toward the east; or in the chambers of our imagery do we offer false fire? If we have committed-any of these abominations is it a light thing?

Important Lessons for the Consecrated

These are the things the Adversary is constantly tempting the consecrated to do, and these are the things which obedience to the heavenly vision will prevent us from doing. If we have to any degree been living "after the commandments and doctrines of men," which things have indeed a show of wisdom, it is "because we have not set our affection on things above, but on things on the earth. We are not dead and our lives are not hid with Christ in God. Neither shall we appear with Christ in glory when He shall appear because He is not our life. (Col. 3:3, 4.) We cannot say with Paul that we have been "not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

Let it show forth the fruits of the spirit in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and let us remember that we have been "called unto liberty; only use

not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the desires of the flesh." (Gal. 5:13-16.) And again, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:1, 2.) How can we bear one another's burdens if we have not been obedient to the heavenly vision?

"What is it that makes a man obedient or disobedient? It is the man's own will. For there are two mysteries in life, the one that man can, and the other that men do, resist Christ's pleading voice.

As to the former we cannot fathom it. But do not let any difficulty deaden the voice of our own consciousness. If I cannot trust my sense that I can do this thing or not do it, as I choose, there is nothing that I can trust. Will is the power of determining which of two roads I shall go, and, strange to say, it is incapable of statement in any more general terms than the reiteration of the fact. Yet here stands the fact, that God, the 'infinite Will, has given to men, whom He made in His own image, this inexplicable and awful power, of coinciding with, or opposing His purposes and His will."

"Have You Felt the Spirit's Power?"

In other words, man is a free moral agent and is responsible for his conduct up to the point of his intelligence. Conscience is his guide, and if he violates that conscience he commits sin. Sin is selfishness expressed in some form, and is as much a truth as is, righteousness or any other virtue. If we wish to follow the heavenly vision, we can. It may cost us something in time, effort, or sacrifice. If we wish to 'be led by, the Spirit of God, we can. It may lead us into unpleasant places, but nothing impossible will be asked. Nothing beyond our ability to attain will be expected, provided we exercise our conscience, which plays so large a part in the Christian's life and of which one has spoken thus:

"But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience -- conscience revered and obeyed
As God's most intimate presence in the soul.
And His most perfect image in the world."

Obedience to the heavenly vision requires the leading of the Holy Spirit. No man by strength of his own spirit can react to this vision, for the Holy Spirit must 'bear "witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God, and "by this witness we are not to expect any special -manifestation inside ourselves that 'we might call the voice of God, for while it comes through His power and by His will, it comes to and through and with our spirit also. Many Christians have failed to enjoy their privileges to the full extent because they have looked for some assurance of their standing from a source outside themselves, and many also have had a false sense of security because of an emotional experience within themselves, in which case they are trusting in their own spirit and not in the witnessing of, the Holy Spirit with their spirit that they are the sons of God.

We may have this confirmation first by a realization that we are His sons; the spirit of sonship prompts our attitude toward Him because we are bringing forth the fruit of this Spirit which can

properly be called filial obedience, and thus we find that we are less carnally minded, "for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds 'of the body, ye shall live."

Now the carnal things are not necessarily sensual or in themselves evil. They are the things which the spirit of the flesh clings to and which obedience to the heavenly vision requires should be relinquished. Delight in the old order of things passes from the life. Old affections are supplanted by a struggle for the more spiritual, a new freedom inspires this struggle, and some have risen to a point where the martyrdom of death and the persecutions of life patiently borne have witnessed to the spirit within them that He who called Himself the Light of the world reigns within them and that - He finds "no fault in them." They may rejoice humbly in the knowledge that they are led by the Spirit of God and are therefore sons of God. Paul had this, assurance because he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

The Inheritance of the Divine Nature

In the passage concerning those who are led by the Spirit of God, the Apostle has nicely discriminated in the use of the word "led." It is not exactly synonymous with guide, as used for example in our Lord's statement that the Spirit of truth shall guide you into all truth. The word "led" seems to carry the thought of active compliance, cooperation, with no desire to resist the influence when recognized. Therefore, if we are led by the Spirit of God voluntarily this is again evidence that we are His sons, and this being the case certain definite results are produced which stamp one as of this class.

