

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXI October, 1938 No. 10

Things Coming to Pass

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES, while not essential to the establishment of faith in the Bible, are nevertheless a great encouragement to the student of the Scriptures; particularly so in these days of destructive Biblical criticism. The past century, and especially the last twenty-five years, have through the archaeologist's spade, yielded strong corroborative evidence concerning the integrity of the Scripture records and a short review of some of these discoveries should prove interesting to all.

Critics used to assume that the art of writing was not generally practiced until about the eighth century B. C., and therefore dismissed the Pentateuchal narratives as mythical or legendary, and historically untrustworthy, since it was believed oral tradition was the only means by which they could be transmitted. In the year 1902, the Code of Laws of Hammurabi, the Semitic founder of the first Babylonian dynasty, were discovered amid the ruins of Susa. These laws dealt minutely with practically every phase of public life and revealed not only that writing was extensively used 2000 B. C. but betokened also a high order of civilization obtaining at that time. Further, in the past fifteen years, Dr. Leonard Woolley's excavations on the site of Ur of the Chaldees have demonstrated that the art of writing goes back nearly four thousand years B. C. These findings were destructive to the first principles of the Higher Criticism and together with the discoveries of Professor Langdon at Kish near the site of ancient Babylon, have confirmed the growing belief that not Egypt, as historians once supposed, but Babylon was the original home of civilization. This is confirmatory of the Bible record and has resulted in the early narratives of Genesis being treated with more respect than formerly.

It had been assumed in the past by Bible critics that mankind's religious conceptions had evolved from Totemism* through Polytheism to Monotheism. This was directly in opposition to the Scripture teaching of a revelation by God of His unity. We are happy to quote Dr. Langdon, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford, who writes in his work, "Semitic Theology":

"Although the South Arabians and Accadians are far advanced beyond the primitive Bedouin stage in the periods when the inscriptions begin, their history shows that it is characteristic of the Semites to use animal names in times of advanced culture, when there is no possible influence of primitive Totemism. *I therefore reject the totemistic theory absolutely.* Early Canaanitish and Hebrew religions are far beyond primitive totemism (if it ever existed among them) in the period when any definite information can be obtained about them.... All Semitic tribes appear to have started with a single tribal deity whom they regarded as the divine creator of his people.... In my opinion, the history of the oldest religion of man is a rapid decline from Monotheism to extreme Polytheism and wide-spread belief in evil spirits. It is in a very true sense the history of the fall of man."

*Taking its name from the totem Pole, representative of the personal or tribal "familiar spirit." The primitives holding this view' are supposed to have vested every animal and even every object in nature with a spirit. - Ed. Com.

Genesis Story Corroborated by Archaeology

As further bearing on the Scriptural teaching of man's early condition of culture and civilization and that the "primitive savage" and early cave-man of Evolutionists were degenerates, we quote from "The Bible confirmed by Science" the opinion of the eminent archaeologist, Professor Sayce, which has been endorsed by a leading Canadian scientist, Dr. W. Bell Dawson, F. R. S., in the words

"Neither in Egypt nor in Babylonia has any beginning of civilization been found. As far back as archaeology can take us, man is already civilized, building cities and temples, carving hard stone into artistic form, and even employing a system of picture writing; and of Egypt it may be said, the older the country the more perfect it is found to be. The fact is a very remarkable one, in view of modern theories of development, and of the evolution of civilization out of barbarism. Whatever may be the reason, such theories are not borne out by the discoveries of archaeology. Instead of the progress we should expect, we find retrogression and decay; where we look for the rude beginnings of art, we find an advanced society and artistic perfection. Is it possible that the Biblical view is right after all, and that civilized man has been civilized from the outset?"

Archaeology has also vindicated the Genesis story of the flood within the past fifteen years and that from two distinct sources. The first is through the chronological prism, catalogued W. B. 444, part of a series of cuneiform tablets purchased in Baghdad by Mr. H. Weld-Blundell for the Ashmolean Museum and concerning which Professor Langdon has said: "It constitutes the most important historical document of its kind ever recovered among cuneiform records." This tablet written about 2000 B. C. purports to contain a complete list of Babylonian kings from the beginning of time. Remarkably, the record speaks specifically of the deluge as creating a break in the succession of kings; and also confirms the Genesis record that at the beginning God gave to the first man earthly dominion and which, after the flood, was again restored in Noah.

The second archaeological evidence concerning the flood was that revealed by the more ancient record of the earth itself. This was uncovered through the work of Dr. Woolley on the site of the city from which Abraham migrated. We quote from "Ur of Chaldees" Dr. Woolley's words:

"The shafts went deeper, and suddenly the character of the soil changed. Instead of the stratified pottery and rubbish, we were in perfectly clean clay, uniform throughout, the texture of which showed that it had been laid there by water. . . . The clean clay continued without change until it had attained a thickness of a little over eight feet. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, it stopped and we were once more in layers of rubbish full of stone implements, flint cores from which the

implements had been flaked off, and pottery. . . The great bed of clay marked, if it did not cause, a break in the continuity of history: above it we had the pure Sumerian civilization slowly developing on its own lines; below it there was a mixed culture of which one element was Sumerian and the other of the race which inhabited the river valley before the Sumerians came into it. . . . Inundations are of normal occurrence in Lower Mesopotamia, but no ordinary rising of the rivers would leave behind it anything approaching the bulk of this clay bank; eight feet of sediment imply a very great depth of water, and the flood which deposited it must have been of a magnitude unparalleled in local history... Taking into consideration all the facts, there could be no doubt that the flood of which we had thus found the only possible evidence was the flood of Sumerian history and legend, the flood on which is based the story of Noah."

A remarkably coincident discovery at Kish close to the site of Babylon and some two hundred miles from Dr. Woolley's excavations proved that this alluvial deposit was widely extended. We quote the *London Times* of March 18, 1929:

"Dr. Stephen Langdon, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford and Director of the Oxford Field Museum Expedition to Kish, yesterday gave hitherto unpublished facts about the results of the expedition, which in Professor Langdon's opinion afford conclusive evidence that the Genesis story of the deluge is historical. . . . In a letter to the *Times* on January 4th of this year, Professor Langdon referred to the discovery at Kish of a 'stratum E' in which an alluvial layer has been found, a foot thick, running right through Kish as far as the excavations extend. 'In this layer,' said Professor Langdon yesterday, 'there are two precipitations of clay, potsherds, and stranded fish lying perfectly horizontal. They could not have been placed there by the hand of man, and their position in the layer cannot possibly be explained by any other hypothesis than that of a flood over that part of Mesopotamia. . . . When we made these discoveries two months ago, we were loath to believe that we had obtained confirmation of the deluge of Genesis, but there is no doubt about it now.'"

