

# THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

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## The Called Chosen and Faithful

*"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." - John 6:67, 68.*

OUR LORD speaks of various voices calling mankind and leading astray, and contrasts them with His own call of His own "sheep" who hear and obey it, saying, "My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me; strangers will they not follow, because they recognize not the voice of strangers." (John 10:3, 5.) These, the Master's words, are as full of solemn significance to the people of God today, as they have ever been.

Indeed, there are now, as in the past, numerous voices in the world, calling mankind to follow in the pursuit of pleasure, of riches, of wisdom, etc., and various are the inducements presented, and to the young and inexperienced, the bewilderment of so many attractions is great. But experience has taught many of us that these seductive siren voices would but lead us to shipwreck upon hidden rocks and shoals, and that "all that glitters is not gold." We have learned that the cravings of our own human natures are quite unreliable, that we are fallen beings, that our tastes and appetites are perverse, and so depraved that frequently we crave the things that tend to do us injury, and are inclined to reject the things which are best for us.

## The Shepherd's Voice of Truth

Not all are able to hear and recognize the Shepherd's voice in the present time; a majority are deaf on this subject, however acute their hearing may be as respects the inducements held out to them by the world, the flesh, and the Evil One. Consequently, the Scriptures say, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." But the opening of our ears to hear the good tidings, of which Christ is the center, does not close them to the various voices of selfishness, ambition, pride, avarice, and vainglory, and the other voices proceeding from the various evil sources; it would seem indeed that, after accepting us to be His sheep, and after giving us some opportunity to learn the sound -of the Shepherd's voice, the voice of truth, we are

intentionally exposed to the various voices which would call us away from our Shepherd, and from following in His footsteps. And oh, how many stray away! "Walking after their own desires." How many thus become sidetracked on the way to the heavenly city! How many are ultimately entirely switched off in another direction! How many have thus gone "back and walked no more with Him"! How few, what a "little flock," they seem to be that follow on, day by day, to know the Shepherd more fully, to walk in His paths, and ultimately with Him to reach the heavenly Kingdom!

## **Siftings and Testings Amongst the Apostles**

It will be remembered that the words of our text were called forth by a certain sifting of the disciples. Our Lord's ministry had progressed considerably: At first, the people hung upon His words and said, "Never man' spake like this man," and "Great multitudes followed Him." But towards the close of His ministry, as the jealousy and animosity of the doctors of divinity and the pharisees began to manifest itself, He became less popular, and in our context we find that many of His hearers were leaving Him, and He said, "Therefore said I unto you that no man can come unto Me, except it were given him of My Father." From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Such testings and siftings of the Lord's disciples have been in progress throughout all this dispensation, and still continue. Many, have directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, rejected the great Shepherd. His leading and His instruction have gone unheeded.. Some, because the chief priests, scribes and pharisees said. "He hath a devil and is mad. . . Why hear ye Him?" Some, because they, did not understand His teachings, and they said, "This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" Others, because His teachings drew the lines too sharply between righteousness and sin, between God and mammon; and we may understand as literal our Lord's statement that eventually only a "little flock" will be found worthy of the Kingdom.

## **Gathering Out all Things that Offend**

It may sound harsh to some, because of their misconception of the subject, when we say that the Lord's message and leading were as much intended to shake off and repel one class, as-to attract and hold another class. That would be inconceivable, if the ones repelled and shaken off were understood necessarily to suffer eternal loss. On the contrary, the attraction and the drawing was to the Kingdom, and the repulsion was from the Kingdom. And the sifting and separating of our Lord's day, and since, and at the present time, is to the intent that the Lord may gather out and separate from those who are His true and loyal disciples, the Kingdom class, all who are not acceptable to Him, and who are unworthy of those blessings. As it is written, concerning the end of the Gospel Age, and the final glorification of the saints, "He shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity. . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." We may rest assured that none who are fit for the Kingdom will be sifted out. Of such it is written, "No-man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand"; and again, "If ye do these things [hearken to the voice of the Lord and cultivate His Spirit and walk in His ways] ye shall never fall: for so [doing] an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

How vitally important then it is that we have our minds definitely made up respecting the voice that we will obey and the footsteps that we will follow -- for "the double minded man is unstable in all his ways." We "cannot serve God and mammon," however much we try. We cannot hear and obey the voice of Satan and sin and the world and self and the flesh, and at the same time hear and obey the voice of the Good Shepherd, the voice of truth, the voice of love. Let this be settled and fixed in our minds, that it may keep us from all wavering after we have once taken our place amongst the Lord's sheep.

In order that the decision may be the proper one, and in order that it may be the final decision, from which we will not think to turn, it is well that we should note the different voices calling us,

and to what they lead. It is not the voices that appeal to the worldly minded in general that we 'are now giving attention, but rather to the way they appeal to those who have already heard the voice of the Good Shepherd. They assume that they will not antagonize our faithfulness to the Shepherd, but that they will heartily cooperate. The Shepherd, however, declares that this will not be the case; that the selfish voices of the world are calling, influencing, drawing away from Him and the path in which He leads His sheep.

### **Many Voices Appealing**

Wealth calls to us, holding out its golden charms, and promising great things; suggesting meanwhile our religious zeal is right enough but overwrought, -fanatical, and that in this measure only it-is in opposition to wealth; and that even if obliged to leave the Lord for the sake of wealth, it 'need only be temporary, and that soon, having acquired wealth, we could pursue after Him with redoubled energy and thus gain the Kingdom. Alas, how deluding; and yet *how* many are attracted by this call and presentation! Well does the Apostle say that "the love of money is a root of all evil, which some coveting after have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Then, too, 'how false are these hopes, how few 'amongst the many who pursue wealth ever attain it! Indeed it is not the wealth that is the evil, for God is rich above all. It is the love of earthly wealth and the manner in which it absorbs the heart's affections away from the truth and its service and heavenly things, that constitutes the evil and the snare of wealth which remarkably few ever resist, overcome, and bring into subjection to the divine will.

There are many *who* hear the voice of fame, and pursue it, if peradventure they will become famous, 'highly esteemed among men. The impelling motive here is, in part at least, pride and approbateness -- ambition for self-not for God, nor for righteousness. And how few who turn aside from the Lord's way, in whole or in part, to gain fame, worldly renown, honor of men, ever attain the same in any considerable measure! It is a false voice, leading on to false hopes, soon shattered in death, if not before. It would induce us to turn aside from the humble path of obedience and self-abasement in the divine service, the reward of which is glory, honor, and immortality at God, right hand of favor.