If ye be Christ's, then are -ye Abraham's -seed, and heirs according to the promise; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. This means heirship to the divine nature. And so this vision is borne in unto all who are Christ's by a proper understanding of His Word, and becomes a fixed conviction of eternal life within; a component part of thought, of faith, of consciousness, and assurance of hope and of faith, with no doubts, no waverings, because -such an one is the recipient of the imparted life. He knows, "Christ in him is his hope of glory." This new relationship becomes a life principle unto him, deep, pure. God is his light, "and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the 'blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Only so can it be said that one has put off the things of the flesh and put on the things of the Spirit; only so can one become like-minded with God, for the likeness is within and reveals itself by its fruits. I say unto you, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you that ye may be the children of your Father which, is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

"Ofttimes when the days are bitter and the pulse of life is low,
And the wheels of toil in their dusty course drive heavily and slow,
When the meaning of all is blurred, and the joy of seeking palls,
Ofttimes in my desert places a miracle befalls.
Is it a trick of the blood, a cleaning dot in the brain?
Sudden the far-off shower unguessed has filled the choking stream,
Some rift in the grey horizon let through a crimson beam,

Once more for me the sky is blue; I quaff the wine of the air,
And taste the fierce tang of the sea, and find the wild rose fair.
Once more I walk the allotted round with unreluctant feet,
And daily bread has savor, and love and labor are sweet

"Oh, once centuries olden, before Damascus Gate
Journeyed one with holden eyes and a dreary heart of hate;
When a glory shone round about him, and in the wondrous hour
He had passed from death to life. Then knowledge and grace and power
And a new word filled his lips; and joy and courage and life
Were borne henceforth in his heart, with the vision that fell from above.
And still when the days are bitter, and life is clogged with care
And the heart is salt with unshed tears and tender with despair,
An angel stirs the stagnant soul, and lo! there is healing there.
Once more my song is loosened and the life and labor sweet;
Once more in the tangled weft the pattern shines complete
And I know that the selfsame grace on my soul has been outpoured.
My spirit, by Damascus Gate, has heard the voice of her Lord."

ENOUGH

"I am so weak, dear Lord, I cannot stand
One moment without Thee!
But oh! the tenderness of Thine enfolding,
And oh! the faithfulness of Thine upholding,
And oh! the strength of Thy right hand!
That strength is enough for me!

"It is so sweet to trust Thy Word alone:
I do not ask to see
The unveiling of Thy purpose, of the shining
Of future light on mysteries untwining:
Thy promise-roll is all my own
Thy Word is enough for me!

"The human heart asks love; but now I know
That my heart hath from Thee
All real, and full, and marvelous affection,
So near, so human; yet divine perfection
Thrills gloriously the mighty glow!
Thy love is enough for me!

"There were strange soul-depths, restless, vast, and broad,
Unfathomed as the sea;
An infinite craving for some infinite stilling;
But now Thy perfect love is perfect filling!
Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord, my God,
Thou, Thou art enough for me!"

A Meditation in the Twenty-third Psalm

"The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want." - Psa. 23:1.

IT IS doubtful if there is another passage of Scripture more fitted to inspire and strengthen our confidence in God than the twenty-third psalm, that sweet shepherd psalm which most of us learned in childhood. As we ponder it here afresh, may He who so often before has graciously applied the comfort of His Word as balm to our hearts, do so once again, sending us on our way with fresh courage and renewed hope; His peace, which passeth all understanding, guarding our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord.

One expositor* reminds us that three thousand years have passed away since the sweet singer of Israel first sang this -psalm about the shepherd care of God. Thirty centuries! It is a long time; and in that vast period all the **material** relics of his life,' however carefully treasured, have moldered into dust. The harp, from the strings of which his fingers brought forth music which relieved Saul of his sadness; the tattered banner, which he was wont to uplift in the name of the Lord; the well worn book of the Law, which was his meditation day and night; the sling with which he overcame Goliath, and the huge sword with which he slew the giant; the palace chamber in which at last he died-all these 'have been buried deep amid the debris of the ages. But this psalm is as fresh today as though it were just composed.