Abraham, that grand Patriarch, has long been regarded as an imaginary figure by critics, one of the foremost of whom, Wellhausen, considered him merely "the free creation of unconscious art." The late Canon Cheyne used to declare dogmatically that no teacher of youth ought to let it be thought that we knew anything whatever about Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. The patriarchal narratives were treated as purely mythical. These suppositions have now been generally discarded as the result of (1) the discovery of the Code of Hammurabi; (2) the excavations on the site of Ur of the Chaldees; (3) the revelations concerning the ancient empire of the powerful Hittites, whose very existence was denied by scholars as late as the middle of the nineteenth century; and (4) the confirmation of the historicity of Gen. 14. The names of the kings referred to were unknown outside the Bible and the story of the battle of four kings against five was regarded by many as incredible. Professor Noldeke, in 1869, published a treatise on "The Unhistorical Character of the Fourteenth Chapter of Genesis." The historical character of the narrative has now been confirmed, due largely to the researches of Mr. George Smith and Dr. Theophilus Pinches, both of the British Museum. Amraphel is Hammurabi. Few kings of the ancient world are now better known. The proof of the identification of other names in the narrative is given very conclusively by Sayce in his "Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies."

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah Confirmed

Closely connected with Abraham is the Biblical record of the destruction of the cities of the Plain, probably the most signal act of divine punishment of the ungodly next to the judgment of the

flood. Only the Bible records this awesome event which was witnessed by Abraham. Graphically the scene is described in the words: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." (Gen. 19:24, 25.) Also-"but Lot's wife looked back from behind him and she became a pillar of salt." The historical truth of this event has been severely challenged but has now been remarkably corroborated by a scientific expedition which investigated the whole area about fifteen years ago. The President of the expedition, Dr. Melvin Kyle, in a monograph entitled "Explorations at Sodom," says that "the great catastrophe did take place exactly as narrated in the Bible. . . . This region was found by the geologists to be a burned-out region of oil and asphalt, of which material, indeed, there is again an accumulation that will soon be exploited. . . . Now wherever these conditions exist there is an accumulation of gases, and the geologists tell us that here, at some time which they cannot exactly fix, these gases were ignited by some means, also to them unknown, and there was a great explosion, with first an upheaval, and then a subsidence of the strata. The character of the ruptured strata has also been determined, with most interesting conclusions. There is along the lower part of this Plain a great stratum of rock-salt, which on the western side of the Plain shows itself in that great salt mountain, now known as Jebel Usdum. At its base is a stratum of rock-salt about one hundred and fifty feet thick. It is almost pure salt, but lies in layers of varying thickness. Mixed with the layers of salt, and falling down over them also, is a marl in which is much free sulphur, lumps of which we picked up along the sea. When the explosion of the gases took place, this stratum of salt mixed with sulphur was ruptured with the other strata, and the salt and sulphur carried up into the heavens red-hot, and so rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and over the whole region, exactly as the the Scripture describes the rain of fire and brimstone from heaven. Mixed with the salt and sulphur was also the asphalt, heated to a high degree." The boiling asphalt would create a dense smoke screen; such as that which is described in the Scriptural narrative in the words: "And Abraham looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the Plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace."

The possibility of such a fate as that which befell Lot's wife is illustrated by the fact that to this day the mountain peaks of the neighborhood are incrustated with salt. Thus, in the words of Dr. Kyle, "the geologists have found in nature exactly what the Biblical record describes in Providence."

Space precludes more than the mention of other wonderful corroborations, namely, the excavations at Jericho, Gezer, Gaza, Jerusalem and elsewhere with the confirmatory evidence regarding the date of the Exodus, the antiquity and authenticity of the Pentateuch, the historicity of the Book of Daniel, the language and history of the New Testament, and also the accuracy of the records of Luke in his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. The reverent student of the Scriptures can rejoice at the abundance of the encouraging archaeological witnesses to the truth and sure witness of that "Word which is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." - Psa. 119:105.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word! What more can He say than to you He hath said? You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled."

- *Contributed.*

The Abiding Life

"And now, dear children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear we may have confidence, and not be put to shame by Him in His presence." - 1 John 2:28, Diaglott.

IT IS very generally understood that this Epistle by the beloved John was written during the closing years of his life, after a long experience of close union and fellowship, by faith, with his divine Lord and Master. While the exact (date is uncertain, the weight of authority gives it as somewhere between 90 and 100 A. D. Although it is called an Epistle, it seems more in the nature of a treatise or homily. The chief lines of Christian truth presented in it are three:

First, we have emphasized that most important of all truths, that fellowship with God requires actual purity and holiness in the every-day life of the Christian. (Chapters 1 and 2.) However, a careful attention to verses 8-10 of chapter 1(1 John 1:8-10), plainly shows that the holiness required is that which prompts to such a performance of duties and a fulfillment of obligations as proceeds from an inner state of purity (love out of a pure heart) such as a gracious, merciful Father, who knows better than we know ourselves our state of imperfection in this world, will be pleased and delighted with; and such a life as will at last be rewarded with that absolute, perfect holiness, when we reach the Heavenly state.

Next is described some of the blessings and duties of the true sons of God; and in connection with this we have the children of God contrasted with the children of the Evil One -- as the rival, representative powers of truth and error in this evil world. - 1 John 3-4:6.

Finally, we have the beloved Apostle enlarging on the essential qualities of the bonds of Christian sonship and fellowship, which he states embraces love to both Father and Son, and also to fellow Christians. - 1 John 4:7-5:21.

In the text above St. John exhorts the children of God to continue in the life of abiding, which means, to continue to live in constant union and fellowship with Christ the Lord, by faith and obedience. How simple and tender are the words of this exhortation that comes to us as children of God -- "My little children, abide in Him." He does not exhort us to be wise, or strong, or self sufficient. He knew, both by divine inspiration and experience that heavenly wisdom, strength, and sufficiency are found only in God, and are imparted only by abiding or continuing in a vital union by faith with Christ. As the poet has expressed it:

"In union with the purest One,
I find my heaven on earth begun."

However, we need to ever remember that the agency by which this union is continued and by which it is consummated is the Word of Truth. "If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you," are the words of the divine Master, recorded by St. John in his Gospel. (John 15.) The Christian poet expresses most clearly the way by which this abiding in Christ is experienced, in the words

"'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word,
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know, 'Thus saith the Lord,'"

As a Little Child

Our attitude and relationship to the Heavenly Father in this abiding life should be the same as the **little** child to its earthly father-simple, helpless, and confiding-trusting and loving like a little child. Literally this means to live a life of faith in Christ as our Savior from the condemnation guilt, and power of sin, and as an ever-present Friend, Counselor and Helper. The poet has not in any measure exaggerated the experience connected with this abiding life when she says:

"I'm walking close to Jesus' side,
So close that I can hear,
The softest whispers of His love,
In fellowship so dear;
And feel His great almighty hand,
Protects me in this hostile land.