### **Besetments and Roots of Selfishness**

Others hear the voice of worldly pleasure, and see the millions of earth seeking it in the gratification of the flesh; and there is a great drawing to go with the multitude, seeking pleasures through the gratification of the various perverted natural tastes. Indeed, we ask how long will be required to learn assuredly that worldly pleasures are fleeting and that they have a bitter which counterbalances every sweet, and that the tendencies of Vanity. Fair are quite contrary to the new ambitions, new hopes, new desires of our new natures! How many efforts the vast numbers of the Lord's people have made to blend or mix the pleasures of this world with the heavenly joys, only to find that they will not blend, and that true happiness for those who would abide in Christ and follow in His footsteps, means the rejection of all pleasures which have a sinful combination or tendency! Surely the Master would have us learn that the only pleasures and delight which we 'as true disciples can enjoy, are those in which our blessed Lord can be our companion, those which we can discuss with Him and in which we can enjoy His fellowship.

We read in the sacred Word of the prunings of the vine, and the chastening which is of the Lord toward all those who are truly His sons. May it not be oftentimes and with many of the Lord's

people, that His prunings and chastenings come to check and hinder the waywardness of the natural heart or of those natural or worldly proclivities which are disposed to absorb valuable time and strength, thus taking away from the fruitfulness of the spiritual life. We may well apply the words here of another who is speaking of the purposes of the Lord in many of our testings and trials:

"He removes one after another, the objects in which we have been seeking the repose of idolatrous affections. He afflicts us in ways which we have not anticipated. He sends upon us chastisements which He knows we shall feel most sensitively. He pursues us when we would fain flee from His hand; and if need be, He shakes to pieces the whole framework of our plans of life, by which we have been struggling to build together the service of God and the service of self; till at last, He makes us feel that Christ is all that is left for us."

And be it observed, beloved reader, that many of the deceptions as we endeavor to walk in newness of life, have their roots in selfishness; in fact, they are all in some form inclinations to self-gratification; on the other hand, the voice of the Good Shepherd is calling us away from our debased selfish condition, moods and desires, to a higher plane of sentiment, to a loftier realm of benevolence, the love of God and righteousness and of fellow-men which seeks to do "good and to communicate." We see too, that having by His grace established us in the new condition and atmosphere of His presence, our Master and Teacher is permitting the various human and selfish tendencies of our natural hearts and of humanity in general, to call us in diverse directions; so that by learning to resist these we may more and more be established as strong and fixed characters, rooted, grounded, established in righteousness and love, strong and able to resist the weaknesses of our flesh and its environments as well as the influence of friends and humanity in general.

### **Love of Many Grows Cold**

Only such as thus develop character in likeness to the divine image, can possibly be overcomers of the world, and only such will be recognized and accepted of the Master as His joint-heirs in that Kingdom of glory. It is thus seen that the Lord is not merely teaching those who will make a covenant with Him by sacrifice, but additionally, through lessons of trial and discipline and testings by the way, He is seeking to prove His people -to test them to find and separate to His own service and spiritual ministry, not those who are strong in self-will, strong according to the fleshly estimation, etc., but those who abandoning the will of the flesh, self-will, give themselves so completely to the Lord that they become transformed by the renewing of their minds heavenward and by fashioning themselves not according to the former lusts in their ignorance, but according to the holy pattern and example that is set in heaven for them.

In these recent years as is recognized by many, there have come upon the Lord's people everywhere, very severe testings and fiery trials: brethren who formerly have earnestly and lovingly collaborated in the Master's service and walked in company to the house of God, have been driven apart apparently by a new and hostile influence which is spread throughout the ranks of the truth people, resulting in the introduction of strange and doubtful teachings, doctrines and interpretations, which in turn in some instances, have led to the application of unholy and unscriptural tests of fellowship. Consequently the love of Christ in many has grown cold, and many brethren have proven unfaithful to the Lord and to one another. Along with these circumstances many new teachers have appeared upon the scene, presenting conflicting voices and appeals to accept of their leadership and follow in their ways. In consideration of -all this strange and unhappy outlook, with the many disturbing elements everywhere, causing many 'to

walk no more with Him, what wonder that these days should be peculiarly days of fiery trial upon the Church; days in which the Spirit of the Lord is through these sifting influences, searching the hearts of all to make manifest who is on the Lord's side; and no marvel either, if we seem to hear the Master say to us in these days, as He said to some of old, "Will ye also go away?" Nor can we answer our blessed Lord in a better manner than that in which the beloved Peter replied: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

### **Not Every One that saith Lord, Lord**

In harmony with this thought that the Lord is searching, testing His people today, are the words of the Lord to fleshly Israel, "The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deut. 13:3.). This explains the object and intent of the divine course with the true Israel throughout this dispensation of the Spirit: He has been proving His people, searching and testing them, to ascertain the degree and strength of their love for Him. We learn from the Master, that "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom": that many who make the covenant of surrender and devotion to Him fail to keep that covenant, fail to meet its requirements, that accordingly their failure indicates a deficiency of love for Him, and that self will still reign in their hearts to a considerable extent, giving God only secondary place. The heavenly inheritance and the privilege of eternal fellowship with God, are intended only for those who by grace divine shall at heart become like unto the Lord Jesus in that they will love and honor Him in their hearts, and in their souls be able to say, "Not my will, but Thy will, O Lord, be done." No other state of heart than this of full resignation and surrender to the Lord can make us acceptable for the Kingdom; for no other condition represents full loyalty and love to God. And let us not forget that all the heavenly things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, God hath reserved for them that love Him supremely.

Hence, however desirable it may be and however the fact may be appreciated that some of our friends and neighbors surrender themselves to the Lord in the evening time of life, it is very evident that such as would attempt to make the change merely in their dying hours, are not to be regarded as really followers of the Lord so as to be ultimately "heirs of the Kingdom. For it is not to be reasonably supposed that in the few short hours or days after their repentance, they, could develop the requisite staunch character: they have not passed through such testings of faith and love and zeal for the Lord as would develop in them characteristics of "overcomers" necessary to qualify them for positions in the Kingdom. Those who surrender to the Lord on their death-beds, however, may be encouraged to hope for His blessing in the new dispensation, and for an opportunity to come to a fuller knowledge of the Lord and to have the privilege of cultivating character in that paradisaic condition -- even as the Savior promised the dying thief.