*To avoid endless quotations we refer once for all to "**The Shepherd's Shepherd**" by Samuel Cox and "**The Shepherd Psalm**" by F. B. Meyer. This Meditation is little more than a compilation from their works. Theirs is the bread, only the basket is ours.

Its power lies in the fact that it dwells so much on God, so little on man. Notice, as we study it, that every verse stresses what **God** is and is doing. This is the true policy of life. Unbelief puts circumstances between itself and God, so that He is lost from view, and the soul becomes overwhelmed. Faith, on the contrary, puts God between itself and circumstances, so that it cannot see them for the glory of His shining countenance. Unbelief fixes its gaze on men, and things, and likelihoods, and possibilities, and circumstances. Faith will not concern herself with these; she refuses to spend her time and waste 'her strength in considering them. Her eye is steadfastly fixed on her Lord and she is persuaded that He is well able to supply all her need, and to carry her through all difficulties and straits. The outlook may be very dark, but the **uplook** is always bright, so faith looks away off unto Jesus, and to our Heavenly Father, and rests in Them in peace.

The Song of a Shepherd-King

It has been well observed that this psalm; derives no little of its beauty from the fact that it is a psalm of a shepherd about a Shepherd, the psalm of a king about a King. David himself had led a flock to the pastures of Bethlehem, guiding and protecting them with crook and staff as they passed from hillside to hillside. He had himself welcomed to his royal table fugitives from the wrath of Hebrew and alien tyrants, anointing their heads with oil, and filling their cups with wine till they ran over. And, therefore, he is speaking from his very heart, out. of what was most personal and most memorable in his experience. To him **God** was a shepherd, searching out for His flock pastures of grass, that is, pastures in which the grass had not been scorched up by the 'heat of the sun; and waters of rest, that is, waters beside which the sheep might securely lie

down. To him God was a shepherd, who, when leading His flock through desolate valleys and gorges, haunted by wolf and lion and bear, defended them with His staff and rod. God was also a bountiful and princely host, receiving to His table and sheltering in His house fugitives pursued by their enemies, offering them the oil of anointing; and gladdening them with overflowing cups of wine. And because God was both his Shepherd and his Host, David looks up to Him with an absolute devotion, and rests in Him with a calm and happy trust.

If this were true of David it was still more true of Jesus, that great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, whom David, in so many of his experiences typified, and it is to be true also of us, the members of His Body, as we seek to walk in His steps.

From the peaceful serenity of its tone, and the absence of any hint, of doubt, misgiving, or fear, it is probable, almost to a certainty, that our psalm was written when David was well stricken in years, when, by the experience of a long and checkered life, he had learned that in God alone are strength and peace. No! this psalm is not the utterance of his shepherd days, though it perpetuates their memory. Had it been thus, men might have said that it was but the natural outflowing of a confiding boy's heart, unversed in care or struggle. But this peaceful psalm is a voice out of the maturer life of the psalmist; out of memories of care and battle and treachery; a voice that tells that peace and rest of heart depend not upon the absence of life's burdens, nor on the presence of nature's tranquilizing scenes, but solely upon the shepherding care of God.

David's emotion of entire trust receives in our psalm a threefold expression: (1) I shall not want; (2) I will fear no evil; and (3) I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. I shall not want, for God will find me green pastures and waters of comfort. I will fear no evil, for even as I pass through the gloomiest and most perilous valleys He will protect and defend me. I will dwell in His house for ever, for He welcomes His guests with an unfailing bounty, and under His roof no enemy can make them afraid.,

I shall not Want

The careful - student will have noted that the word "Lord" with which the psalm opens, is printed in our Authorized Version in small capital letters. Wherever this is the case it stands for the word "Jehovah." This word, scholars tell us, means the Living One, the self-existent Being, the I AM. He was, and is, and is to come; who inhabiteth eternity; who hath life in Himself. All other life, from the little insect on the rose-leaf to the archangel before the throne is dependent and derived. All others waste, and change, and grow old He only is unchangeably the same. All others are fires, which He supplies with fuel; He alone is self sustained.