"O wondrous bliss, O joy Divine,
I've Jesus with me all the time."

This thought of enjoying such fellowship and communion does not in any sense conflict with the many statements of Scripture that the Christian life is one more or less of conflict and trials and sufferings. This abiding fellowship is fellowship in His sufferings as well as fellowship in His joys; and faith can "count it all joy when we enter into divers temptations [trials]." To enjoy such fellowship and communion, when knowing by experience how naturally weak and imperfect we are, will require full assurance of faith that in Him we have redemption, that through His blood we have the forgiveness of sins, and that through the Beloved we have acceptance always with the Father. It will require, as St. John informs us in this Epistle, that we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (1 John 3:22.) And that we might make no mistake regarding what these commandments are, he sums them all up in the words: "And this is His commandment, that ye should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment." (1 John 3:23.) To live such a life of abiding will, of course, mean "to feel at home with Him, to be comfortable in His presence, to be at ease with our blessed Savior and always to feel the most perfect confidence in turning to Him at any moment and in any situation." Then again it means a life by the moment, as the poet has expressed it:

"Moment by moment I'm kept in His love,
Moment by moment I've life from above,
Looking to Jesus till glory Both shine,
Moment by moment, O Lord, I am Thine."

"Breath by breath, step by step we are to abide in Him, until it becomes as natural as breathing. To look to Him for everything, to take Him with us in everything, and to seek to please Him in everything. We are not expected by Him, and ought not to expect, to be anything good or strong without Him." He tells us in the Gospel of the Apostle, that without Him we can do nothing. We are complete in Him. All our goodness, our love, and our ability to do everything must come moment by moment from Him, by trusting Him -- trusting in His word of promise to be with us, trusting Him to help us show forth His praises. For of His fulness have we received, and grace for grace," that is, grace from Him, for every grace He expects of us.

How happy, how profitable is such a life. Our Lord tells us that such a life will "bring forth much fruit." (John 15:8.) St. John tells us that our "joy will be full." (1 John 1:4.) He also tells us that

our prayers will be answered (1 John 3:22); that our heart will not condemn us. (1 John 3:21.) He tells us that we will be kept from sin if we abide in Him. (1 John 3:6.) And in the, particular verse we are considering, He tells us that we shall ever be ready for His coming "And when He shall appear, we shall have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His presence."

In the Light of His Presence

"Our growth in holiness can be measured by the acuteness of the consciousness of remaining sinfulness. The more our prayers for enlightenment are answered, the more deep our sinfulness comes into view. Sitting on a bright summer day among the stones half-hidden by the grass and heather of some warm hillside, admiring one of them gay with the colors of lichen and moss, and listening to the joyous song of some happy bird that has perched upon it, we seem to be looking on a perfect picture of purity and peace, till some sudden impulse makes us overturn the stone to see what is beneath. And then, what a revulsion of feeling! A whole colony of loathsome, wriggling creatures, disturbed by the light, are rushing hither and thither, burrowing out of sight into congenial darkness again! So will the light of God, when suddenly let in upon what lies beneath the fair exterior of life, reveal in one moment a multitude of sins that were never suspected to be there.

"It cannot be safe to be blind to the sins which God sees clearly enough; and yet how greatly we ignore that large region of our sinfulness that is below the surface, out of the view of others, and often out of our own too! Open sins we easily detect, and perhaps confess, but sins of thought and imagination and feeling-the deep stirrings of pride and vanity, of covetousness and impurity, of resentment and envy and discontent-we hardly think of these; or, if we do, we excuse them easily as being just sins of our nature and temperament and constitution, for which we are hardly responsible, or at least much less responsible than we are for open sins.

"All self-deceptions such as these will perish if we are really much alone with God. In the secret of His presence, and under its all-revealing light, we will that our worst sins are not the open ones that are only exceptional, but the hidden sins, continually active though working in the dark; just as an army of white ants will pick a carcass clean sooner than a lion will. 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.' *"-Selected.*

Songs of the Pilgrims

A Meditation in Four Parts on Psalms 120, 121, and 122.

Part I

"Kept by the power of God through faith." - 1 Pet. 1:5.

THE Book of Psalms may be likened to a large hymn-book. While we may not always pause to remember it, yet we know that the hymns in our hymn-book were not all written by one person at one time, but by many persons at different times. So with the Psalms. While many of them were written by David, yet others beside David contributed to them. Then, too, before they appeared in the form we now have them, they were grouped in a number of smaller Psalm books or hymn books. From time to time several of these smaller Psalm-books were bound together to constitute a larger collection, of which there are five, as may be seen from the arrangement shown in the Revised Version of the Bible. These five books, or collections, of sacred songs, were gathered up and published at long- intervals, extending over a period of five or six hundred years, which elapsed between the reign of Solomon and the return from the captivity in Babylon. Finally the five were bound together into what we now call "the Book" of Psalms.

Fifteen Precious Songs

In the fifth book of Psalms there is a little cluster of fifteen Psalms, beginning with number 120 and ending with number 134, which evidently constituted one of the smaller collections before it became bound in with the others which make up the fifth book (107-150 inclusive). Included in this little song book are some very choice expressions with which every well-instructed child of God is very familiar. For example, in Psalm 121 we have the well known verses: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." Then again, in the next Psalm: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." A little later, in Psalm 125, we find: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people, from henceforth, even for ever." In the following Psalm appear those words: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the nations, The Lord hath done great things for them." And again, in the closing verses of that 126th Psalm: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with 'him." In the next Psalm we are reminded: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the, Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." In Psalm 130 those searching words appear: "If Thou, Lord shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" And in the next verse the joyous truth is enunciated in language which the Apostle Paul himself might have used: "But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be revered." In this same little Psalm are found those words so familiar to us all: "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning." In Psalm 132 we have that Messianic promise: "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." And again, in that same Psalm: "The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation." In the next Psalm we have that blessed fellowship portrayed "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went

down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon; and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Finally in the last of these 15 Psalms, number 134, appears the gracious benediction: "The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."

Songs of the Goings-up

Familiar as these Psalms are to us, and beautiful in sentiment and choice in poetic expression as each is when seen by itself, they take on new charm, color, and loveliness, their delightful music swells to the harmony of an anthem. chorus, when they are seen, studied, and enjoyed in their' relationship to one another, and in connection with the special use to which the little collection was put. Each one of them bears the caption: "A song of degrees," or as the Revised Version puts it: "A song of ascents," and means, "A song of the goings-up."