### **Beloved Count It All Joy**

If the great and important truths could always be borne in mind by the Lord's children, that their sorrows, distresses and tribulations are for the purpose of their spiritual development and have an important bearing upon the establishment of their characters in righteousness and love, surely it would cause all their temptations and reverses to appear before them in a new light and would assist them greatly in the struggles of the overcoming life. This is evidently the Apostle's thought in his loving admonition, "Beloved, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations and another Apostle adds,, "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth,

though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." And further passages bear likewise: "Blessed is the man that endureth [faithfully under] temptation; for after his trial he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love Him." "These light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" -- if rightly exercised at the time.

Thus we are again assured that those who really love the Lord, and who in consequence will receive the Kingdom, will be those whose love will have been allowed to come under' the pressure of sore trials, reverses, and temptations, while they were on their way to the Kingdom. Those who do not love the Lord with all their heart, in whom self or some other idol has first place, will very probably be seduced away into some by-path, through the operation of some counter forces or influences, and thus finally be found supporting some form of rebellion against the divine Word or divine providence. They will very probably be led to pursue schemes and theories which they will prefer to the Lord's plans, and their own theories and plans when analyzed will be found to be based either upon selfishness, ambition, or some other element not in harmony with the divine will. The Lord's leading and the Lord's Word will lose their attraction to such, and they in turn lose their interest correspondingly, and like those who turned away from the Lord at the First Advent, saying, "This is a hard saying"-they walk no more with Him. It becomes evident then and the real causes are made manifest why many who name the name of Christ will be rejected of the Lord; sin and unrighteousness cannot dwell together, for "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"

### **What Fellowship hath Light with Darkness**

Another has forcefully dealt with this point "Nothing can be more dishonoring to the pure grace of the Gospel than the supposition that a man may belong to God, while his conduct and character exhibit not the fair traces of practical holiness. 'Known unto God are all His works,' no doubt; but He has given us in His 'Holy Word, those evidences by which we can discern those who belong to Him. 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth' them that are His; and, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' (2 Tim. 2:19.) We have no right to suppose that an evil doer belongs to God. The holy instincts of the divine nature are shocked by the mention of such a thing. People sometimes express much difficulty in accounting for such and such evil practices on the part of those whom they carp of help regarding in the light of Christians. The Word of God settles the matter so clearly and so authoritatively, as to leave' no possible ground for any such difficulty. 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' It is well to remember this, in this day of laxity and self-indulgence. There is a fearful amount of easy, uninfluential profession abroad, against which the genuine Christian is called upon to make a firm stand, and bear a severe testimony-a testimony resulting from the steady exhibition of 'the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and the praise of God.' It is most deplorable to see so many going along the beaten path-the well-trodden highway of religious profession, and yet manifesting not a trace of love or holiness in their conduct. Christian reader, let us be faithful. Let us rebuke, by a life of self-denial and genuine benevolence, the self-indulgence and culpable inactivity of evangelical yet worldly profession. May God grant unto all His true-hearted people abundant grace for these things!"

## **Christ Alone Hath the Words of Life**

But the consolation remains that some will continue to walk with the Lord; some will not be driven from Him by any of the arts and wiles of the Evil One. They are such as are at heart wholly the Lord's, not their own; they will follow wherever the Lord may lead, because they have no will except His will. These will follow the Lord in the narrow way of trial, discipline and testing during the present life, and by and by, as He declared, "They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." Nor will this company lack in numbers by reason of the falling away of some. Nay verily, there will be the full, complete number of the blessed and holy which was predetermined in the counsels of God to be joint-heirs with His Son our blessed Lord Jesus. His foreknowledge permitted Him to make full allowance for all who would turn back, as well as to foreknow that the requisite number would go on in faithfulness.

Those who persevere will all have the general character of their divine Lord-faithfulness to Him and to His word of promise: and when various adverse voices call in different directions, away from the narrow way of consecration and sacrifice, humiliation and self-denial, they, in answer to the Lord's query, "Will ye also go away?" will answer as the Apostles of old, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." They know no one else to go to; they cannot turn back, for they can see clearly that to reverse their course would, be as the Scriptures express it, to turn away unto perdition, etc. Having heard the call of the world, the flesh, and the Evil One, they have seen the emptiness of all their false promises, and how none of them can give a satisfying portion. But in our Lord's call they have recognized not only righteousness, justice, but have recognized also, the promised reward of righteousness through Christ, which is promised to them that love Him eternal life.

## **The Way Growing Still Narrower**

Nowhere else is there to be found such a promise; from no other direction or quarter comes such a blessed hope; in no other service, therefore could they think of engaging but in this service. With the hope of obtaining the likeness of their Redeemer and the prize of eternal life accompanying that glorious condition of His likeness, they rejoice even in laying down this present life. Truly, this is that "blessed hope." With such hope before them, clearly understood, and with the narrow way distinctly marked out, and with an understanding of why it is so narrow and why so few find it (because it leads to the great exaltation in the Kingdom and in joint-heirship with Christ) who could think for a moment of turning aside or even of listening to the voices calling to wealth, honor, fame, joys or pleasures of this life, etc., seeing that even hearkening to them would interrupt our progress in the ways of the Kingdom, and thus frustrate our hopes and make the exceeding great and precious promises of none effect to us. The rather therefore, will we lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us in the Gospel.

As the faithful disciples realized a meaning in the Master's teachings during His presence at that time, which the majority could not realize, so now at the present time His messages have a preciousness and a meaning and a force to those who are in heart harmony with Him, which they do not have to others. Hence, now as at the First Advent, some are stumbling and going back, and others are being drawn to the Lord more closely than ever by His keeping power-the truth and His Spirit. As we progress in the way, towards the close of this trial time, let none be surprised or dismayed if they find the way growing still narrower, more difficult, and if the tendencies to



"stumble" should become more frequent. Happy indeed therefore will it be for all of us if we are increasingly possessed of the spirit of holy vigilance against the wiles of the Adversary. And may we indeed permit the perfect love of God to rule in our hearts, driving out self-love and all inordinate desires, together with every semblance of pride and ambition; and let the spirit of lowliness and full devotion to God bring into our hearts the promised fulness of joy and rest and peace; and let us abide in Him, the Vine, and so be fruitful 'branches, responding to the prunings of the great Husbandman with more abundant fruit; and when beguilement comes to us, be prepared to answer in the spirit of apostolic wisdom, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