Now this mighty Being David claims as his Shepherd, and if this were really the case, he needed no argument to prove that all his wants must be supplied. He knew that, when he was a shepherd, no one of his sheep wanted aught that he could get. He had watched over every one of them with an unfailing solicitude. He had often wandered on the hills till he was weary, and long after he was weary, to find what little water the drought had spared. He had driven off birds and beasts of prey with the smooth stones of his unerring sling, and had even ventured forth against the lion and the bear, risking his very life that he might save his flock. And if Jehovah is a shepherd, will He let His flock lack anything that He can get for them? And as there is nothing He cannot get, how can they ever want?

This, doubtless, was David's argument, though he gave it no logical expression. We admit the force of the argument; we admire the beauty of the figure; we feel the pathos of the appeal. We love David for the vigor and the serenity of his trust in the God he had so often put to the test. But do we not also envy, rather than imitate, him? Which of us can say, with entire sincerity, "Since Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want. Because He is with me, I will fear no evil. Because He has anointed me with joy so often in the past when I have fled to Him, I will abide in His love and service for ever"? Alas! do we not feel that we want much, and are likely to be wanting much, before the journey is over?

Moreover, even if we do not fear anything' at present, do we not often trouble our present with anxious forebodings as to the future? And while we may have the grace to believe that we shall ultimately find ourselves sitting at His table on the other side, do we not sometimes fear that the journey there is likely to be anything but pleasant, that the future looks as though it will be just filled with inevitable changes, dark uncertainties, and gloomy experiences; that we have' yet to pass through that narrow gorge of darkness which leads from this life to the next, and instead of a cheerful trust in His abiding faithfulness, do we not find ourselves, on occasion, wondering if, after all, we shall be able to see the Shepherd going before us all the time, staff in hand, to 'brush from our path any 'brier of offense, and to guard us from the ills which, at least to our imagination, haunt the pathway which lies ahead of us?

Beautiful as the psalm is, much as we admire it, many of us, we fear, must read it as a rebuke. We feel that we miserably lag behind the fair ideal it sets before us, that we are far from having attained the holy serenity, the calm, unwavering trust in God, which 'breathes through its every word.

A Simple Test

If, however, we have any doubt on that score, we may soon put it to a simple, but conclusive test. Can we repeat without doubt or misgiving even the opening words of the psalm: "The Lord [Jehovah] is my Shepherd, I shall not want"? If Jesus His great Under-Shepherd, were to stand in our midst again, today, so that we could see Him with the eyes of flesh, and with all the graciousness of which only He is capable, were to ask us: "Brethren, lack ye anything?", and if we felt sure that He would give us whatever we asked Him for, would there be but one answer from us all, and would that answer be: "Nothing, Lord, nothing. We lack for nothing. We have everything we need. We have lacked for nothing thus far; all our present wants are bountifully supplied; and we are sure, so complete is our trust in Thee, that this will be so always"?

If we were quite honest with Him, quite frank, should we not meet His question with a chorus of eager requests? More than one brother, perhaps, would say, "Lord, I am not wishing to complain, but I am in very poor financial circumstances, and out of employment. I want work, and a fair wage for my work." Another, perhaps, would say, "Lord, of course I want Thy will done, not mine, but- the circumstances in which I find myself are not at all suited to my taste. I could fill another sphere of activities much more congenial to, me, if only the way were opened, but unfortunately lack the means to fit myself for the change." Or another would reply, "Lord, my business is waning. I have certain ideas, which, if adopted, would make all the difference in the world, but it requires new capital, or at least a line of credit, which I seem unable to secure.!" Perhaps one might say, "Lord, of course Thy way is best, but I had hoped to be able to spend my entire time in Thy service, ministering Thy gracious Word to others. As things are now, I am so pressed upon by domestic or business relationships, that I have hardly sufficient time to see that