This meaning no scholar disputes, though scholars interpret it in different applications. Some expositors maintain that these were- the songs with which the exiles on their return from Babylon refreshed their hearts by the way; that it was during the going-up from Babylon that these songs of the goings-up were collected and arranged in their present form. The passage relied upon for this explanation is the ninth verse of the seventh chapter of Ezra which reads: "Upon the first day of the first month began he [Ezra and his company] to go up from Babylon." This view is not without points in its favor. The contents of most of the fifteen Psalms would adapt themselves to it; but against it is urged the use of the plural in the titles of the Psalms. They are not the songs of the going-up, as though they referred to one great national experience, but songs of the goings-up, as though they referred to many journeys. Moreover ten of the fifteen make no allusion to the condition of captives.

Other expositors contend that the title is derived from the peculiar rhythmical structure of the Psalms. They have noted that in these fifteen Psalms an emphatic word or phrase is often taken up and repeated in the next sentence; that the Psalms wind upward, so to speak; that they are built as on an ascending scale. And these structural ascents they take to be the goings-up to which the title refers. While this explanation, too, has much to commend it, it cannot exhaust the meaning of the caption, for while each of these Psalms has the title "A song of degrees" this climbing or ascending rhythm in their structure is not common to all. It does not occur, for instance, in the 127th, 128th, 131st, or 132nd.

Songs for Travelers or Pilgrims

A third view, and one which seems to have most in its favor, and which is therefore the prevailing view of these Psalms, is that they were sung by the Hebrew pilgrims who annually went up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord in His temple. Thrice every year, at the beginning and at the close of the wheat harvest, and again when the grapes were gathered, and the wine made-at these natural seasons of joy and festivity, every "son of the law" had to appear before God. One might have inferred that so musical and songful a people **would** sing some songs as they went up to Jerusalem, that they **would** carry some music with them to cheer them by the way. But we are not left to inference, for in Isaiah we read: "Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, **as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord**, the mighty One of Israel." We know, therefore, that the Hebrew pilgrims made merry with songs and instruments of music as they went up to the feasts. And we may be

sure that they would choose for this purpose short songs, easily carried in the memory, and appropriate songs, national lyrics, or lyrics which expressed the moods of the time and the journey. Such these fifteen songs were, and therefore we may reasonably infer, as most of the eminent expositors do infer, that these songs of the goings-up were the Psalms with which the Hebrew pilgrims lightened the way as year by year they went up to the temple to keep the great feasts of their ecclesiastical calendar. Of course this is not to say that they were never sung at other times. Doubtless they were used on many occasions, but some of them seem quite evidently to have been specially designed for the use of the pilgrims, and therefore could never be so appropriately sung as when the caravans were on their way to the feasts or were returning from them.

It is apparently impossible to determine what the order was in which these Psalms were sung; but, as we find some traces of an orderly sequence and arrangement, we shall do well, perhaps, to conclude that there was an order, though we can no longer recover it. It seems almost certain that the first Psalm in the collection, number 120, would be that of the start from home, as the last, number 134, is undoubtedly that of the final service in Jerusalem. The second Psalm in the group, number 121, would exactly express the emotions of the pilgrims as they came in sight of the mountains that stood round Jerusalem; while the third, number 122, would doubtless be the song they sung on their arrival, when they passed through the gates of the Holy City, and trod its streets. But the time and place of most of these inspired songs can no longer be determined. All that we can be reasonably certain of is that they **were** sung by the caravans of pilgrims as they went to and fro on their way to the annual feasts.

Songs for Christian Pilgrims

However such critical questions may be settled, it remains true that these fifteen Psalms are among the most charming portions of the Psalter, full of deep and tender feeling, simple and graceful in structure; so much so that a Spanish commentator, cited by several English expositors, has said that this collection is to the rest of the Psalms what Paradise was to the world at its creation. In these meditations we propose to consider the first three of them, numbers 120, 121, and 122, which we suggest may be considered respectively as The Song of the Start, The Song of the Journey, and The Song of the Arrival. When we remember that the Apostle Peter represents us as pilgrims, and that **we** need songs with which to **start our** journey, and songs to sing **during the journey**, yes, and a song to sing even as we arrive **at the journey's end**, it is evident that as we meditate on them we should derive much edification and comfort from them, written, as they were, under the guidance of that same spirit which dwells within us, and containing as they do the heart sentiment, thought, and emotion of a people of God whose experiences the Apostle tells us were typical of those common to us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Note: Samuel Cox, an eminent Hebrew and Greek scholar, and who preceded Brother Russell in an exhaustive analysis of the true meaning of "Hell", wrote helpfully on the "Pilgrim Psalms." These meditations are little more than a condensation of his able treatise.

Faithful is the Saying

(Continued from last issue)

"If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." - 2 Tim. 2:11-13.

The Athlete

THE NEXT illustration is that of the athlete, as we read in verse 5, "And if any man strive for the mastery, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully," or to read from the Revised Version, "If also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully." This was a favorite metaphor with St. Paul, in years long past (1 Cor. 9:25), and now, close to the end of his own long exercise in the gymnasium of Christ's service, he comes to it again. Behold the crown, the wreath, the olive, the laurel, of the prize of the high calling! What will it be for Timothy to receive it while "Well done, good and faithful" is spoken by the blessed Umpire? But the man who would take it at last must have kept the rules, even as the rules were kept for the Olympian contests. **He must have trained in earnest**, keeping his body under, enduring hardness for the Lord.

The Farmer

The third illustration is that of the farmer. In verse six we read: "The husbandman that laboreth must be the first to partake of the fruits." Here Timothy is led by contrast to a comparison void of all excitement, remote alike from the glamour of peril that encompasses the life of a soldier and from the applause that comes to the athlete contending in the games. The strenuous and prosaic life of the farmer, his patience under uncertain seasons, his quiet waiting through pains for the harvest—all this is to enter deep into the life of the Lord's servant: plowing, sowing, tending, and then reaping at last. That supreme quality is here in view, so great in the Gospel scale of virtues, the patience that goes on, and does not fail. And if Timothy does thus prove himself a diligent farmer in the field of Christian service, he shall have his fruit, for he shall live and reign with Christ. Paul is content to labor and endure **he** glories in his afflictions and bonds for the Gospel's sake. For the Word of God is not bound because he is bound, but on the contrary, his very imprisonment has turned out to the furtherance of the Gospel, resulting in the conversion of even some of the members of the regiment of soldiers who took turns to guard him. And therefore he is well content to endure all things, and would have Timothy of the same mind. Not only so, but let Timothy urge those in his pastoral care also to be of this same mind, putting them in remembrance that to die with Christ, and to endure for Christ, and never to think for one moment of being so unfaithful as to deny Him, is the one profitable course for the Christian. Thus we see that the farmer, the athlete, the soldier, Timothy, Paul himself—all help to illustrate this faithful saying, and to prove it worthy of all acceptance.