## **The Just Shall Live by Faith**

*"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." - Gal. 2:20.*

THE MIND not enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and even the one merely lacking, the experience of the advanced Christian, may be unable to appreciate the greater portion of the thought in this and many similar passages. *Such* may 'be contented to find here only the teaching that the Christian's chief blessings, the things for which he lives, are invisible except to the eye of faith. And, noting the unvarying testimony of the Sacred Record that life, the gift of God, is provided only for the righteous, he would note also that life is reckoned to us by Him who imputes righteousness to us. Christ, who is our life, came forth from God for this very purpose, that we might by faith have this imputed righteousness and be counted alive, for in God's economy none can have life except the righteous. Since there is none actually righteous, no not one, any righteousness we can ever have while in this imperfect state must be imputed and be the result of faith in Jesus, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

One of somewhat deeper discernment might perceive this text to teach that the Christian must walk by faith and not by sight, trusting an unseen Guidance; but this expression may be on his lips for years before he learns to know the import it should have in his life. When this condition prevails, faith has viewed life only in broad generalities. This is a very important stage to reach, an absolutely necessary condition to experience, but years may be spent here and only the faintest beginnings of sanctification reward us. "The form of faith which is especially necessary in order to live the life of faith, is that which makes God present, moment by moment, in any and all events which take place. The want of this form of faith is one great source of evil. It is owing to a defect here, in a great part at least, that many persons who believe to some extent in God and in Christ, and perhaps in their own final acceptance, nevertheless make but little progress in sanctification. Adhesive in a general faith which looks at things in masses, and rejecting that which is particular, they necessarily place God at a great distance; while, on the other hand, that faith which is specific and particular brings Him near, makes Him present and intimate in all our concerns, and establishes between Him and our own souls a perpetual and happy relationship."

## Specific Form of Faith Necessary

God must be recognized in every smallest detail of life, either as directly bringing all experiences upon us for our blessing or at least permitting and so molding them that there is a blessing

in each one for us. These blessings are dependent however upon our having the quality of faith that is ready to appropriate the gracious provision of His love. A lack of confidence in *self* and joyful submission to God's will is necessary to this faith. In stressing this most advanced form of faith, no one must suppose that it would 'be possible to maintain it if all the early forms were not also present. Thomas C. Upham in dealing with the subject of "Faith" remarks

"Those who are in the exercise of that form of faith which makes God present in everything, will perceive and recognize the hand of God in everything which relates to themselves, viz., in the preservation of their lives and health, in their affairs of business, in their sufferings and joys, in the strength or weakness of their intellectual powers, in their opportunities of acquiring knowledge, in their opportunities of discharging duty, in their inward and outward temptations, in everything, whether it relates to mind, body, or estate, or whether it relates to suffering or to action, which in any way concerns themselves, or which in any way concerns those with whom they are closely connected by family ties."

## Following the Course of Faith

While we may be able to exercise faith in all these various particulars, yet we may fall short in others. The Christian who can without murmuring see God's hand sweep away all that a life time has accumulated, the Christian who can with absolute confidence trust his most beloved ones 'in God's care, see all his powers waning through' sickness or old age, and all the while trust God for strength sufficient for every time of need, may still find it difficult to believe that the same loving Hand is guiding in his affairs and the affairs *of* his brethren when trouble or false doctrine creep into the Church. The flesh, confident of its: own strength, will be found in the midst of every manmade scheme for the banishing of the disturbance and disturber. Faith alone can follow the simple and effective suggestion of the Apostle: "Foolish and unlearned questions avoid [and thus quietly pass by all opportunities for argument], knowing that they do gender strife [and there- is no way of knowing how large the brood of battles may be if this course is not taken]. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient [Greek: enduring evil], in meekness instructing those that oppose." The Greek word from which this translation "instructing" comes gives a forceful suggestion *as* to how immoderate are most efforts to set right those who oppose that which has been accepted as true doctrine. The word meaning literally "to rear as a child" comes from a verb signifying "to strike a single blow." The one who would suggest useless and spiritually uninformative questions should be considered, doctrinally at least, a babe and be treated with corresponding consideration. What a contrast there is between the shower of blows the fleshly mind would rain upon the one it endeavors to force to a change of mind and the patient, gentle treatment that will surely result from following the course of faith.

The Apostle Peter indicates also that those who intrude the "unlearned and foolish questions" do so from lack of faith, for while "Paul hath written some things hard to be understood," it is only the "unlearned and the unstable" (literally the "unpropped") who "put them to the torture," as the Greek suggests. If their trust had been in the Word of God instead of leaning to their own

understanding, these foolish errors could have been avoided and the resulting shame need never have been experienced. However, that there will be false doctrines taught among the brethren in the last days, and that it is in accord with the Father's wisdom to permit us to experience the test of meeting them to prove whether we will do it confident of our own intelligence or whether we will have the faith to follow the course He has laid down for "the just," there seems no reason to doubt. Whether the peril be from false brethren or from immature Bible students, the mind stayed on God looks at Him rather than at the instrument He uses for our testing. "Looking up to the great Author, it accepts from His hand, with acquiescence and thankfulness, the cup of bitterness; while it has mingled emotions of disapproval and pity (compassion being the predominant feeling) for the subordinate agent. But it is the distinct and unwavering perception that God is present, and that it is God who offers it to our lips, which most of all changes and sweetens the draught. It is inexpressibly delightful, in all the trials that come upon us, from within and without, to realize, without any misgivings of spirit, that the rod, whatever may be the subordinate agency, is in the hands of our 'heavenly Father.'

### **Presence of God Recognized in Results**

Some have concluded that- since they are exhorted to live by faith, therefore all responsibility has been removed from them of caring either for themselves or for their families. Quite the contrary is the fact however, for faith accepts with no discount the statement, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Faith accepts to the full the responsibility imposed in the word "provide," the thought shown in the original as well as in our English word being "gaze beforehand." Without taking "anxious thought the man of faith will "gaze beforehand" to make reasonable plans for the future of his family, knowing however full well that it is not his planting and his cultivating that brings the results, but "it is God who giveth the increase." The presence of God and His agencies must be recognized. Doing to the best of our ability whatever God requires of us, we are to recognize Him in and thank Him for the results, whatever they may be. Whether they give occasion for rejoicing or disappointment to the flesh, faith will recognize in them the blessings most appropriate to the time and the individual and will rejoice in them as direct from the hand of a loving God. Too much credit must not be given to the rain and the sunshine, and much less to our little part-the turning of the furrow and the dropping of the seed, although it is absolutely necessary that we be found "faithful in that which is least." It is thus we, give proof of our faith in Him who giveth the increase where and when He chooses.