my own spiritual life is nourished." A few, perhaps, who now spend their whole time in "truth" activities, might be disposed to reply: "Lord, of course I am very appreciative of my privileges, but when I succeeded in arranging my temporal affairs so as to spend my time exclusively in Thy service, I little realized how petty and trivial many of the problems of the Church were to which I would be assigned. Of course I have no idea of drawing back, but if there is another cornet in Thy vineyard to which I could be transferred I feel that my labors would proceed much more happily there." How many of us would be able to reply with absolute sincerity and joy: "Lord, I want for nothing; save to be more like Thee. And even this, dear Lord, Thou art working in me, and I look forward with confidence in Thy love -and skill, that this work of grace which Thou hast begun in me Thou wilt complete in Thine own good time and way. Meantime, I am content, whatever lot I see, since 'tis Thy hand that leadeth me"?

Our Father's Resources are Infinite

And yet, as soon as we pause to consider, we may see that these cries for what we do not possess, spring more or less from distrust -- most of them from ignorance of our Father's resources. We do not pause to reflect that our God is an infinite God. While the cry of the worldling may be and indeed often is: "I 'perish with hunger!" while it is true that even young lions lack and suffer hunger, they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

If God be our Shepherd He can get us all we want, for there is absolutely, no limit to His power; and He will give us all we need, for there is absolutely no limit to His goodness. Too often we forget, not only His resources, but His love; and how that love, which embraces all, takes thought and care for -each. We want to choose our own way, to walk at our own will, and to see the store from which our future needs are to be supplied. We forget that, if it have a good shepherd, the flock is not permitted to ramble where it will, and still less is every sheep in the flock permitted to do so. If they were, there would soon be no flock left, but only a few sheep scattered through many failing pastures (oh! how they fail), or on many barren hills, (oh! so barren) each at the mercy of its foes. We are, too commonly, like sheep who should want to see an -endless supply of food and water set apart in their own private store, as though the sun would never rise, or the rain fall, or the grass grow, again; or like a flock, which, when one pasture was consumed, and one stream dried up, should conclude that the shepherd knew of no other pasture, and could find no other stream, because they could see none. If we would at all enter into the rest of David's trust, we must learn both that God cares for the whole flock, and that He has provided for the future which **we** cannot foresee, and for which we cannot provide.

If only we could eat our bread, and do our work, from day to day, without fretting about tomorrow, and pass on to new spheres of action, and to new stores of bread, when the Shepherd goes before us, relying on His higher wisdom and love, would not our days go happily enough? There is hardly any reflection more painful than this, that if we look -back on our past lives, and recall all that has fretted and afflicted us, we shall find that most of our fears were groundless fears, most of our anxieties needless anxieties, most of our troubles a burden which we packed with our own hands, and imposed on our own shoulders, and that, had we been content to take each day as it came, and put our trust in God, the lives that have been so fretted and sorrowful, might have been bright with content and cheerfulness. Shall we not, then, for the days that remain, believe that, since Jehovah is our Shepherd, we shall not want?

Fellowship with Jesus

But let us also understand that, while the Good Shepherd will not let any of us' want any good thing, His main care will be-for the whole flock, and that at times He may do us the honor of asking us to bear trouble and bear pain, for the sake of the flock. As He Himself spared not His well beloved Son, who was more than life itself to Him as Jesus came and willingly sacrificed Himself; as in all our afflictions Jehovah Himself is afflicted, so He may invite us to bear toil and pain on behalf of others. Shall we shrink and complain if He should put this honor on us? We shall not, if we are wise; for in calling us to this service He is not, as we might hastily infer, asking us to sacrifice ourselves to others; He is rather asking us to serve others by toils and sacrifices by which we ourselves shall be made perfect. Reader, can you recall any labor to which you have bent, or any sacrifice you may have borne for the good of others, which has not, in the long run, made you wiser, better, and happier? Be sure then; when the call to service and sacrifice comes again, that God is asking you to lose your life only that you may find it, to serve His flock and to suffer for it, only that you may enter more closely into the joy and fellowship of your Lord.