Why Was This Faithful Saying so Precious to Early Church?

Thus far, however, we have dealt mainly with the form of this "faithful saying," with the delicacies and beauties of its structure, and the light which these throw on its meaning. If now we turn to its vital substance, two questions at once suggest themselves. First, What was there in this saying which made it so precious, so highly prized, in the early Church? and second, What is there in it which should make it equally valuable to us?

The answer to the first of these questions is simple and direct, and really answers the second also. We may be sure that to men like the early disciples, just redeemed from ignorance, superstition and vice, those sayings would be most precious which expressed the substance of the Gospel in terse, winning, and memorable forms. And in this saying there is not a single clause which does not embody some of the most essential and majestic facts and truths of the Christian faith. Let us take it clause by clause once more, and ask ourselves what it would suggest to Jews and Gentiles who, within a few brief years had been redeemed and reconciled to God.

The Death of Christ

"If we died with Him we shall also live with Him." What would that suggest? It could not fail to recall that death of the cross, in which they saw a sacrifice for the sin of the world, by which, as they held, all men might be reconciled to God, and to each other, so that now there was hope for every man, however vile he had previously been, and all walls of partition had been broken down, all the various classes and races of men, who had been hateful and hating each other, might be made one in Him; in whom there was no room for Jew or Gentile, bond or free, rich or poor; in whom the sinner was assured that God had loved him from the foundation of the world, and the slave enfranchised into a happy liberty.

We ourselves have talked so long, sometimes very technically, or perfunctorily, of the death of Christ; we have so wearied ourselves and others with a discussion of the fine points of the philosophy of the Atonement that today we are in danger of forgetting how large, impressive, and wonderful a fact the death of Christ on the cross must have been to men who might any day be hung on a cross like that of Christ's, simply because they believed on His Name. While they understood little, if anything, of the philosophy of God underlying it, yet, to their simple faith, the dying of the Lord Jesus was the great wonder of all time, the pivot on which the destinies of the universe turned, the source and center of a sacred and redeeming influence which should yet create a new heaven and a new earth. The tragic catastrophe of the world's history, it was also the prologue to a sacred age of peace and good-will, the initial moment of which they felt to be at their very door; an age in which God would make His tabernacle with men, and wipe away all tears from their faces. Eye itself, they were certain, could not see, nor heart of man conceive, nor hope grasp, the glories about to be revealed. All these glories had been won for men by that death, the very thought of which might well move them, as it did move some of them, to a passion of sorrow and love and devotion.

Our Death with Him

While recalling the great event of all time, the words "we died with Him" would also recall the most sacred and momentous act of their lives, the act of consecration. As they symbolized this immersion of their wills into the will of God by water immersion, it must have meant a great deal to them. It was to them, putting on Christ in the face of a hostile world; it was avowing a faith for which they had to risk the loss of all things, even of life itself. Under such circumstances we cannot doubt but that their vow of consecration to the Lord, publicly expressed in the waters of baptism as He Himself had appointed, carried with it a force **capable of changing and raising the whole current of their lives**; and therefore, any words which recalled to them both the death of the Cross and their own vow of consecration might well touch the deepest chords of emotion within them, and be deemed worthy of all acceptance.

Enduring with Him

"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." This clause, again, suggests a precisely similar strain of thought. How could they be exhorted to endure with Christ, and not recall the grace and patience with which, through a ministry short in years indeed, but in sorrows above measure long, Christ had endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself; how could they think of their own constancy under temptation and affliction and not remember how His righteous soul was vexed from day to day, not only "by the lawless deeds of the wicked, but by the dullness, defection, yes, even treachery, of His friends? The words could hardly fail to call up in their memories all that was most heroic and yet most tender and pathetic in the life of the Man of Sorrows, who, though He had all power in heaven and on earth, cheerfully endured all the wrongs and indignities heaped upon Him. Were they to endure with Him and like Him? Were they, as the faithful saying implied, to endure loss and pain and wrong, with a constant and courageous cheerfulness of spirit because they endured them for His sake? Think how their hearts must have trembled at times. Any one of their assemblies might be broken up by the soldiers or the mob. At any moment an envious business competitor, a disgruntled servant, a government spy or informer, might denounce them to the Roman magistrates. They might have to suffer stripes, imprisonment, bonds. They might be called to fight with gladiators, or wild beasts in the arena; or to see wife, sister, child, torn or trampled, to death on its sands. Was it in them to meet all this with a constant heart, to triumph over it, to rejoice in it? O, marvelous power of faith and, love, it was in them. In this very age they crowded in great numbers to the Roman tribunals to avow themselves followers of the crucified Nazarene; not waiting to be betrayed or denounced, they courted death so gaily, that the judges had to stay their hands for very weariness, and the bishops had to rebuke their eagerness for martyrdom, and to remind them that Christ was to be served in life as well as by death. To live and reign with Christ **was a hope of reward so vivid to their minds** that they willingly endured unto the uttermost in fidelity to their Lord, being faithful even unto death.

The Martyrs of the Past

This does not mean that every one of those who were martyred in the past would be classed by our Lord as amongst the overcomers, the "hundred forty and four thousand" mentioned in the Revelation, the "little flock," the elect Church. Indeed we know that there were many more than the full number required to make up the Body of Christ who lost their lives by violent deaths as

martyrs. The vast majority of these martyrdoms, so far as we are able to determine from the meagre records of history, resulted in large part at least from political and social enmity, comparatively few of them for what might be strictly termed saintship, full consecration and faithfulness to the Lord. So far as the records show many were executed very unwillingly; few willingly, joyfully, laid down their lives as living sacrifices to the Lord and His cause. Some, from the records, would appear to have' gone to martyrdom, spurred on, as Brother Russell has suggested, by a spirit of bravado, others by family or personal pride.

Again, there must have been some among the disciples of the early Church whose courage was weak, whose faith was not a steadfast flame. Indeed we know that there were some whose hearts failed them when they were confronted with the agonies of the arena or the pain and shame of the cross. With trembling hand and averted eyes they threw a few grains of incense on the altar of the reigning Caesar, and thus renounced Christ and the prize of the high calling which might have been theirs. And, hence, to the members of the early Church the words: "If we should deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He abideth faithful, for He cannot deny Himself," would recall some sad, tragic scenes in its brief history. Those who were strong in faith would once more live through the shame with which they had witnessed some brother, weak but beloved, arraigned before the Imperial tribunal, and under fear of death, prove himself unworthy of the victor's crown. The Roman court, with its inexorable magistrate, its armed lictors, its eager surging crowd of onlookers, would rise before their eyes once more. Once more they would burn with shame and grief and indignation, as they saw the poor, craven-hearted one turn traitor to Christ, to himself, and to them, and fling away his hope of joint heirship with Christ to escape the sufferings of a day.