"He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and 'he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap," is said of the creature, not of the Creator. He works with and through second causes, not in dependence on them. Our faith must learn to rise above a dependence on things, into closer proximity to the great First Cause, knowing that plowing and sowing can give no fruitage that He withholds, nor lack of rain and sunshine blight the crop He has blessed. Though in his blindness man seldom looks above them, these things are not the originating cause, but mere servants and visible evidences of the purpose of Him to whom should be and eventually shall be all the praise.

## **"All Nature Speaks"**

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." There can be no anxious thought but only an abounding and everincreasing peace for the man "who, as he goes about his daily business, tending his flocks with Abraham, or plowing his fields with Elisha, can see God in trees, and flowers, and running brooks, in hills and valleys, and mountains, in clouds, and in sunshine; and can connect Him, as an intelligible and effective agency, with everything that has relation to the time and the place, the nature and the results, of his labors."

"If we live a life of prayer,  
God is present everywhere."

In every decade of man's history there have been developments that have tried the faith of the man of observation. To suppose that any of earth's affairs would be allowed to progress without the oversight of the all-powerful One, would be to suppose that the outcome is in great jeopardy. Even such trying times as these last days will result in "perplexity and distress" only for "the nations." Those whose faith has learned to "take joyfully the spoiling of their goods will rejoice to see God's purposes all accomplished even though it mean the destruction of every work of man's hand, though his masterpiece be cast as a millstone into the midst of the sea. Since our God "worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will" there can be no political event, no rise or fall of kingdoms, no war nor peace, without the presence of the hand of God in it, either for punishment or for reward. God says, "By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice" (Prov. 8:15), as He also says of Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, "He is My shepherd and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple. Thy foundation shall be laid." (Isa. 44:28.) If Cyrus could have his part in so sacred a mission, and if the arch-agnostic of the last days could share in the breaking down of the battlements of that fearful doctrine of hell, need any circumstance or combination of circumstances or the qualities of any instrument move us to doubt that the power and wisdom of God are being manifested even in the "perilous times" of the last days? The soul that does not find his peace increased by each step in the development of the purpose of God for the Church and the world will find his frail bark tossed in a treacherous deep with no pilot at the helm.

## **Uninterrupted Communion the Unfailing Result**

The same events that sometimes lead the man of the world to condemnation of God, if he believes in His existence, bring the humbled Christian to his knees in the prayer of faith and thanksgiving. The life of faith is invariably the life of prayer. To recognize God in the great and in the small events of the day will, while increasing faith, undoubtedly lead also to a desire for a closer communion with that guiding Mind, not only because of our appreciation of His will, but also in order that we may be found in sympathetic cooperation with, it. To have the faith that finds God in everything, and at the same time have no desire for a closer walk with Him, if it were possible to have this faith under such circumstances, would be without sentiment, without feeling—a cold, a lifeless faith. On the contrary, to "in everything give thanks" is the natural result of recognizing a loving and all powerful Hand in everything. It is in order that God may be loved and communed with that the eyes of faith are opened to see Him in every event. An uninterrupted communion with God is the unfailing result of the life of faith that recognizes the loving purpose of an ever-

present God. Thus only can one be said to "pray without ceasing," every thought and every act becoming a part of this ceaseless communion. The smallest trifle of the day will find one in the attitude of prayer; the fires of devotion always ready for the sending of incense heavenward. It is evident there can be no true prayer where there is no faith. If therefore faith is lacking in any act, any moment of the day, during that time communion is interrupted. It is impossible that there shall be any surrounding circumstance or any duty so trifling that it will not have an effect for good or for ill in our lives. The new creature's reason for giving thanks in everything is that faith finds God in everything, -working all things together for its eternal welfare.. Faith as a grain -of mustard seed will remove mountains, but it is a well developed faith that accepts unreservedly the Master's statement that the hairs of our head are numbered. Until this stage of faith is reached there must be moments when communion with God is interrupted, circumstances too insignificant for us to believe the God of the universe could interest Himself in them. During those moments self must unavoidably be uppermost. Looking for a further revelation of God in each new circumstance, with what enthusiasm the child of God can enter upon each day; with what possibilities is each moment fraught to the -one whose greatest joy is in knowing God-that great "center where the soul finds rest"!

"In all my ways Thy hand I own,  
Thy ruling providence I see;  
Assist me still my course to run,  
And still direct my paths to Thee."

## **"THOU KNOWEST"**

"Master, I am so glad Thou knowest all  
Outspoken joys, and sorrow's hidden pain.  
I am so glad my path is known to Thee,  
And that Thou wilt my wayward steps restrain  
I place my hand in Thine. Oh, hold it fast!  
Nor heed my cry whene'er I ask amiss.  
Thou knowest what is best, my loving Lord,  
From out my heart all willfulness dismiss!

"Lord, when the thorns of earth pierce sharp and deep,  
And I instead would choose the scented rose,  
Let me recall Thy tender, watchful love,  
And that mine inmost-need Thy wisdom knows.  
Ah, who can tell how far our feet might stray?  
We are so prone to wander from Thy side,  
If not hedged in by Thine eternal arms,  
And made within Thy sheepfold to abide.

"I am so glad Thou knowest all, dear Lord!  
My life but poorly proves, what' lips confess.  
And well I know none but a Father could  
So frail an offering with such mercy bless.  
Thou knowest all! This is my cradle, Lord  
The shadow of Thy wings, 'neath which I sleep  
Not for my goodness, but Thine own great love,  
Thou wilt in peace Thy child securely keep."

# God's Grace and the Song of the Lord

[Contributed]

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 CHRON. 28 AND 29.

*"And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also." - 2 Chron. 29:27.*

FOR SIXTEEN years there had been no song in the temple of the Lord in Israel. And then one day a wonderful change took place. "Early in the morning the king and the rulers of the city went up to the temple; the Levites came with their harps, and the priests were there with their trumpets, and there was a great chorus of trained singers." And suddenly-it says, "When the burnt offerings began"-the trumpets blew, and the harpers began to play with mighty volume on their strings, and then, like the sound of many waters came the voices of the temple singers, and the house of the Lord was filled with songs of praise to God. So -beautiful is the scene that it brings to our minds that scene recorded in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation where, looking down into the future, John saw one hundred and forty-four thousand standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb, and heard as the voice of many waters, and as the sound of harpers playing on their harps, and they sang as it were a new song before the throne; and no man could learn that song but the one hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

## The Heart's Expression by Song

Song is an expression of joy in the heart. Whenever men have occasion to express great joy, they do so by song. The Jewish people spent seventy years in captivity at Babylon, while their land lay desolate to keep its Sabbaths. They had no song in their hearts then. Of that time one of their poets has written:

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" - Psa. 137:1-4.