I Will Fear no Evil

We have considered David's calm assurance that since the Lord was his Shepherd he could not possibly want; let us turn next to his second expression of confidence: "I will fear no evil."

Perfect love casteth out fear. Nothing else will do it. You may argue against fear, whether in yourself or in others. You may laugh it to scorn. You may try to shame it. But all will be in vain. If you would master fear, whether in yourself or in others, you must expel it by the trust which is born of love. A simple illustration will suffice to demonstrate this. A man comes home extremely hungry. His whole nature craves food. But as he enters his house he learns that his child, suddenly stricken with fever, is lying at the point of death. What becomes of that man's hunger? It is forgotten; it is gone. In the intense love and grief with which he bends over the tiny, feverish form, his own hunger is forgotten, and he thinks only of how best he may minister to his child's needs. Thus the lower passions are subdued in the soul by the higher. Thus, and thus only, is fear dispelled. And so it happens that the most timid brother or sister, from the natural standpoint, who yet is conscious of the presence of the Good Shepherd, can sing through the gloom, with notes of music which vibrate with the buoyancy of a courage which cannot flinch or falter. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

Thou art with Me

Have you ever noticed the change in the pronoun here? Hitherto the Psalmist has spoken of the Lord in the third person; but now, as he enters the dark, gloomy ravine, like the sheep had often done to him, he, as one of the Lord's sheep, presses close against his Shepherd. No longer does he speak about Him; he speaks to Him. In the green pastures, and beside the still waters, He was content to speak **of** Him. "**He** maketh me to lie down. "**He** leadeth me." But now, as the darkness deepens it is "THOU."

When things are going well with us we may content ourselves with talking about the Lord; but when the sky darkens, we hasten-to talk directly to Him. I will fear no evil, though I walk'

through a gloomy ravine, even the shadow of death itself; I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod, Thy staff, they comfort me.

For Ever with the Lord

With Jehovah as his Shepherd, then, David was assured of two things. First, he could not experience want, and second, he would fear no evil. Just a word in closing, on the third expression of his trust and devotion: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over; surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Is it still the Shepherd whom we meet in the closing verses of this psalm? Are the memories of his pastoral life still giving form and color to David's thoughts? Expositors differ in their viewpoints on this question. Some think the figure of the Shepherd is maintained throughout, and it must be admitted that if this be true, the value of this brief lyric, from the literary standpoint, would be enhanced. Others think that at this point the figure changes, and that, whereas in the first four verses of the psalm we see a shepherd guiding and caring for his flock, we see in the last two verses a King, who receives fugitives to his table with a princely hospitality, despite all the threatenings of their foes; anoints them for the feast with cool, fragrant, oils; fills their cup with wine till it runs over, and so bountifully supplies their wants that they resolve to stay with him for good, feeling that in his house, and reclining at his table, they have all their hearts can desire.

However we may read them,- we cannot doubt that much new meaning and beauty is thrown into the psalm by its final verses. Hitherto David has described the providence of God in neutral tints, in negative tones. The Good Shepherd supplies the wants, and relieves the fears of His flock. There is grass for their hunger; there is water for their thirst; there is the protecting staff for their weakness. Hitherto, therefore, David has said only: "I cannot want; I will fear no evil." True, even to rise above the fear of want and danger gravely tasks our faith. But to the faith of David this seems an incomplete result. If he is to do justice to his sense of the divine trustworthiness and goodness his voice must take warmer, fuller tones. If he is to give the energies of his faith way and scope he must soar into a higher strain, and breathe a more illumined atmosphere. The divine providence is far more than a mere asylum from want, or a mere refuge from peril. It is characterized by the generous warmth and bounty of **Home**. And he who sincerely trusts in that providence does far more than surmount the depressions of fear and care; he mounts into a triumphant gladness, a sacred and constant joy. Hence David depicts himself as sitting at the table of the divine Shepherd, anointed with the oil of festive mirth, drinking of a cup which runs over, so full is it of quickening joy, while his foes, the enemies of his peace, rave and threaten ineffectively, from beyond a gulf they cannot pass. I cannot want!-No, indeed. I am raised a whole heaven above want. I sit at a table lavishly supplied with all that is best and choicest; with fragrant oil on my head, and the wine-cup in my hand. I will fear no evil!-What is there to fear in this secure abode? , My enemies, want, and care? Ah! see, they stand afar off-impotent, incapable of approach. Only goodness and lovingness pursue me now, or so pursue me as to reach me. I will dwell with God my Shepherd Host. I sit at His bountiful table. I shall never more go out from His presence. And, therefore, with my whole heart will I sing and give praise. I am the happy guest of God, and dwell with Him in an inviolable sanctuary, an eternal home.