Is This Faithful Saying Precious to Us?

Could words such as these-words which recalled to remembrance the death of Christ on the cross, and their own vow of consecration to be dead with Him; the daily endurance of persecutions and the bright reward of life everlasting; the renunciation of Christ by faint-hearted, fear-stricken converts who had brought shame on the Church, and the solemn warning from the Master's own lips that in the presence of His Father He would surely deny those who denied Him-could such words as these fail to strike the profoundest chords in the memories and hearts of men to whom these facts, these scenes, these prospects formed the very material of daily experience, and on which their very lives depended? Should they not touch and move all that is deepest and best in us? Must they not, if we believe that Christ died for us, if we hope to live and reign with Him', if we know that we too shall stand before His bar, and be judged by our fidelity to Him, to His truth, and to His brethren, **if indeed we are not already standing there?** If we are not moved, the fault is in us, not in the faithful saying. Our hearts must be dull and cold indeed, if we can listen to its music without emotion.

Victory Through Christ

What a wonderful song it is, this "faithful saying"! How full of the conquering power of faith and hope and love! It goes deep to the foundations of the Gospel, basing all our hope of present peace and future deliverance on the sacrifice accomplished by the death of our dear Redeemer. It looks upward and onward to His everlasting reign in glory, and recites the promise that those who cheerfully endure will also reign with Him. It makes mention even of His own solemn warning (Matt. 10:32) to the' disciple who denies Him, and reminds the waverer that He cannot deny

Himself -- cannot gainsay His own plighted word, whether of promise or rejection. Above all and through all it sings of Him, and makes of His Name its one divine refrain. It is permeated throughout with the Name of Jesus. The man who overcomes, who lives, who reigns at last above, does so as one to whom is given the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Ah! yes, "Faithful is the saying, for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him; if we should deny Him [which please God we never shall], He also will deny us, for even if we are faithless, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself."

Dwelling in the Secret Place

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." - Psa. 91:1

WHAT A wealth of comfort and consolation there is in the ninety-first Psalm! From first to last it is pervaded with that much needed "comfort of the Scriptures" wherewith the saints of God have been helped to meet the trials associated with Christian life. How good our gracious God has been in directing inspired minds to write down such gems of comfort as this Psalm represents. For suffering saints to have no mercys seat would be tragic indeed, and equally tragic would be the absence of such words in season to him that is weary as are contained in the language of this Psalm, appropriately entitled in some Bibles: "Happy state of the godly."

In the first verse of this gem of comfort we should note very carefully two outstanding words, namely, "dwelleth" and "abide"-"He that dwelleth . . . shall abide." Both of these words signify something of permanency, a continuance in the same place, and in the enjoyment of perpetual rest. Indeed it is solely on the state implied in these terms that all the remainder of the Psalm's blessings may be known in experience. No transitory condition or a mere fluctuating blessing can be the fulfillment of this portion of our Father's Word. It represents a particularly high degree of the favor and blessing of the Lord. So much so that it may be said of this secret place of close fellowship with God, as it is said respecting the narrow way by which such favors are gained, "few there be that find it." Like all of God's special blessings this also requires degrees. of devotion and dedication not appreciated by the greater number. The text therefore appropriately singles out the individual. "He that dwelleth in the secret place," he whose faith and devotion has become settled and habitual, such a one shall then **abide** under the shadow of God's protection. And as the rest of the Psalm reveals, this is a priceless heritage. Here, from every stormy wind that blows, there is a calm, a sure retreat. From every assault of the Adversary here is a hiding place beyond the portal of which he can never come. Pestilence may stalk about, cruel arrows fly around, with wasting destruction abroad, but "there shall no evil befall thee," is the promise to the one who abides under the shadowing care of the Almighty. Happy, then, that one who, enjoying this secret place, can say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and fortress; my God; in Him will I trust." - Psa. 91:2.

The tenor of the entire Psalm conveys the thought that the need of such a secret place is imperative. Its identification of certain evils to be encountered by the child of God, is of course a prophecy that these will sooner or later be met with on the way to eternal life. Perhaps it was from this very portion of the Word that the poet took the thought so well expressed in the familiar and warning words:

"My soul, be on thy guard;
Ten thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the prize."

With this picture of a multitude of foes the words of the Apostle agree, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood [alone], but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12.) What an array of opposing forces, these malignant foes without, veiled from our ' sight, and how necessary our refuge and fortress in God. Moreover, how numerous and deeply entrenched are the foes within. Not in vain has it been written, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9.) Since this is true, and it can be equally true that "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death," with what eagerness we should seek this secret place o'er-shadowed by the Almighty. In these days when every heart is being tried, and every man's work of what sort it is, with Satan mustering all his forces to "deceive if possible the very elect," O how watchful and fortified we need to be. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest **he** fall." - 1 Cor. 10:12.

Hearts Searched in the Secret Place

It is of great importance that we think of this secret place as an environment congenial only to such as are pure in heart and life. To be in such close contact with the Most High would be anything but pleasant to any other than the pure hearted. As illustrating how the holiness of God effects imperfection we call to mind the experience of Isaiah. He wrote, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, . . . Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Isa. 6:1, 5.) In similar strain Daniel relates a like effect as he stood before a messenger sent from the presence of God: "There remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." (Dan. 10:8.) If these holy Prophets were thus overwhelmed with such visions of God, how impossible the thought that any thinking to enter His presence presumptuously and without the required holiness of character would find themselves in congenial environments. Therefore to now in our probationary days abide in this secret place, and to rejoice in its atmosphere while experiencing its protections, will mean purity of heart and life. As with the Prophets Isaiah and Daniel so it will be with us in coming into the presence of God, our own lips and comeliness will shame us before "His eyes as lamps of fire."

In considering our opening text, let us then concern ourselves with what is required of such as may dwell in the secret place of the Most High. Perhaps it is for the very purpose of making clear the conditions necessary for close contact with God in both the present life and the future, that we have been given several repetitions of these requirements. One such passage is found in Psalm 24:3-5. It reads, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Another such text is found in Psalm 15:1, 2. "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor." Again we read, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name

is Holy; I dwell in the high and lofty place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." - Isa. 57:15.