There can be no true joy in the heart that feels the frown of God's displeasure. But when God permitted them to return to their own land, and to build again the wall of Jerusalem, under Nehemiah the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, they dedicated the wall "with gladness, both with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps," and with two great companies of singers. - Neh. 12:27.

In prophecy the absence of joy is expressed by the absence of singing (as in Isa. 16:10); but of the time when God's favor shall have been restored to His people and all Israel shall be saved, the Prophet says: "Sing, oh ye heavens: for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel" - Isa. 44:23.

## **The Christian's Song of joy and Praise**

And prophesying of the time when God's spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh, the same Prophet further says (Isa. 35:2), the desert "shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing"; and, Isa. 51:11: "The redeemed of the Lord shall return [i.e. from the grave], and come with singing unto Zion [Christ ruling with His Church in the Kingdom of God]; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

*Who* has not heard of the song of the angels when Jesus was *born*? The song celebrating the good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people, *which* joy is to come through Him who was - "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows"! - Heb. 1:9; Psa. 45:7.

Jesus said to *His* disciples: "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:11.) No other people on the face of the earth have so much to rejoice and sing over as do Christians. Nothing else that we can conceive of a man possessing in this life could mean as much as the knowledge that we have the favor of Almighty God, and that "no man is able to pluck us out of our Father's hand." It is therefore natural for a Christian to rejoice and sing. Wherefore the Apostle, in Col. 3:16, says "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing With grace in your hearts to the Lord."- Again, in Eph. 5:18-20, he says: "And he not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Also in Phil. 4:4 he says "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice."

If we are living up to our privileges in the Lord we will be constantly rejoicing, and songs of praise to God will constantly well up in our hearts.

"Singing for Jesus, our life and our light;  
Singing for Him as we press to the mark;  
Singing for Him when the morning is bright:  
Singing, still singing, for Him in the dark."

## **Israel's Lost Song**

Now let us see why Israel lost her song. In the chapter preceding that from which our text is taken we find that Ahaz, the king, had no use for the worship of God, so he drove out of the temple the singers and the priests. He cut in pieces the gold and silver vessels; he hewed down the altars, and put out the lights, and locked the doors, and the house of God was filled with dust and dirt, and became the abode of the birds of the air that built their nests in its neglected courts and filled it with their uncleanness. And he built altars and sacrificed to the gods of the heathen nations and caused the people of Israel to transgress. For sixteen years this lasted; and the judgment of God fell upon the nation, and many of them were taken captives or slain by the surrounding nations.

The judgment of God will fall upon all men and .all nations that, having known God, choose to turn from His service .and forget Him. Wherefore the Psalmist has said (Psalm 9:17): "The wicked shall be returned\* into the grave, and all the nations that forget God."

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\* Rotherham and Leeser.

**It was closing the doors of the house of the Lord and forgetting** God that robbed Israel of her song. And if the song has ever gone out of **your** life, it is for exactly the same reason-the temple of your heart has been closed against its rightful Lord. Of course you didn't close the door with a slam. You would not be rude to your Lord. You just neglected to read your Bible; earnest prayer became too much of a task; the worship of God began to lose its attraction, and the old pleasures began to fascinate you; and without actually saying, "These be your gods, Israel," you gave yourself to them and closed the door of your life against God. No wonder the song was gone, and conscience pointed an accusing finger at you.

### **Song Returns with the Burnt Offering**

How can such a one get the song back? How get again the Christian experience which is joyful and victorious? Look at the verse from which we have taken our text. It says, "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also."

You know God ordained various sacrifices- for Israel. For example, there were the trespass offering, the peace offering, the meat offering and the whole burnt offering. Each of these is symbolic, and teaches a lesson concerning the Christian experience. But the highest type of all these offerings was the whole burnt offering. In the other offerings either the whole or a portion of that offered became the property of the officiating priest, and in some a portion was returned to the offerer but in the case of the whole burnt offering the entire sacrifice was devoted to the Lord, and consumed by the fire upon the altar. It was typical of the kind of sacrifice God invites you and me to make of our wills and our all to Him. It is not completed by merely giving ourselves to Him as a definite act in consecration-consecration is but the placing of the sacrifice upon the altar. The offering of the whole burnt offering is a life work -keeping the offering upon the altar while Jesus, our High Priest, sees that it is all consumed.

When we first gave ourselves to God in consecration, what joy filled our hearts! What songs of joy rose to our lips as we sought to praise Him for the blessed privilege of being counted dead with Christ, yet rising to walk with Him in newness of life! But after a while, little by little, perhaps we failed to keep our sacrifice as fully upon the altar .as we had done at first; a little self-will began to find a place in our life, and correspondingly some of the joy began to go out of our life, until one day we awoke to the fact that we no longer possessed that great joy in the Lord we had once known. Perhaps we found ourselves in the condition described in Cowper's hymn

"Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the Lord?  
Where is the soul-refreshing view  
Of Jesus and His Word?"

"What peaceful **hours** I once enjoyed!  
How sweet their memory still!  
But they have left an aching void  
The world can never fill."



The way back, as we have said, is that pointed out by our text. "When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also." When we begin again to bind our offering to the altar, resolving to see to it that all we have consecrated to the Lord is fully devoted to Him, that there is no withholding of anything, and when the fire begins to consume the sacrifice, then let us "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, as though some strange thing were happening to us," for this is what we are to **expect**; "but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may 'be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet. 4:12, 13.) For self in us must be fully consumed before our whole burnt offering will be fully completed. And as the fire of those testings begins to come upon us and consume self, then the song of the Lord will begin again in our heart, and we shall, as the Apostle Peter says, be able to rejoice inasmuch as we are made **partakers** of Christ's sufferings, -and to rejoice with the Apostle Paul that in all things we may be more than conquerors through Him who loved us. - Rom. 8:37.

The time came when King Ahaz had to die. He had been so vicious and wicked that the people loathed him; they refused him a sepulcher among the kings of Israel, so he had to sleep in a dishonored grave.