Thus the psalm, which opens in a mood of sacred and tranquil content, closes in a rapture. He who knew no want, kindles into an ecstasy of triumphant joy. He who feared no evil, wears the

crown of a victoriousness and ever augmenting gladness. He who was willing to wander in dark and perilous paths, finds himself in the house of the Lord for ever.

So may it be with each one of us for His Name's sake. Amen.

Convention Reports

Buffalo, N. Y.

The two days of fellowship enjoyed by the brethren who were privileged to assemble at Buffalo, N. Y., on June 22 and 23, may be reported as days spent in a profitable conference on holy things. The attendance, though not large, was nevertheless quite remarkable in view of the fact that no large groups of friends reside within' easy reach of that city; therefore the gathering of approximately ninety friends meant the coming together of brethren scattered over a wide area. The various themes discussed by the speakers were such as to focus attention on the great essentials of Christian life and conduct. The life of faith in its special aspects was well emphasized in three helpful discourses. Lessons drawn from some of the heroes of faith of a former dispensation were presented, and it is hoped that the hearts of many present were filled with renewed desires for a stronger faith to walk more confidently and with singleness of purpose before the Lord. Attention was also drawn to the Apostolic emphasis on the fact that only that which is built upon the Rock foundation, Christ Jesus, can by any means secure the approval of the Lord, and that the day having come in which every man's work shall be tried by fire, it is the more necessary that all wood, hay, and stubble, be carefully sought out and removed, and gold, silver, and precious stones alone be found in our character and faith structure. The place and power of the cross of Christ in Christian life was also rehearsed, as was the blessedness of those who shall eventually y be numbered among the finally overcoming Church in the day when they who have suffered with Christ here in the flesh will share with Him in His reign and glory.

With such stimulating encouragements as the faithful saints may now have, that the time for making ready to meet the Lord is rapidly closing, it must follow that this gathering was not in vain, and it can be confidently believed that the Lord was present to fulfill His promises to such as possessed receptive, hungry- hearts. May these two days therefore bear fruitage in some hearts at least, producing greater faith in God, a larger measure of devotion to Him and His Word, and a broader love and sympathy extending to all who crown Him Lord of all in their hearts and lives.

Chicago, Ill.

The stirring up of one another's pure mind by way of remembrance, to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have learned, was evidently one of the happy results of the convention held in Chicago, Sunday, *July 7*. A goodly number of friends, probably 125, assembled from various parts of Chicago and surrounding territory, for the- day's fellowship. Some who participated in the joys and blessings of this day had not met for upwards of twenty years. Without doubt it was with much delight that these renewed their acquaintance in the Lord. At the close of the day the consensus of opinion was that a rich blessing had been realized from the fellowship in song and prayer, and in hearing the Word of the Lord.

Detroit, Mich.