Such passages as these reveal that an entrance into this favored place is a privilege associated with very exacting requirements. Let us note them carefully. Clean hands, such hands as move only under the impulse of divine love. A pure heart, a heart out of which good treasure habitually flows-without vanity or deceit, without sham or pretense; upright conduct, a sanctified tongue, and an abundance of contrition and humility. The possession or the absence of these in a character will be made manifest in the secret place. If possessed, the shadow of the Almighty will be a joy and delight; if absent, there may indeed be a pretended simulation of that joy and delight, albeit a false sense of security only.

"The secret place of the Most High" is needed even by the most sincere of heart. Are there any so fully purified in heart that the search-light of the Word will reveal nothing contrary to the will of God? Surely not. Even a human mind is ready to acknowledge the wisdom of the suggestion that "Could we see ourselves as others see us, it would from many a blunder free us." How much more true would be the expression: Could we see ourselves as God sees us apart from our dependence upon Christ, surely it would discover to us many things far from a perfect holiness. It is the realization of this very fact that makes the prayer of David seem so fitting on our own lips: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psa. 139: 23, 24.) The atmosphere of the secret place will create such a request as this, and make the heart ready for the Lord's inspection. There in that environment, if there be any conventional, outward simulation, a form of godliness without the power, the prayer will be quickened, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Psa. 51:10.) There in the presence of God it will be remembered that His Word "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12.) And recognizing this as a necessary operation of the Word if so be that we desire to be sanctified thereby, there will be a real fervency in the prayer: "Order my steps in Thy Word," and "lead me in the paths of righteousness for Thy name's sake." (Psa. 119:133; 23:3.) This will mean dwelling and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

Under His Wings Shalt Thou Trust

Having examined some of the requirements to be met by such as will abide in the secret place of the Almighty, let us turn to some consideration of the things to be expected in the daily enjoyment of this favored place. "If we begin each day by first of all surrendering ourselves to Christ, this enthronement of Christ within will carry with it, if it be a real thing, the dethronement of self. Full surrender to Him implies His full mastery over us; and till that is both acknowledged as a thing that ought to be, and experienced as a thing that is, there can be nothing in us of that joy and freedom and power that belongs to the really consecrated heart.

"What joy it gives, and strength too, to begin each day by feeling, 'On this day once again I am to live simply as a servant of Jesus Christ: His will and not my own will is to sway me every hour!' 'A servant of Jesus Christ!' then I cannot be the servant of sin, I must aim to be holy as my Master is holy. 'A servant of Jesus Christ!' then I will not be the servant of men: the maxims of the world will not rule me; I am under orders only to my Master in heaven. 'A servant of Jesus Christ!' then, if I want to know Him, I must walk even as He walked, seeking always to plant my feet in His

footsteps. As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, to see how their work should be done, so my eyes must wait upon the Lord. If His service is sometimes difficult, I must not complain: He may use me as He will. And at the end of all I will be more than satisfied if I only hear Him say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

"To be a true and faithful servant such as this I must put myself daily into Almighty hands, and say, 'Into Thy hands I commit my spirit' for this day and every day. . . . These words Jesus Himself used when, on the cross, He was looking out on death; but they had been, before that, the words of one who was looking out, not on death, but on the difficulties and trials of life. (See Psa. 31:5.) If they were enough for my Master to die upon, they are more than enough for me to live upon, and so I say:

"Into Thy protecting hands I commit my spirit for the **keeping** of it. Life is full of temptations, the world full of snares; I cannot keep myself, but Thou canst keep me from falling; I trust myself to Thee.

"Into thy **tender** hands I commit my spirit for the **comforting** of it. The sorrows of my life may be many, the waters deep, the furnace hot; I may have thick darkness over me soon in which I could lose all my joy, but if Thou wilt whisper to me then, 'I am with thee still,' I will fear no evil.

"Into Thy **correcting** hands I commit my spirit for the **sanctifying** of it. I am willing to be chastened if only the chastening makes me purer than before. Take what way Thou wilt with me, I will bless the hand that smites.

"Into Thy **moulding** hands I commit my spirit for the **consecrating** of it. Use me to Thy glory. I would not live to myself. Let self be killed that Christ may be all in me. Turn me as the clay is turned in the potter's hands. I would fain be a vessel for the Master's use, filled with the Master's grace, and Thou canst make me so.

"And then if death should come even suddenly, I will hear Thee calling, and reply, 'Into Thy **redeeming** hands I commit my spirit for the **glorifying** of it. Thy creating hands fashioned **me**, Thy preserving hands have kept me, Thy guiding hands have led me, Thy appealing hands have beckoned to me, Thy smiting hands have chastened me, but they were always saving hands that delivered me, and sheltering hands that covered me. I ever found them to be loving hands, I have proved them to be strong, and so I trust myself entirely and for ever to Thee; 'Into Thy hands I commit my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.'"

"In the secret of His presence
How my soul delights to hide:

Oh, how precious are the lessons
Which I learn at Jesus' side.

Earthly cares can only vex me,
Trials never lay me low,

Arid when Satan comes to tempt me;
To the secret place I go.

"Would you like to know the sweetness
Of this secret of the Lord?

Go and hide beneath His shadow,
This shall then be your reward.

And when'er you leave the silence
Of that happy meeting place,

You must mind and bear the image
Of the Master in your face."

- Contributed.

"His Loving-Kindness, O How Great!"

God has a kindness of nature and disposition, a loving-kindness, that is general, that goes out, in one sense of the word, to all His creatures -- not only the intelligent, but the unintelligent creatures of His hand. He bestows His kindness, His favors, upon the just and the unjust. He sends His sunshine and His rain upon the good and the evil. But there is a special lovingkindness, a special love which He reserves for those who have lovable qualities of heart -- those who have such traits of character as permit Him thus to love them -- just as every good person loves every other person who is good and noble-hearted.

We, above all people in the world have the lovingkindness of God manifested toward us. We have His exceeding great and precious promises. We are the recipients of His special love. And the more we appreciate this love and these glorious promises and the bountiful provisions of His grace, the more our hearts respond in gratitude, the more His loving-kindness becomes a reality to us, and the more are we ready to lay down our lives in His service.

This loving favor of God, which is so appreciated by the true saints, is not a favor respecting future prospects and hopes merely, but it is the blessed possession also of the present life. Gradually these come to prize the communion and fellowship of the Lord to such a degree that any interruption of this communion produces misery of soul. It brings an aching void that nothing else can fill. This sentiment is beautifully expressed in the hymn we often sing:

"Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when Thou art near;
O, may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"

The true child of God will walk so closely with Him that nothing, however sweet or precious to thee natural man, will be permitted to shut from him his Father's face. This would be esteemed a calamity with which nothing else could compare. He would rather cut off anything as dear as a right hand, or pluck out of his life anything as precious as an eye, than that it should come between himself and his heavenly Friend, whom he has come to love above all else beside. God is truly to these the Sun of their soul, without whom life would become the blackness of night.