### **The Influence of a Godly Mother**

Hezekiah, his son, then became king. He was one of the noblest princes that ever adorned the throne of David. He had everything against him on his father's side. But we have every reason to believe that Abijah, his mother; the daughter of the Prophet Zechariah, was a good woman; and no doubt in the midst of the profligacy and idolatry of her wicked husband's reign she took the lad under her own control, and inspired him for the noble part he was to play, when he took the throne of his father.

One of the best gifts God can give in this world is a godly, sensible, praying, Christian mother. If we had more such mothers today, we would find more Hezekiahs among the youths of the land. Abraham Lincoln said, "All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my mother." And many a mean and woman is serving God today only because he or she had a Christian mother who taught him to reverence spiritual things. The influence of mother's life has restrained many a young man and young woman from entering into sinful pleasures during the dangerous years of the formative period of their life, so that when they came to more mature years and began to appreciate the really worth while things in life, mother's teaching has brought forth fruit in a determination to turn to God and serve Him. And often when the fiery trials of experience have come to a Christian, the memory and influence of a saintly mother has given the courage and strength to go through that testing victoriously. May all reverence, then, be paid to Christian mothers, the extent of whose influence has been far, far beyond what **they** can ever know until He in whom they placed their faith rewards them with the privilege of knowing fully, even as they have been fully known of Him. The love of such a mother is more like the love of God, in its mercy and compassion, than any other earthly love. Often has the Christian mother's love continued to pour forth its wealth of affection when all other earthly loves have failed. Of the love of such a Christian mother one has written (George Griffith Fetter):

"The noblest thoughts my soul can claim,  
The holiest words my tongue can frame,  
Unworthy are to praise the name  
More sacred than all other.  
An infant when her love first came;  
A man, I find it just the same;  
Reverently I breathe her name,  
The blessed name of mother."

### **Jesus Honors His Mother**

As we understand the matter, Jesus paid a wonderful tribute of loving respect to His mother when He performed His first miracle at her request.

To paraphrase the matter, it would appear that the occurrence was about as follows: His mother knew that the wine had given out at the wedding feast to which they had been invited. She knew *her* son to be a prophet sent of God; and she knew the powers of a prophet as they had been exercised by that greatest of Old Testament prophets, Elijah, when for three and a half years, while a great famine was in the land, the measure of meal and cruse of oil of the widow of Sarepta failed not. And so she said to Him, aside, "They have no wine." Applying to her that title which those in Palestine considered most honorable of all others, He seems to have replied substantially as follows: "Woman, what have I to do with thy private requests for the exercise of My power? You wish Me to perform a miracle before this noble company that they may behold, and believe on Me. Mine hour for manifesting My Father's glory to men is not yet come. Nevertheless, in obedience to thy wish, My honored mother, I will do what thou desirest Me to do." How- must the--emotions have been stirred of her who had pondered many strange things in *her* heart since His babyhood, and her eyes must have kindled with maternal pride and holy joy as she realized that she was about to behold her son display powers such as only come by the gift of God, and which were to seal Him as a prophet in the eyes of Jew and Gentile. With confidence, therefore, she said to the servants: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Thus was Jesus' first manifestation of divine power rendered in honor of His mother. What a lesson is **there** for all! O that all young men and women who have godly mothers would render to them such deference !

### **Faint is the Song of the Lord Today**

"The first thing Hezekiah did when he came to the throne was to open the doors of the temple and start again the worship of Jehovah. He brought the priests and the Levites together and told them first to sanctify themselves, for they had been chosen to stand before the Lord and to minister unto the people. And then he told them to cleanse the temple, to carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place, and to restore the vessels of the Lord." And when this was done, he commanded that the sin offerings and the burnt offerings be made upon the altar. "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also," and "they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped."

All too much has the song of the Lord died out in the ecclesias of today. In some ecclesias it has been because of a tendency to look to earthly leaders, and a failure to prove the interpretations of such leaders by a comparison of Scripture with Scripture. And so the dust and the dirt and the cobwebs of human philosophies and interpretations have been allowed to accumulate, and the

ecclesias have become filled with members who give no evidence that they ever experienced the power of God's regenerating grace which fills the heart with compassionate love for all mankind. And the voice of the Levites and priests, the justified and the consecrated ones, in such ecclesias, sounds more like the shout of battle than the song of praise to the Giver of all good.

In other ecclesias of professing Christians there is no song because the members do not care to listen to the preaching of the pure, unadulterated Gospel, "once for all delivered to the saints" in the Bible; they consider themselves too modern, too intellectual, for that. And there can be no song of the Lord in the heart of either minister or congregation who preach from or accept a mutilated Bible, and contend for the God-dishonoring teaching of a brute ancestry for one who bears the image of God, and who remove the virgin birth and the supernatural in general from the revelation of God as we find it in the Bible.

Hezekiah told the priests to restore the vessels of the temple, which the wicked King Ahaz had carried away. And there are some things that ought to be restored to the ecclesias of God today. Let the Bible come back in its simplicity, and let men preach the truth as it is written therein. Let it be taught that Jesus **was** conceived by the Holy Spirit; that He **was indeed** the Son of God; that He did on the **cross** bear the penalty of **our** sins, which is death, to remove us from death; that He was raised from the dead, assuring a resurrection to all men; that He was the Seed through whom blessings shall ultimately come to all the families of earth, both the quick and the dead, after His return from heaven to earth; that the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the great central doctrine about which the whole plan of salvation revolves and that it is only as men become like Jesus in character that they can ever hope to abide in His favor. And as these teachings are restored, let the people offer once more the sin offering for their transgressions, that is, plead before God a true faith in Jesus Christ as the one who bore the penalty for their sins, and through whose merit and work **alone** they can hope to stand before God and let them follow the sin offering by the burnt offering, for the latter should always follow the former, that is, a complete surrender of the will to God, and the continued sacrifice of self upon the altar of consecration to God until "Christ be formed in them," and then the ecclesias will again be filled with men and women whose hearts are overflowing with the song of the Lord, and the spirit of gladness and worship will enable them to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of their lips giving thanks unto His name." (Heb. 13:15.) "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also."

### **The Divine Remedy for Spiritual Delinquents**

So full of the song of the Lord, of praise to God, were the hearts of the people, that when Hezekiah told them of their privilege of bringing sacrifices and thank offerings unto the Lord, the number of the burnt offerings brought was seventy bullocks a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; and of the consecrated things, six hundred oxen, and three thousand sheep. But before the burnt offerings could be offered they must be flayed -- skinned -- the covering with which nature provided the animal must be removed, well picturing the fact that in offering ourselves to God as burnt offerings, all that in man's sight might constitute a covering or excuse for our fallen natures must be taken away; for there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. - Heb. 4:13.