A goodly measure of the Spirit of the Lord was in evidence at the Detroit Convention. Special and appropriate music and an abundance of time for fellowship were other appreciated features. Opening each day with the "Bethel service" all the sessions furnished their part in the revelation of the Arm of the Lord. Between the opening talk on the Church as "The fulness of Him that filleth all in all" to the closing one on, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me," various helpful and interesting topics were discussed, laying stress on the things we know both through the intellect and through faith, and on the things we hope to know when we know as we are known. Appreciating the assurance of our having been already "quickened together with Christ" by faith, there was also a realization of the absolute necessity of the warning that "Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. The question, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" was abundantly answered, testimonies and discourses giving evidence of hearts that had long been His abiding place, a privilege that can be maintained only by those who "gird up the loins of their minds" in accordance with the Scriptural instructions, resulting not in little fruit, nor in only more fruit, but assuredly in "much fruit," and to the Father's glory. Not how much we have done for Him, but how much He has done for us; not how great our work is, but "have we received the Holy Spirit"; not how long is our pilgrimage to be, but how faithfully are we using our present privileges of fruit bearing, is the real issue we were assured, and that our greatest assistance to this end is the power of prayer. Pentecost was a sequel to a ten days' prayer meeting. It was the spirit of Pentecost that prompted the witness that followed. A church which ceases to witness will die.

For four days our present Lord revealed Himself in great preciousness. About 200 had enjoyed the blessings of this convention and returned to their homes, we trust, determined to be faithful "watchmen in Zion," not merely seeing and hearing but telling to others the vision they had enjoyed of the risen Lord and hoping to be able soon to say with the Apostle, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." We remember, however, that Paul said this in the presence of "fightings without and fightings within," at the end of a life of devotion to brethren who had all apparently forsaken him. His hope of an entrance into the heavenly Kingdom was because of the work done in his own heart. It was a completely changed Paul, who, beginning as the persecutor of Jesus, learned to endure patiently the opposition of false brethren, and in spite of their misrepresentations finished his course with joy, for he ran not "as uncertainly. There was no division, of his' heart between heaven and earth, because all his treasure was safe in heaven.

Waukesha, Wis.

The friends participating in the convention in Waukesha, Saturday and Sunday, July 13, 14, were enthusiastic in pronouncing it in every way a success. The State of Wisconsin was quite generally represented; a goodly number of the dear friends from the Minneapolis Class also contributed much to the refreshment of spirit and enjoyment of this time of fellowship. There was much singing together of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and making melody in the heart to the Lord. The various things that constitute our precious heritage in Christ were dwelt upon at length and the prayers and testimonies of the brethren furnished abundant evidence of the fact that the things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, were increasingly engaging their hearts' affections. We are sure that sweet memories of this happy occasion will long abide.

Words of Encouragement

Dear Brethren in Christ:

I have just read the "Herald" for May and feel I would like to express to you my love and appreciation for the helpfulness of the two main articles. In these it seems to me you have approximated very closely the needs of the times in regard to those who are looking for His appearing.

The very sober and prudent reviews of the chronological features, with the strain of encouragement to still watch with interest, is I think very timely, and acts as a tonic to the weary watchers. I feel more and more that the work of Mr. Grattan Guinness, and his conclusions regarding the running out of the Gentile Times have been of great value toward a sober understanding of the apparent delays, and the system put forth seems to me to be as majestic as the occasion requires. When we realize that we are now touching some of the final terminal dates, we can indeed lift up our heads and rejoice, as we note the nearness of our and the world's deliverance.

The other article on the Cross of Christ, I found equally helpful and full of blessing. Truly while we are awaiting the consummation of our hopes, we must more and more have our thoughts occupied with the great love of God, so perfectly revealed in the life, teachings, sufferings and death of our dear Lord and Master.

I have come to realize that an intellectual appreciation of the process of atonement in Christ is not enough to do the work of sanctification, but it requires also the stirring of our emotions and the cleansing and regeneration of our moral qualities, which alone can come from a deep appreciation and understanding of the Spirit of God at work in His Son Jesus Christ. In our Lord's experiences, God exhibited all the glories and beauties of Divine love, in all its, 'condescending grace, of compassion, mercy and longsuffering, and in beholding this, we behold our God. Only as we by meditation and contemplation can catch such a vision of our God and Father shall we be wholly captivated as St. Paul himself was and so irresistibly drawn and begotten into the spiritual likeness of our Heavenly Father and His only begotten Son. Perhaps the time lingers on in order to our greater development in Christ-likeness, to make us indeed "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Yours by Divine Grace,
F. W. F. - Eng.