- *The Watch Tower*.

The Eternal Goodness

John Greenleaf Whittier was born in 1807 and died in 1892. Brother Russell used his poems perhaps to a greater extent than those of any other poet, and this doubtless because they reflected so accurately his own burning desire to make known to all men the understanding of the Divine Plan which he had received. The following poem was the cause of Whittier being admonished by the elders of the Quaker community for writing matter which they considered subversive of Quaker "Truth." - *Bible Students Monthly, London.*

O Friends! with whom my feet have trod
The quiet aisles of prayer;
Glad witness to your zeal for God,
And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument,
Your logic linked and strong.
I weigh as one who dreads dissent,
And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds!
Against the words ye bid me speak
My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?
Who talks of scheme and plan?
The Lord is God, He needeth not
The poor device of man.

I walk with bare hushed feet the ground
Ye tread with boldness shod;
I dare not fix with mete and bound
The love and power of God.

Ye praise His Justice! even such
His pitying love I deem;
Ye seek a King; I fain would touch
The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
A world of pain and loss;
I hear the Lord's Beatitudes
And prayer upon the Cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
Myself alas, I know!
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead in the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame;
And urge in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.

I feel the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groans and travail-cries,

The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed trust my spirit clings:
I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
And seraphs may not see;
But nothing can be good in Him
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
I dare not throne above.
I know not of His hate-I know
His goodness and His love.

I dimly guess, from blessings known,
Of greater, out of sight;
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
His judgments too are right.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise;
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain;
The bruised reed He will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I bring,
Nor works by faith to prove;
I can but give the gifts He gave,
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray;
Pray for me that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be;
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee!

The Fellowship at Minneapolis

"The welcome extended the visiting friends on Saturday evening and again on Sunday morning to the Minneapolis Convention and the reminder of the welcome awaiting the faithful to the 'General Assembly and Church of the Firstborns' warmed our hearts and prepared the brethren assembled, about 125, to unitedly enter more fully into the blessings of the convention.

"It was refreshing to hear again the Scriptures bearing on 'Our Inheritance,' and to be reminded that while we are called to an 'inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,' we have a present inheritance with which no earthly heritage is comparable. Amid the trials and difficulties of our present experiences there may be a tendency to forget the blessed portion that belongs to the children of God even now, that our 'lines are fallen to us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage,' for the 'Lord is the portion of our inheritance.'

"The Sunday morning service was opened with a choral selection by Minneapolis friends:

'Make me a blessing, make me a blessing,
Out of my life may Jesus shine.
Make me a blessing, O Savior I pray,
Make me a blessing to some one today.'

The singing of this beautiful hymn, the prayer of all, served to fix the prayer on our hearts and doubtless had much to do with the giving and receiving of blessing during the convention.

"Reflections on 2 Timothy 1:6, 7 brought home to us all the question: 'What spirit are ye of?' and caused a heart searching as to the spirit we are manifesting in our contact with the world, and in our fellowship with our brethren, especially those with whom there is a difference of thought. There resulted a renewed desire to have and maintain that spirit that provokes unto love -that love that 'doth not behave itself unseemly'-that love that 'suffereth long and is kind.' In this connection we were reminded of the article by Brother Russell in January 1, 1896 Watch Tower, entitled 'The Early Ministry of Jesus,' which doubtless has proved a blessing to all who have reviewed it.

"John 9:25 was the basis of a profitable discussion, when we were reminded of the darkness that had been lifted from our eyes, and were led to rejoice in the vision of the Divine Plan of the Ages, which beautifully reflects the glorious character of our God. And as it was but 'dust and spittle' used to accomplish this miracle in opening the eyes of the man born blind, so now it is oftentimes but humble instruments, stammering lips, 'dust and spittle,' used as the human agencies for opening the spiritual eyes.

"The words recorded in Micah 6:6-8 with Deuteronomy 10:12 were brought to our attention in such manner as to impress upon the mind the importance and 'sacred duty' of each child of God to have the spirit of justice and righteousness; that obedience in little things is one of the requirements, for it is the 'little foxes that spoil the vines'; and that the sum of the matter is to 'love the Lord with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength.' The 'doing of these things,' as admonished by Peter, was shown to be the only way to obtain an 'abundant entrance into the Kingdom.'

"The baptismal service, when five symbolized their consecration unto death, was very impressive. Our hearts indeed were thrilled as we remembered how we had been called to be members of the divine family of God; called to 'suffer with Him,' that, 'planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.'

"The examination of 1 Cor. 13 was edifying to all, viewed in the light of that 'Word of God which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' In the review of Romans 8:36, another, opportunity was given of considering our vow to be dead with Him, and the necessity of 'daily dying' if we would at last be found faithful.

"The happy faces and cheering testimonies gave expression to a joy and a love and a peace that the world can neither give nor take away. The singing of hymns and the devotional services were a very real and touching part of the convention, and the selections rendered by the Chicago trio, as also the Minneapolis chorus, were an inspiration, and much appreciated by all. A touching solo, 'Where He leads me I will follow,' was also rendered by an aged Brother from Waukesha, Wis., now past his fourscore years.

"We would be prompt to gratefully acknowledge the kind hospitality of the dear friends of the Minneapolis Class, the providing of lodging in the various homes and serving of meals at the hall -- all of which gave much opportunity for fellowship. Their service was heartily appreciated, and spoke much of their spirit of sacrifice.

"The Farewell Remarks reminded us of how we had been 'sitting at Jesus' feet, there to catch something of His spirit, thence to take away a little more of His likeness,' and of how good and how pleasant it had been to 'dwell together in unity'-a unity, the basis of which 'consists in a belief in the existence of the one only true God; and in a firm conviction that Christ Jesus is His Son, and that, after laying down His life as a ransom for us, He was raised from the dead by the Father's power. It consists further of a confession that this risen Jesus has become our Lord; that is to say, He has been entreated by us each individually and has graciously consented to exercise lordship of our life; and finally, it consists in an outward manner of 'life which makes it plain that these beliefs and confession are not false, but are the sincere sentiment of our hearts. To quote the language of the inspired Apostle: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord [that is to say, as *thy* Lord, no matter who else rejects Him], and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made to salvation."

"We were reminded of the prayer of Moses, 'Lord, if Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence,' and were asked to take with us as our Farewell, the precious promise which was inscribed over the door to the convention hall: 'My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.' The hymn, 'God be with you till we meet again,' was made both our parting hymn and prayer. Thus ended a precious season of fellowship."