This work of thus helping to prepare the burnt offerings was apart of the duty of the priests. But in verse 34 we are told: "But the priests were too few, so, that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them till the work was ended, and until the

other priests had -sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests."

And if any in the ecclesias of God today, whatever their standing **may have been** with the Lord as members of the antitypical priesthood, are neglecting the maintaining -of their consecration, it may be that they too are missing some wonderful privileges which otherwise might be theirs, of assisting **others** to be divested of that covering in which they have hitherto trusted, that is, confidence in the works of the natural man, and of assisting in bringing them to that condition where they might present their bodies as a sacrifice to God. For God has ordained that the required number of antitypical burnt offerings shall be offered. It is the privilege of the priests, the consecrated, to assist in the preparation of those burnt offerings. And whenever the priests grow lax and are not awake to their privileges of service, God may grant that service to others who have been more diligent, though they be numbered only among the Levites -- the justified.

### **Practical Lessons for the Consecrated**

A word further as to the application of the lesson and the text to the individual: 1. **The temple was opened.** Let us remind you that the Scripture teaches that every child of God is a temple of the Holy Spirit: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God - dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." - 1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

If the song of the Lord has in any measure gone out of your life, are you willing to open the temple of your life to the will of God again, to get it back? Jesus is saying to you today: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." (Rev. 3:20.) **Do** this; open the door of your heart fully to Him, and the song, the joy of the Lord, will fill your soul.

2. **And then they cleansed the temple.** You would not worship in a temple like the one that Hezekiah found, moldy 'and, dirty, and festooned with cobwebs. And just so the Holy Spirit must have a clean temple in which to dwell. "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." (Isa. 52:11.) It may be in just one thing, and what seems to you a **very small** thing, in which you are failing to conform your life to the divine standard. But however small it may seem to you, if it is sin, it is taking the song, the joy of the Lord, measurably out of your life, and causing you to lack the power whereby you might be enabled always to have the victory through Christ Jesus. Not until every open and every secret **sin** has been cleansed from your life, everything that in any manner violates your well-trained Christian conscience, will there come complete peace, and power, and the song of the Lord in all its beauty and joy in your life.

3. **And then they restored the holy vessels that had been taken away.** And there are things that need to be restored in the life if the song of the Lord is to begin there. How often do you read the Bible, our "love letter from home"? The Prophet says: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Jer. 15:16.) Is the new creature within you being starved for lack of this spiritual food? Is this one of the vessels that needs to be restored?

And what about prayer? Perhaps this is another vessel that needs to be restored. For any neglect of this wonderful privilege of communion with the Heavenly Father we are bound to pay the price by a decrease in our spiritual joys.

"Take time to be holy!  
Speak oft with thy Lord.  
Abide in Him always  
And feed on His Word."

Possibly another vessel that needs to be restored is attendance upon divine worship. The Psalmist expresses the spirit of every one who is living up to his privileges of joy in the Lord when he says "I was glad when they said unto me, Let, us go into the house of the Lord." (Psa. 122:1.) The admonition of the Apostle in Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and **so much the more** as ye see the clay approaching," is more fully applicable today than at any prior time in the history of the Church, now that the day of the Lord is so near at hand.

Certainly all of these things must be restored if we wish the song of the Lord to begin.

4. **And** then one last **thing was done**. The rendering of the offerings: first the sin offering, and then the burnt offering. As for the sin offering, all you have to do is to exercise faith in the efficacy of the sacrifice of Him who became a sin offering for us, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. You must realize that no **amount of work** which you could perform in the service of God can entitle you to any standing with Him; that when you have done all you can possibly do, you are still an unprofitable servant; and that all the Heavenly Father asks of you, in order that He may forgive your sins and remove them as far front you as the east is from the west is that you acknowledge your sin, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who has made atonement therefore, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, "but with His own precious blood. Realizing our constant mistakes and failures, we say, "What wondrous mercy, what amazing grace, that He should still wish to claim us as His children! and are "lost in wonder, love, and praise" until we cry --

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a tribute far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my all!"

And then, in grateful appreciation, we would stretch ourselves upon the altar for the burnt offering and ask God to send the fire that shall utterly consume our sacrifice, utterly consume self-will within us, the while the song, the joy, of the Lord fills our hearts.

There is a verse at the end of the chapter which says, "The thing was done suddenly." O, child of God, If you have been half hearted, or faltering in sacrificing your burnt offering, decide suddenly, right now, to make that surrender full and complete. Decide today to live closer to God; to lay aside every weight and close-girding sin; to be indeed dead with Christ, putting to death self-will, that the life of Jesus may indeed be manifest in your body. (2 Cor. 4:10.) The world can never give you the song of the Lord in your heart; it is the life that is "filled with all the fulness of God," the life of the burnt offering, the life of full surrender to the will of God, that gives that song. Then say now in your heart:

"O Love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee I give  
Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be."

"And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also."

## Encouraging Letters

Dear Brethren:

We thought it might be helpful to the "Herald" readers to bring to their attention a little service which we have found to be a real blessing to the friends in our Class. After our meetings on Sunday, during the spring and summer months, the friends go to the homes of the various shut-ins and hold meetings-a talk for a half hour and then a testimony meeting. Arrangements for these meetings are made by the secretary of the deaconesses a few weeks ahead. We go to give a blessing but come away with a much richer blessing ourselves.

We have also found it helpful to take note of the absence from meetings, for a period of two weeks or so, of any of the friends and to make inquiry or call on them. A great many times it has been sickness or trouble which has kept them away and we have been able to offer a helping hand.

In these days of trials and testings on the Church, these little services seem to bring us closer together and to bear rich fruitage.

Yours in Christ,  
Mrs. J. B. W.-Mass.

*We are glad to publish the above letter, and if the deaconesses, or "Comfort Committees," as they are some times designated, of other ecelesias find any particular form of ministry in which they engage to prove specially helpful, we hope that they will not hesitate to use these pages to "pass the good word along."-Ed. Com.*

Dear Sirs:

I have been handed some of your leaflets and have read them and I am anxious to receive more. Will you send me mole on "the present world distress and Bible prophecies." Also would you please lend me a copy of "The Divine Plan of the Ages." I am to return it after carefully studying it. I thank you.

Sincerely, C. D.-Ohio.